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Orginal Article

The Relationship between Psychological Capital and Knowledge Sharing and Innovative Work Behavior with the Mediation of Job Engagement in South East Khuzestan Water Company

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship between psychological capital, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behavior, with job engagement as a mediating factor, among employees of the South East Khuzestan Water Company. Positive attitudes toward work not only foster personal growth but also enhance organizational outcomes through innovation and collaboration. Understanding the psychological mechanisms that drive such behaviors is thus of great importance for organizations seeking sustainable development. The research population consisted of 200 employees of the South East Khuzestan Water Company in 2022, selected through random sampling. Standardized questionnaires were employed to gather data: the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans et al., 2007), Knowledge Sharing Questionnaire (Huy et al., 2010), Innovative Work Behavior Questionnaire (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010), and Job Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2001). Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with SPSS-24 and AMOS-24 software.The results revealed that the proposed model demonstrated an acceptable fit with the empirical data. Findings confirmed direct and significant relationships between psychological capital and knowledge sharing, innovative work behavior, and job engagement. Moreover, knowledge sharing was positively associated with job engagement, while innovative work behavior was significantly linked to job enthusiasm. Indirect path analysis indicated that job engagement

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mediated the relationship between psychological capital and both knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior, highlighting the central role of job engagement in translating psychological resources into productive workplace behaviors. The discussion emphasizes that enhancing employees' psychological capital—through building confidence, optimism, hope, and resilience—strengthens their passion for work. Such passion fosters greater involvement in tasks, enabling employees to demonstrate higher levels of creativity and innovation. Employees with strong psychological capital are more capable of overcoming workplace challenges and perceiving conditions positively, which in turn increases their willingness to share knowledge. When job engagement complements psychological capital, employees experience higher satisfaction, contributing to a culture of collaboration and innovative performance within organizations. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of investing in employees' psychological resources and engagement to promote both individual well-being and organizational effectiveness.

Keyword: Psychological capital, knowledge sharing, innovative work behavior, Job Engagement

Extended Abstract

Introduction

If employees have a positive attitude towards their work, enjoy it, and view it as a means for personal growth and social development, they will likely be more engaged in work-related activities. In organizations, innovative work behaviors and knowledge sharing are crucial, so it is essential to examine the variables that can facilitate their occurrence. The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between psychological capital and knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior, with the mediation of job engagement in South East Khuzestan Water Company.

Method

This study aimed to explore the relationships between psychological capital, knowledge sharing, innovative work behavior, and job engagement among employees of the Southeast Water Company in Ahvaz. The research was applied in purpose and descriptive–correlational in method, using path analysis. The statistical population included all 513 employees in 2022, from which 230 were selected through simple random sampling. After data collection, 200 valid questionnaires were analyzed. Four well-established

instruments were employed. Psychological capital was measured with the 24-item questionnaire of Luthans et al. (2007), assessing self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. Knowledge sharing was examined with the 12-item scale of Huy et al. (2010), covering best practice sharing, error sharing, and idea promotion. Innovative work behavior was assessed using the 10-item scale of De Jong and Den Hartog (2010), including exploration, generation, championing, and implementation of ideas. Job engagement was measured with Schaufeli et al.'s (2001) 17-item scale, which evaluates vigor, dedication, and absorption. Reliability results confirmed acceptable internal consistency for all instruments (α ranging from 0.86 to 0.93). Confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS-23 also indicated good construct validity, with fit indices within acceptable ranges. The study provides a sound empirical basis for understanding how psychological resources and knowledge practices enhance innovation and engagement in organizational settings.

Results

The demographic analysis of the 200 participants showed that 152 were male and 48 were female. In terms of education, 21% held associate degrees or lower, 51.9% had bachelor's degrees, and 25% held master's or higher degrees. The mean age of participants was 38.55 years, with an average job tenure of 13.64 years (SD = 1.23). Correlation analyses indicated that all relationships among the study variables were significant at the 0.01 level, providing useful insights into their bivariate associations. Tests of normality showed skewness and kurtosis values within acceptable ranges (absolute skewness < 3; absolute kurtosis < 10), confirming that the data did not violate normality assumptions. Multicollinearity diagnostics revealed tolerance values above 0.10 and variance inflation factors (VIF) below 10 for all predictors, indicating no multicollinearity problems. The model fit indices demonstrated excellent goodness of fit, confirming that the proposed conceptual model adequately represented the observed data. Path analysis results revealed significant direct effects of psychological capital on job engagement ($\beta = 0.78$, $p = 0.001$), knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.52$, $p = 0.001$), and innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.24$, $p = 0.04$). Job engagement also had significant effects on knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.39$, $p = 0.002$) and innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.23$, $p = 0.005$). Moreover, bootstrap analysis confirmed the mediating role of job engagement, showing significant indirect effects of psychological capital on knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.19$, $p = 0.002$) and innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.29$, $p = 0.03$). These results provide strong support for the hypothesized model and highlight the critical role of job engagement as a mediator linking psychological capital to key organizational outcomes.

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between psychological capital, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behavior with the mediating role of job engagement among employees of the Southeast Water Company in Khuzestan. Using a descriptive–correlational design and path analysis, data were collected from 200 employees through validated questionnaires. The results showed that psychological capital had a significant positive effect on both knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior, consistent with prior studies highlighting the role of psychological resources as intangible assets that foster collaboration, creativity, and resilience in organizations. Psychological capital, defined by self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, was also found to positively predict job engagement. Engaged employees demonstrated higher energy, dedication, and absorption in their work, which in turn significantly enhanced both knowledge sharing and innovative behavior. The findings further confirmed the mediating role of job engagement, showing that employees with higher psychological capital are more engaged, and this engagement facilitates the transfer of knowledge and the display of innovative work practices. These results underscore the importance of fostering psychological capital in employees as a low-cost yet highly impactful resource for promoting organizational knowledge management and innovation. By enhancing confidence, optimism, and adaptability, organizations can improve employees' willingness to share expertise, generate and implement novel ideas, and sustain high levels of motivation even when facing challenges. The study highlights practical implications for managers, including designing interventions to strengthen psychological capital and job engagement, thereby creating an organizational climate supportive of continuous learning, innovation, and improved performance outcomes.

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