

Application and Related Research on the Psychological Capital Theory in Higher Education Research

Fu, Chensha^{1,*} & Fwu-Yuan Weng¹

¹International College, Krirk University, Thanon Ram Intra, Khwaeng Anusawari, Khet Bang Khen, Krung Thep, Maha Nakhon 10220, Thailand

*Correspondence: International College, Krirk University, Thanon Ram Intra, Khwaeng Anusawari, Khet Bang Khen, Krung Thep, Maha Nakhon 10220, Thailand. E-mail: 502996484@qq.com <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2613-5582>

Received: July 30, 2022

Accepted: September 24, 2022

Online Published: October 18, 2022

doi:10.5430/jct.v11n7p27

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v11n7p27>

Abstract

Psychological capital refers to a state of positive energy displayed in the heart of an individual in the process of self-growth and comprehensive and healthy development. Many scholars at home and abroad have found through research that psychological capital, as a positive psychological state, plays a significant positive role in evaluating and regulating college students in many aspects, such as academic performance, interpersonal relationships, stress relief, mental health, etc. Based on this, the article aims to draw on the current relatively mature research results of psychological capital theory, and deeply and systematically analyzes and discusses these research results, so as to provide valuable conclusions for the in-depth study of psychological capital theory in the field of college education. To meet that aim, a range of general methods including, descriptive, observational, literature review analysis are utilized.

Given the results, in higher education, the application of psychological capital theory is still in the initial exploration period, and it needs to be explored comprehensively and deeply to make it continuously perfect.

Keywords: psychological capital, college education, college students, applied value

1. Introduction

American management scientist Lutnans defines psychological capital as a positive psychological state of an individual in the process of self-growth and overall development (Ayala Calvo & Manzano García, 2021). With the gradual development of psychological capital theory, educational scholars have gradually realized that psychological capital theory also plays a particularly important positive impact in the field of education (Liu et al., 2021). Through in-depth analysis of the research results in recent years, this article aims to provide some reference for scholars who study psychological capital theory in the field of education.

Initially, the concept of psychological capital only focused on its category standards, and listed positive energy psychological structures that were more in line with the standards. Subsequently, psychological capital was expanded and generally defined as: the general level of positive energy internal factors, whose specific performance is a kind of state suitable for the specified standards, which has great advantages over other capital. This is the core definition to integrate this state into a higher level (Ngoma and Dithan Ntale, 2016; Hsu & Chang, 2022).

This article draws on the views summed up by western scholars, and defines psychological capital as a positive psychological state of an individual in the process of self-growth and all-round development, which is embodied in the following four aspects:

1. When facing difficulties, they are very confident and can give full play to their potential to meet difficulties, so as to successfully complete the work (self-confidence).
2. They tend to be positive about their present and future success (optimistic).
3. They will persevere in achieving goals. In order to achieve good results, they can modify methods from practical considerations at any time in the midway (hope).

4. When they are in adversity and hindered by problems, they can make persistent efforts, quickly adjust and even surpass themselves, so as to achieve the goal (resilience).

2. Methods

the article aims to draw on the current relatively mature research results of psychological capital theory, and deeply and systematically analyzes and discusses these research results, so as to provide valuable conclusions for the in-depth study of psychological capital theory in the field of college education. To meet that aim, a range of general methods including, descriptive, observational, literature review analysis are taken into account

3. Results and Discussion

At the beginning of the 21st century, famous western management scientists proposed that psychological capital is a positive mental state that can continuously and positively affect the work situation of an individual. Domestic scholars also realize that developing the psychological capital of college students can not only create a good opportunity for the society to cultivate talents with all-round development, but also make the development of college students in all aspects full of positive energy.

As for the connotation of college students' psychological capital, some scholars believe that it is a psychological factor with positive energy that can promote individual positive behavior (Baron et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2021); Others believe that it is the sum of all kinds of positive energy abilities of college students in the special period of life development. The use of these positive energy abilities in practical tests can help college students enhance their self-confidence and develop their potential (Noel & Finocchio, 2022). Another part thinks that it is the sum of all kinds of positive psychological energy brought by college students in a special period of life (You, 2016; Usman et al., 2022).

By analyzing the existing literature, it is found that the students' hope level is directly proportional to their usual grades, and it can also effectively estimate the final grades. Optimism can gradually enhance the self-confidence of college students (da Costa et al., 2021). Under normal circumstances, the comprehensive level of college students' psychological capital is above the average level, but in special circumstances or when the variables are different, the differences in psychological capital and its dimensions will lead to different conclusions, and micro-intervention can significantly improve psychological capital. Based on this conclusion, domestic scholars put forward specific and effective intervention measures based on the general situation of college students' psychological capital and the intervention model created by Snyder in 1991 (Dudasova et al., 2021).

At present, regarding the measurement of psychological capital, scholars have compiled the psychological capital questionnaire PCQ according to the four structures of psychological capital. The Cronbach α coefficient of the overall psychological capital is 0.89, and the reliability coefficient of each dimension is in the range of 0.72-0.79 (Cooper, 2021). Taking Chinese employees as the test object, Santos et al. (2018) revised the Chinese version of the PCQ questionnaire for the first time through practice. The questionnaire is divided into four dimensions, each dimension contains four items, a total of 16 items. The feedback from the revised questionnaire is good.

The research shows that college students' psychological capital will achieve their goals through self-expectation, thus affecting their academic status. The resilience of psychological capital can significantly adjust college students' employment pressure and psychological anxiety. College students with a high level of resilience can smoothly adjust some psychological discomfort caused by their employment pressure. College students' Psychological capital has a positive role in estimating college students' employability. The subjective feelings of college students will also be significantly affected by the estimation of positive psychological capital, and the two show a significant proportional relationship. In addition, college students' learning pressure is also significantly affected by psychological capital (Salam, 2017).

4. Conclusion

It can be seen that psychological capital theory is summarized under the premise of positive energy psychology. Different from the previous capital, it pays more attention to people's psychological situation, completely puts people first, and fully analyzes the individual's positive energy psychological resources, so as to achieve its goal smoothly. The constituent elements of psychological capital are all dynamic. As long as they are suitable for positive energy, they can be included in the research scope of psychological capital, which provides convenient conditions for

cross-cultural exploration. Nowadays, only the management field is generally using the psychological capital theory, while the education field is still in the initial stage of its application. There is no unified conclusion on the constituent elements, measurement, management and development of college students' psychological capital. However, from the perspective of the overall application effect of psychological capital, the results of psychological capital intervention in the field of education are particularly obvious. At present, in higher education, the application of psychological capital theory is still in the initial exploration period, and it needs to be explored comprehensively and deeply to make it continuously perfect.

References

- Ayala Calvo, J. C., & Manzano García, G. (2021). The influence of psychological capital on graduates' perception of employability: the mediating role of employability skills. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 40(2), 293-308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1738350>
- Baron, R. A., Franklin, R. J., & Hmieleski, K. M. (2016). Why entrepreneurs often experience low, not high, levels of stress: The joint effects of selection and psychological capital. *Journal of management*, 42(3), 742-768. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206313495411>
- Cooper, B. D. (2021). Establishing an Ethical Leadership Development Baseline in Higher Education and Research It: An Authentic Leadership, Ethical Climate, Psychological Capital, and Diversity Study (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Cumberland).
- da Costa, M. G., Pinto, L. H., Martins, H., & Vieira, D. A. (2021). Developing psychological capital and emotional intelligence in higher education: A field experiment with economics and management students. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 19(3), 100516. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2021.100516>
- Dudasova, L., Prochazka, J., Vaculik, M., & Lorenz, T. (2021). Measuring psychological capital: Revision of the compound psychological capital scale (CPC-12). *PloS one*, 16(3), e0247114. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0247114>
- Hsu, C. P., & Chang, C. W. (2022). Does the social platform established by MMORPGs build social and psychological capital?. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 129, 107139. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.107139>
- Liu, X., Lyu, B., Fan, J., Yu, S., Xiong, Y., & Chen, H. (2021). A Study on Influence of Psychological Capital of Chinese University Teachers Upon Job Thriving: Based on Motivational Work Behavior as an Intermediary Variable. *Sage Open*, 11(2), 21582440211003093. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211003093>
- Ngoma, M., & Dithan Ntale, P. (2016). Psychological capital, career identity and graduate employability in Uganda: the mediating role of social capital. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 20(2), 124-139. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijtd.12073>
- Noel, T. K., & Finocchio, B. (2022). Using theories of human, social, structural, and positive psychological capital to explore the attrition of former public school practitioners. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 3, 100112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2021.100112>
- Salam, M. A. (2017). Effects of Psychological Capital on Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention: Thai Higher Education Perspective. *Journal of Asia Pacific Studies*, 4(3).
- Santos, A. S., Neto, M. T. R., & Verwaal, E. (2018). Does cultural capital matter for individual job performance? A large-scale survey of the impact of cultural, social and psychological capital on individual performance in Brazil. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-05-2017-0110>
- Usman, S. A., Kowalski, K. B., Andiappan, V. S., & Parayitam, S. (2022). Effect of knowledge sharing and interpersonal trust on psychological capital and emotional intelligence in higher-educational institutions in India: Gender as a moderator. *FIIB Business Review*, 11(3), 315-335. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23197145211011571>
- Wong, I. A., Lin, Z., & Kou, I. E. (2021). Restoring hope and optimism through staycation programs: An application of psychological capital theory. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2021.1970172>
- You, J. W. (2016). The relationship among college students' psychological capital, learning empowerment, and engagement. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 49, 17-24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2016.05.001>

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).