

Positive Psychological Capacity and Its Impacts on Success

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Abstract—Healing has become considerably significant in psychology since World War II. In this period, the focus of the psychology was to repair the damages with the use of a disease model of human psychology. However, this almost exclusive approach to pathology disregarded the concept of a fulfilled individual and a flourishing community. It also ignored the possibility that the most potent weapon in the arsenal of therapy is building strength. Positive psychology aims to pave the way for a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to building the best qualities in life. The building of strength must be brought to the forefront in the treatment and prevention of mental illness in order to correct the previous imbalance. In fact, what positive psychology highlights are strengths rather than weaknesses, health and vitality rather than illness and pathology. Confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience—four positive psychological capacities—are measurable and they can be improved and managed for better work performance. Consisting of two parts, positive social capital concept will be explained in the first part of this article. The second part will focus on the relationship between the success of college students in Hittite University in Çorum/Turkey and their positive capital.

Index Terms—positive psychology, positive organizational behavior, social capital

I. INTRODUCTION

“If you work hard, you will become successful, and once you become successful, *then* you’ll be happy”. This approach explains what generally motivates us in life in that we become tend to think as follows: “If I just get that raise, or hit that next sales target, I’ll be happy. If I can just get that next good grade, I’ll be happy. If I lose five pounds, I’ll be happy.” The examples can be increased.

According to this idea, success precedes happiness. However, there is a problem as this formula is broken in that if success brings happiness, then every positive outcome should come with satisfaction. For instance, every employee who gets a promotion, every student who receives an acceptance letter, anyone who accomplishes a goal of any kind would be happy. Yet, this is not the case.

Our goalposts of success keep getting pushed further and further out along with each victory, therefore happiness gets pushed over the horizon. What is more, this formula is broken, for it is backward.

Innovative research carried out in positive psychology and neuroscience in the period of more than ten years has suggested that the relationship between success and happiness occurs reversely. This revolutionary finding has enlightened us in that happiness is not only the result of success but actually the initiator of it. Moreover, making us competitive, this happiness and optimism foster our performance and achievement [1].

II. POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

Healing has gained significant improvement in psychology since World War II, when the aim of psychology was repairing damage with the use of a disease model of human psychology. This strong focus was based on the idea of a fulfilled individual and a thriving community, but it ignored the possibility that the most potent weapon in the center of therapy is building strength. What positive psychology aims is to foster a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life [2]. Rather than weaknesses and dysfunctions, Positive psychology is concerned with people’s strengths and the way how they can grow and thrive (rather than be fixed or maintained). Positive psychology is not the first highlight the power of positive thinking. Rather it balances focus of understanding and process developing the right people and their thrive [3].

Positive organizational behavior, namely POB, is the use of positive psychology in the workplace [4]. POB-oriented studies mostly addresses individual traits such as conscientiousness and trait-like states such as optimism, self-efficacy and resilience and their outcomes, or organizational practices such as strong organizational cultures and human resource practices [5]. POS does not depend on a single theory, but it includes elements such as excellence, thriving, flourishing, abundance, resilience, or virtuousness [6]. People would realize the weakness of others when they first meet. It’s usually easy to notice the

differences among people and depict their deficiency. To illustrate, someone who is highly organized can easily catch on a disorganized person and then will not realize his/her other talents. We are eager to find the mistakes of others. To solve this problem in the short term people try to give up search weakness of other people. Alternatively, we can try to understand the differences among people and position people so that they can make use of their potentials [7].

III. POSITIVE EMOTIONS AND HUMANS

It is not that easy to define the term 'emotion'. According to Fehr and Russell, everyone believes that they know what emotion is, but they cannot give a definition [8]. The wide variety of definition proposed on emotion is the most important problem about it. Kleinginna and Kleinginna evaluated 92 definitions and 9 skeptical statements compiled from a variety of sources in the literature of emotion to clarify the terminological confusion. After their study, they proposed the following definition of emotion: "emotion is a complex set of interactions of subjective and objective factors, mediated by neural/hormonal systems, which can (a) give rise to affective experiences such as feelings of arousal, pleasure/displeasure; (b) generate cognitive processes such as emotionally relevant perceptual effects, appraisals, labeling processes; (c) activate widespread physiological adjustment to the arousing conditions; and (d) lead to behavior that is often expressive, goal-directed and adaptive. [9]

Psychology put emphasis on negative emotions such as depression and anxiety rather than on positive emotions such as happiness and satisfaction during its first century. Actually, texts are mostly about suffering but not about joy even today. However, this has started to change. In fact, the number of Psychological Abstract citations of "well-being," "happiness," and "life satisfaction" quintupled, reaching 780 articles annually during the 1980s [10].

The defenders of broaden-and-build theory suggest that positive emotions can momentarily broaden one's scopes of thought and allow for flexible attention, which can improve one's well-being [11]

An individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (being optimistic) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals, and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (being hopeful) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success [12].

Four specific positive psychological capital elements were found to have measurable, open to develop and related to work performance and desirable outcomes. These psychological resources are [13]:

A. Self-Efficacy/Confidence

Self-efficacy is to do with people's convictions about their own capacity in carrying out a set of actions

successfully that leads to a desired outcome. Self-confident people select challenging tasks and aspire to auspiciously accomplish their goals [14]. According to Luthans, self-confident people are those who have the following five important features [15]:

- They set high goals for themselves and volunteer for difficult tasks.
- They welcome and thrive on challenge.
- They are exceptionally self-motivated.
- They make the necessary effort to accomplish their ambitions.
- They do not give up when they encounter obstacles.

People are not adequately motivated to take action if they do not believe that they can produce desired effects and hinder inappropriate ones by their actions. Whatever other factors may motivate people, they are based on the main belief that one has the power to produce desired results. The fact that self-efficacy belief is a vital personal resource is sufficiently documented by meta-analysis of the findings from diverse spheres of functioning under laboratory and naturalistic conditions [16].

B. Hope

Hope is defined as "the process of thinking about one's goals, along with the motivation to move toward those goals (agency), and the ways to achieve those (pathways)" [17]. The findings of many studies on hope suggest that hope did not affect reports on how painful the experience was, but it did foster the ability to tolerate [18]

C. Optimism

While optimism is defined as a general expectation for future good outcomes, hope is described as a set of cognitive processes that aims at attaining specific goals [19]. Optimistic people expect to experience good things whereas pessimistic people assume to encounter bad things in life [20].

Optimism - reacting to setbacks from a presumption of personal power [21]

- Bad events are not permanent setbacks
- Isolated to particular circumstances
- Can be overcome by my effort and abilities

D. Resilience

Being and adaptive system, resilience enables people to rapidly overcome or rejuvenate after a setback or failure [22]. It refers to a process of good adaptation under extenuating circumstances [23]. Research on resilience has focused on the following three distinct situations: a) functioning well during a time of distinguished hardship ("stress resistance"); b) recovery from a traumatic or extremely disturbing experience ("bouncing back"); or c) attaining positive or normal adaptation as the seriously adverse conditions improve ("normalization") [24].

Above all, people who are resilient in their traits experience positive emotions even when they are in the middle of stressful events, which may illustrate their capacity to rebound successfully in spite of difficulties [25]. Resilient people have three traits in common:

acceptance of reality; a strong belief that life is meaningful; and a remarkable talent to improvise [26].

What directed psychology toward “the best things in life” has come at an interesting time respecting the changing nature of work and the role psychology can play in helping us understand it [27]. In essence, POS is based on the idea that understanding the causes of positive behavior in the workplace would help organizations reach new levels of achievement [28]. It has been found that psychological well-being is not only related to work but also personal life outcomes. For instance, sufficient research has been made on the relationship between psychological well-being and performance at work and successful relationships. Moreover, it has been found that superior mental and physical health and longevity covary with happiness and positivity levels [29].

IV. METHOD

This study aim to determine whether people who are hopeful, self-confident, optimistic and resilient called as psychological capital are more successful in school life.

The study consists of two parts. While the first part is theoretical; the second part contains an empirical study. In the theoretical part of the research includes the literature review on the concept of psychological capital Empirical study involves a questionnaire study which entails Psychological Capital Scale which was developed by Luthans *et al.* [27] and was translated into Turkish by Çetin and Basım [28]. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's α ; it was 0.812. Data from the questionnaires was coded and analyzed both descriptively and analytically. At the level of descriptive statistic, frequency, mean and percentage were calculated and at the level of the analyze ANOVA was used to assess the relationship between Psychological Capital and academic achievement.

A. Participants

TABLE I. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Between 1,01-1,50	13	5,7	5,7	5,7
1,51-2,00	51	22,3	22,3	27,9
2,01-2,50	91	39,7	39,7	67,7
2,51-3,00	47	20,5	20,5	88,2
3,01-3,50	21	9,2	9,2	97,4
3,51-4,00	6	2,6	2,6	100,0
Total	229	100,0	100,0	

This research was carried out at Hitit University in Corum, Turkey. Two hundred twenty nine (229) students who study in the departments of economics and administrative sciences and vocational school participated in the survey. 53.7% of participants were female and 46.3% were male. Participant were aged between 15-35, but most of the participants were ages between 20- 24 (86%). 50.7 %

of the participants are studying undergraduate and 49.3% of participants are studying graduate. Table I shows academic achievements of students. Academic achievements of students ranged from to 1-4 points.

B. Results

TABLE II. THE RELATIONSHIP OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL SCALE VARIABLE BETWEEN ACADEMIC SUCCESSES

	Group	N	Mean	SD	F	P
Optimism	1,50 and below	13	3,4744	,70987	1,710	,133
	1,51-2,00	51	3,3922	,61718		
	2,01-2,50	91	3,4542	,59476		
	2,51-3,00	47	3,3759	,55000		
	3,01-3,50	21	3,6587	,55896		
	3,51-4,00	6	3,9722	,32347		
Self-efficacy	1,50 and below	13	3,6744	,87625	2,445	,035
	1,51-2,00	51	3,7778	,76932		
	2,01-2,50	91	3,7802	,76047		
	2,51-3,00	47	3,9433	,77106		
	3,01-3,50	21	4,0556	,61764		
	3,51-4,00	6	4,7500	,31180		
Resilience	1,50 and below	13	3,7692	,96354	,996	,421
	1,51-2,00	51	3,7124	,70481		
	2,01-2,50	91	3,6978	,65259		
	2,51-3,00	47	3,6950	,66150		
	3,01-3,50	21	3,8651	,35205		
	3,51-4,00	6	4,2500	,46845		
Hope	1,50 and below	3	3,4795	,80064	4,311	,001
	1,51-2,00	1	3,5588	,77160		
	2,01-2,50	1	3,7344	,65545		
	2,51-3,00	47	4,0177	,64384		
	3,01-3,50	21	4,0397	,57952		
	3,51-4,00	6	4,5000	,38006		

In this study relationship between business students' positive psychological capital and academic achievement was analyzed. ANOVA results show that the relationship students' self-efficacy ($F = 2.445$, $p = 0.035$)/ hope ($F = 4.311$, $p = 0.001$) and students' academic achievement is significant difference. However, relationship optimism ($F = 1.170$, $p = 0.133$)/ endurance ($F = 996$, $p = 0.001$) and students' academic achievement variables are not a significant difference. These results refer the students' level of hope and self-confidence is effective on academic achievement. Table II shows the results of ANOVA test.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper outlined the importance of having positive psychological capital.

As stated in the theoretical part, self-confidence is essential in psychological resource. The findings of the research support that statement. The relationship between students' academic achievement and self-confidence belief is significant. Furthermore, there is significant relationship about students' academic achievements and hope. However, we did not find any significant relationship between optimism/ resilience and students' academic achievement.

Unemployment is a major problem in Turkey. Therefore students are pessimistic to find a job in the

future. The result of research is natural in terms of the resilience factor, because, individuals can understand own psychological and mental capacity only once. Furthermore, there is not a significant correlation between students' psychological capital and the level of education. These results indicate that the most important thing is being seen himself/herself as a successful in the school life rather than what the graduate level of students'

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