

## **7. Is Your Employee A HERO? – A Positive Psychology Standpoint to Increase Desirable Consequences**

*Dr. (Fr.) Mukl Clarence, S. J.*

### **Purpose:**

To provide a positive psychology standpoint to facilitate desirable consequences among employees via psychological capital (PsyCap).

### **Design/Methodology/Approach:**

The authors have gone through PsyCap literature extensively to pinpoint the modality to increase employee PsyCap. Also, based on the previous empirical works, they assert essential interventional training, which boosts PsyCap. This paper is written for HR professionals; therefore, care was taken to avoid bombastic words related to terms and concepts.

### **Findings:**

HERO (hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism) is known to predict desirable consequences such as organizational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work engagement, health and creativity. Organizations spend several thousand dollars to increase among employee desirable consequences.

HR professionals now have an alternative, positive psychology standpoint to consider as part of their overall employee interventional training program to improve their desirable consequences via PsyCap. Suggested modules of training are easy to use.

### **Originality/Value:**

This paper provides insights into this important concept of employee PsyCap and interventional training programs from a positive psychology perspective. It aims to leverage interventional training to enhance employee PsyCap so that HR professionals can augment their employees' desirable consequences.

### **Keywords:**

*Psychological capital, interventional training, desirable consequences.*

## **Introduction:**

Researchers have shown an increasing interest in “Psychological Capital” (PsyCap) and its positive impact on employees’ attitudes, behavior, and performance in recent years. The findings of several evidence-based and intercultural studies conclusively highlight the efficacious capacity of PsyCap to predict desirable consequences (organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work engagement, health and creativity) and reduce undesirable consequences (absenteeism, incivility, cynicism and stress). Further, during the post-Covid era, the value of PsyCap has been viewed as more vital. During the Covid pandemic, many organizations conducted sessions wherein behavioral psychologists unfolded the pathways to increase PsyCap. As a result, it brought solace in the life of many employees. Yet, many organizations are not in a position to boost their employees’ PsyCap for various reasons. Thus, this viewpoint garner information in a quick reference and practical guide on how PsyCap can increase and attain desirable outcomes.

## **PsyCap (HERO) in a Nutshell:**

Drawing from insights of positive psychology, Fred Luthans, a management professor of University, and George Holmes developed a concept called psychological capital. It is an umbrella term consisting of four traits: hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (HERO). Luthans proposes that a person with psychological capital (PsyCap) will have enough personal resources to combat against perils of well-being, resulting in work in predicting desirable consequences at the workplace (Luthans et al., 2015).

In laypeople, understanding capital refers to a necessary resource for the production and growth of organisations or industries or individuals. In conformity with social sciences, one can say that there are four types of capital; 1) economic capital, which indicates what one has. Economic capital specifies possession of monetary resources, which is essential for success. 2) Similarly, social capital denotes who you know.

It is argued that having contacts and networking with people and knowing people serve as assets for human resources and organizational growth. 3) Human capital refers to what one knows (skills, knowledge, and attitudes). It includes the abilities and strengths of the individual. Human capital is a reliable predictor of ones’ progress. 4) Psychological capital refers to what one possesses within; it refers to the substance or makeup of a person. The uniqueness of PsyCap lies in its HERO constructs which are measurable, malleable and positive. PsyCap thrusts upon the dictum of “who you are” and what you can become”. Research findings indicate that persons with high in HERO construct remain victorious in all spheres of life, be it professional and personal (Luthans et al., 2006). Psychological capital constitutes of four states, “HERO within”. A summary of each is presented as follows:

1. Hope is one's capacity to determine one's goal and explore the strategy to achieve that goal. In sum, it includes goals, paths, and power. Hopeful people proactively explore other alternatives to meet the goals when the primary way does not work. To conclude, hope is a cognitive state that helps individuals become more realistic about their expectations of the desired goals through self-determination, perception, and energy.
2. Efficacy entails the belief that one has the ability, skill, and knowledge to marshal all the resources available, be it cognitive, conative, or affective, to complete a given task. Persons having efficacy states are considered to have the following characteristic: they set high goals for themselves, do well in challenging situations, are motivated persons, make efforts to reach their goals, and persist in times of challenges before giving up. Six traits are closely associated with efficacy: confidence, command, adaptability, personal effectiveness, positive attitudes, and individuality.
3. Resilience includes the energy to bounce back or recovery from the divested condition. It is the positive energy of individuals, which fights with adverse events to recover from failure. It works with three dimensions of control, coherence, and connectedness. A person who has the states of resilience is said to possess objectivity, convictions, adaption, and evaluation characteristics. It also includes the process of positive adaption to different adversities and risks.

Optimism refers to having a positive and realistic perspective. Optimistic people have internal stability and believe that they control the situation. It is a kind of attributional style. Optimism is cognitive skills in its emphasis, reflecting a reasoned judgment that good would predominate over evil. While encountering positive events or experiences, people with an optimistic mindset adopt internal, stable and global attributions, and while engaging adverse events, they use external and specific attribution.

### **Ordinary Ways to Increase PsyCap:**

While there are many ways to increase PsyCap among employees, the pertinent ones are given below:

1. **Hope:** organizations can have sessions where employees can be taught to make personal and professional goals for their growth based on SMART metrics. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timebound. Besides, employees can be asked to reflect on possible obstacles on the path of their goals and make the strategy to overcome them.
2. **Efficacy:** During sessions, employees can be given positive feedback and talked about their worth and strength. Also, they can be asked to visualize that they have achieved their envisaged goal. During training programs ensure that employees learn a new set of professional skills to build their confidence. To increase efficacy, organizations should create a culture of wellness by training employees in spirituality and mental

health workshops. In sum, organizations make every effort to enhance the confidence level of their employees.

3. **Resilience:** SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities and threat) analysis can be done for the employees, and obtained insight can be communicated to them as to how they can build grit and perseverance in challenging situations. Employees can be given apt training to improve /her knowledge and skills of their work domain. Organizations can keep a check on their employee's emotional upheavals in the face of misfortune and suggest practical coping skills.
4. **Optimism:** Employees can be asked to count their achievements and strengths. Based on SWOT and goal setting (SMART) exercise, employees can be requested to formulate their understanding. Employees can be trained to be creative and to see the bright side of every challenging circumstance. Further, during training sessions, evidence-based information can be imparted to employees on the importance of being in a good relationship and nurturing them, be it with spouse, children, friends, and colleagues. Practical guidelines of associating with positive people and reading positive books can be encouraged to employees.

### **Insights For HR Executives and Leaders:**

HR executives and leaders can adopt the Positive psychology approach to develop PsyCap among employees of their organizations. While each of these training interventions has different characteristics and impacts – they have empirically proven to improve the PsyCap of employees. Some of the practical and effective ways for HR professionals to adopt would be:

- Training employees with the ways to make (SMART) specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timebound goals to navigate challenges and strategy to overcome those challenges.
- Promoting the sessions on appraisals, capacity building program, and SWOT analysis
- Orienting employees to discover meaning, spirituality, and happiness in life.
- Teaching employees to engage in positive self-talk and positive evaluation of life and its events.

### **Conclusion:**

In the face of adverse scenarios created by Covid 19 at the workplace, resulting in a reduction of productivity and well-being. The seeming need for PsyCap has been accentuated to heal and boost the employees. Usually, organizations spend billions of dollars to increase desirable consequences among employees with limited success. PsyCap is known to enhance the same of the employees. PsyCap includes a collection of state-like traits that can improve organizational productivity and well-being in life (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015).

This study explores potential strategies of PsyCap interventions. PsyCap interventions have shown effective improvement in HERO elements and PsyCap among employees. Empirical research on PsyCap, and its constructs, has highlighted its positive outcome with desirable consequences. Traditionally to the positive implications of PsyCap, research findings were conducted in organizational settings alone. However, research on PsyCap and its constructs has recently begun in various settings such as educational context, health professional employees, defence employees, and mental health prerequisites. Thus, among other studies, this viewpoint discusses applying PsyCap interventions for a desirable outcome.

**References:**

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