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A Study on Psychological Capital Improvement Using Experiential Learning Model- The Catholic University of Taiwan As an Example

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to improve the Psychological Capital of Catholic University students by Using Experiential Learning Model.

This study was given a total of 300 questionnaires randomly sampled by 1,200 students from 25 classes of Catholic University in Taiwan, Republic of China. There are 53.4% students believe that I have the ability to become a student with a balanced five educations, show that Strongly Agree & Agree Percentage of "Self- efficacy" is relatively low. But when through Kolb's Experiential Learning Model as Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE) to group practice, complete a charity task. There are 81.2% students facing the task, I will imagine ways to achieve the goal, show that Strongly Agree & Agree Percentage of "Hope" is relatively high.

Therefore, this research is to improve the Psychological Capital of Catholic University students by Using Experiential Learning Model. At the same time also encourage students to pursue an education that combines excellent humanities, cultural development and professional services.

Keywords: Psychological Capital, Experiential Learning Model, Catholic University

Introduction

The Providence University (2018) abides by the laws of the Catholic Church and is devoted to spreading the Gospel by sharing Christian faith and following Catholic ideals and principles. The Catholic University Aims to develop the spirit of the foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Saint Mother Theodore Guerin, by educating with a loving heart.

As a Catholic university committed to the pursuit of truth and knowledge, Providence utilizes a holistic educational approach, as it nurtures students to become professionally competent, compassionate, altruistic, globally minded and responsible citizens. The Catholic University, being committed to social innovation and creativity, actively promotes

interdisciplinary cooperation with other schools, religious groups, enterprises, professional communities, and organizations, nurturing talents through social practices to serve and contribute to the society and to the global community as a whole.

Recently, largely stimulated by the positive psychology movement (e.g., see Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001; Snyder & Lopez, 2002), there has been a call to go beyond human capital (generally recognized to be the education, experience, and implicit knowledge of human resources) by focusing on what has been termed positive “psychological capital” (Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Specifically, this psychological capital or, simply, PsyCap, is not only concerned with “who you are” (i.e., human capital) but also, in the developmental sense “who you are becoming”, your “best self” (Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007)

Dewey (1933) stated that not all experience results in learning. Experiential learning, much like professional development, is a process of change within the individual. For each learner it is unique as they draw upon their own past experiences as a foundation to engage with the new. Over a relatively short period of intervention, Johnston, Conneely, Murchan and Tangney (2015) found an overall gain in learners sense of self-efficacy for Key Skills in the categories of ‘being creative’, ‘working with others’, ‘managing information and thinking’ which were specifically investigated.

The purpose of this research is to improve the Psychological Capital of Catholic University students by Using Experiential Learning Model.

Literature Review

Psychological Capital

The concept of psychological capital (PsyCap) has attracted a great deal of interest from both academics and practitioners and has been linked to employee attitudes, behavior and performance at different levels of analysis.

Luthans and his co-authors (2002) describe PsyCap as an individual’s positive psychological state of development that comprises four positive psychological resources: self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience.

Table 1. Four Positive Psychological Resources

No	Positive Psychological Resources	Definition
1	Self- efficacy	Self- efficacy, based on Bandura’s social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997, 2012), refers to an individual’s confidence in their ability to mobilize their motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action in order to achieve high levels of performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Individuals with high self-efficacy generally have a stronger belief in their ability to control outcomes and succeed in addressing difficult challenges than those low in self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).
2	Optimism	Optimism refers to an individual’s expectancy of positive outcomes (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 2001). Those high in optimism generally build positive expectancies that motivate them to pursue their goals and deal with difficult situations (Seligman, 1998).
3	Hope	Hope is composed of two components: agency (goal-directed energy) and pathways (Snyder et al., 1996). Whereas agency refers to an individual’s motivation to succeed at a specific task in a set context, pathways refer to

4 Resilience

the way or means by which that task may be accomplished (Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008). Individuals with high levels of hope show greater goal-directed energy and are more likely to exhibit the capacity to develop alternative pathways to accomplish their goals (Luthans, Avey, et al., 2008).

Resilience refers to the ability of an individual to bounce back from adversity, uncertainty, risk or failure, and adapt to changing and stressful life demands (Masten & Reed, 2002; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Individuals high in resilience tend to be better at adapting in the face of negative experiences and changes in the external environment (Luthans, Vogelgesang, & Lester, 2006).

Source : Combines

PsyCap scale such as well-being, flow, humor, gratitude and forgiveness (Luthans, Norman, et al., 2008; Luthans & Youssef, 2007). The most widely used self-report measure has been the four dimensional 24-item PCQ2 as developed and empirically validated by Luthans and his colleagues (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007).

Workplace stress is a growing concern for human resource managers. Although considerable scholarly and practical attention has been devoted to stress management over the years, the time has come for new perspectives and research. Drawing from the emerging field of positive organizational behavior, this study offers research findings with implications for combating occupational stress.

Psychological capital (the positive resources of efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience) may be key to better understanding the variation in perceived symptoms of stress, as well as intentions to quit and job search behaviors. By fostering psychological capital, HR managers may provide a new human resource development approach to help employees build the critical resources needed in today's stress-filled workplace.

PsyCap was measured with the 24-item Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ; see Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007, for the complete questionnaire and permission for use can be obtained from www.mindgarden.com). Containing six items for each of the four components (efficacy, hope, resilience, optimism), the PCQ demonstrated adequate confirmatory factor analytic structure across multiple samples (e.g., Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007) and had strong internal reliability in this study ($\alpha = .92$).

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 (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals, and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, in press).

Confidence/efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency have been determined to best meet the PsyCap operational definition and inclusion criteria (Luthans, 2002a; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). We have found that PsyCap is a core construct that predicts performance and satisfaction better than any of the individual strengths that make it up (Luthans, Avolio, Norman, & Avey, 2006; Luthans et al., 2005).

Snyder, Irving, and Anderson (1991) define hope as a "positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (1) agency (goal-directed energy) and (2)

pathways (planning to meet goals)". People who are high in hope possess the uncanny ability to generate multiple pathways to accomplishing their goals. This psychological resource continuously provides hope that the goal will be accomplished. Furthermore, those with high hope frame tasks in such a way that keeps them highly motivated to attain success in the task at hand. Snyder (2002) notes that agency thinking in hope "takes on special significance when people encounter impediments. During such instances of blockage, agency helps the person to apply the requisite motivation to the best alternative pathway".

Experiential Learning Model

According to Kolb (1984,38), "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." It suggests that learning is cyclical, involving four stages, which, paraphrasing Kolb, may be referred to as experience, reflect, generalize, and test (Cowan 1998).

Some of the theory's appeal is that it provides a rationale for a variety of learning methods, including independent learning, learning by doing, work-based learning, and problem-based learning, which have recently received much attention within higher education (e.g., Gibbs 1992, Henry 1989) and geography (e.g., Gold et al. 1991, Gravestock and Healey 1998).

The theory has a wide range of applications in geography, including helping students to become self-aware (e.g., Bradbeer 1999, *Geography for the New Undergraduate* 1999); assisting staff to become reflective teachers (e.g., Burkill et al. 2000) and students reflective learners (Birnie and Mason O'Connor 1998); identifying students' learning styles (e.g., Hertzog and Lieble 1996); developing and teaching key skills (e.g., Chalkley and Harwood 1998, Haigh and Kilmartin 1999); designing group projects (e.g., Brown 1999, Mellor 1991); deciding how resource-based learning and information and communications technology can support the learning process (e.g., Healey 1998, Shepherd 1998); and developing the overall geography curriculum (e.g., Jenkins 1998).

Provides a theoretical rationale for what many of us already do as teachers and then offers suggestions on how to improve on that practice (in particular ensuring effective links between theory and application); makes explicit the importance of encouraging students to reflect and providing them with feedback to reinforce their learning; supports us in developing a diverse, aware classroom;

Kolb (1984), building on earlier work by Dewey and Lewin, provides "a comprehensive theory which offers the foundation for an approach to education and learning as a lifelong process and which is soundly based in intellectual traditions of philosophy and cognitive and social psychology" (Zuber-Skerritt 1992a, 98).

The core of Kolb's four-stage model is a simple description of a learning cycle that shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences. Kolb refers to these four stages as Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE).

The learning cycle therefore provides feedback, which is the basis for new action and evaluation of the consequences of that action. Learners should go through the cycle several times, so it may best be thought of as a spiral of cycle. Two primary axes lie behind the cycle: an abstract conceptualization-concrete experience (AC-CE) dimension and an active experimentation-reflective observation (AE-RO) dimension. These reflect the two main dimensions of the learning process that correspond to two major ways by which we learn.

Research Methods

This study conducted a questionnaire survey on about 1,200 students from 25 classes of the first semester of the 109 school year at a Catholic University in Central Taiwan, Republic of China, and randomly sampled classes from five different colleges and departments (Management, Computing and Informatics, Foreign Languages and Literature, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences) were given a total of 300 questionnaires, 292 questionnaires were returned, 4 invalid questionnaires were deducted, 288 valid questionnaires, and the questionnaire validity rate was 96%.

The research tools used in this study include psychological capital scale, religious belief scale, and personal basic data table. Mainly use multiple regression analysis to understand the influence of psychological capital of Catholic University students by Using Experiential Learning Model.

Results and Discussion

Stage 1 (CE). The students watched three videos respectively describing the founder of the Catholic school, the history of the establishment of the Catholic school, and the new church of the Catholic University. This gives them a “substitute” concrete experience.

Stage 2 (RO). In group discussions, students will consider key questions, such as who is the founder of the Catholic University? What is the founding spirit of Catholic University? Here, students are asked to reflect on their observations and are prepared for the next theoretical stage.

Stage 3 (AC). The thirty-minute lecture prevented the main thoughts of the founder of the Catholic University and confirmed the different understanding of Psychological Capital (self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency). This is the abstract conceptualization phase.

Stage 4 (AE). Students are guided to fill out questionnaires, include psychological capital scale, religious belief scale, and personal basic data table. And through group practice, complete a charity task.

Table 2. Strongly Agree & Agree Percentage of Psychological Capital Scale

No	Psychological Capital	Question Item	Strongly Agree & Agree Percentage
1	Self- efficacy	I believe that I have a way to complete the task	72.9%
		I believe that I have the ability to become a student with a balanced five education	53.4%
2	Hope	Facing the task, I will imagine ways to achieve the goal	81.2%
		In the face of emergencies, I will have many solutions	61.8%
3	Optimism	I am always looking forward to the development of campus life	59.0%
		I look forward to my performance getting better and better in the future	79.5%
4	Resilience	I can overcome difficulties and resolve things that are not conducive to me	54.8%
		In the face of setbacks, I can quickly regain my spirit	59.0%

Source : Statistical Results

Conclusions

This study was given a total of 300 questionnaires randomly sampled by 1,200 students from 25 classes of Catholic University in Taiwan, Republic of China. The 288 valid questionnaires

were 40.6% Male and 59.3% Female. There are 48.6% students have religious beliefs (Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam). There are 37.8% students participated in a service club and 68.0% students worked as a volunteer.

There are 53.4% students believe that I have the ability to become a student with a balanced five educations, show that Strongly Agree & Agree Percentage of "Self- efficacy" is relatively low. But when through group practice, complete a charity task. There are 81.2% students facing the task, I will imagine ways to achieve the goal, show that Strongly Agree & Agree Percentage of "Hope" is relatively high.

Therefore, this research is to improve the Psychological Capital of Catholic University students by Using Experiential Learning Model. At the same time also encourage students to pursue an education that combines excellent humanities, cultural development and professional services.

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