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Research on the Relationship between Positive Emotions, Psychological Capital and Job Burnout in Enterprises' Employees: Based on the Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions

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Abstract

At present, the research on the positive emotions of employees in management scholars is a little inadequate. This study uses a questionnaire survey to measure 385 employees from Chinese Enterprises, focusing on the relationship between positive emotions and job burnout, and emphatically examines the mediating effect of psychological capital. The results show that positive emotions of employees are positively correlated with psychological capital and negatively correlated with job burnout. Psychological capital plays a complete mediator between positive emotions and job burnout. This study has some guiding significance for the construction of healthy society and organization.

Key words: Positive emotions; Psychological capital; Job burnout; Mediating effect

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INTRODUCTION

In order to be in an impregnable position in the fierce competition, enterprises must pay attention to their own sustainable competitive advantage in the current transition period. Market competition has become a routine of enterprise, and employees will need to bear the conduction of top-down work pressure. Job burnout has become common problem in enterprises' employees with the intensification of market competition. As the market competition intensifies and the pace of work accelerates, the phenomenon becomes more and more serious, and its adverse consequences become increasingly prominent. Psychological capital (PsyCap) is an important personal resource that increases people's capability for development (Luthans et al. 2008) and usefulness in the workplace (Avey et al. 2010; Luthans et al. 2007). PsyCap has been found to be beneficial to both organizations and employees in promoting desirable work outcomes, including job satisfaction, employees' health (Lyubomirsky et al.2005), and turnover intention (Harvey et al. 2007). PsyCap also alleviates undesirable outcomes such as employee's counter-productive behaviors (Avey et al. 2010).

Therefore, we think it is very important to build a PsyCap among employees. According to Broaden-and-Build theory of positive emotions, positive emotions can broaden the idea of personal action routines, and establish the individual's personal resources, including physical and intellectual resources, social and psychological resources (Frederickson, 2001). Therefore, positive emotions can enhance psychological resources. PsyCap and positive emotions are two important capacity/resources in organizational behavior. However, little is known about the interaction between them. Moreover, in the context of an organization, there is relatively little empirical evidence to support Broaden-and-Build theory of positive emotions. The main purpose of this study is adapted the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson 1998,2009; Fredrickson et al. 2008) as the theoretical framework to examine whether positive emotions will enhance psychological capital and reducing Job burnout.

1. BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

1.1 Psychological Capital

In 2002, Seligman proposed the concept of Psychological Capital. He believes that the psychological factors that

lead to individual positive behavior can be included in the category of capital (Seligman, 2002).To positive psychology and positive organizational behavior(POB) Luthans and Youssef, based on the analysis of the difference between economic capital, social capital and human capital and characteristics, puts forward the concept of PsyCap in organization and management., it is beyond the human capital and social capital, and can have on the cultivation and development of the individual will gain a competitive advantage (Luthans, et al., 2004).

PsyCap is positive state-like psychological capacities, its focus is on people's strength and how they grow and thrive. It has been defined as an individual's characteristics 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 towards 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 et al. 2007)".

Organizational psychology has found that positive emotions are closely related to psychological capital. Little et al. (2007) found that positive emotions and PsyCap(motivation and path), optimism and resilience have significant correlation. Avery et al. also found that positive emotions and psychological capital related significantly, and the study also found that positive emotions and psychological capital are the employee attitude and behavior have a significant role;The interaction between psychological capital and alertness can predict the positive emotions of employees. Conceptually, it has been summarized and argued that PsyCap is a higher-order construct consisting of the shared variance of hope, efficacy, optimism, and resiliency (Avey et al. 2010; Luthans et al. 2007; Siu 2013)

1.2 Positive Emotions and PsyCap

Employees with high psychological capital can influence their attitude and behavior at work through their positive emotions (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008). Many researchers give positive emotions has given specific description or definition, such as Russell has proposed "positive mood is when things are going well, do you want to smile when that kind of good feelings" (Russell & Barrett, 1999).Fredrickson argues that "positive emotions are a unique instant response to something meaningful to individuals, a temporary pleasure" (Fredrickson, 2001).Fredrickson et al. conducted a large number of experimental studies on the role of positive emotions and their improvement of health. In 1998, they proposed the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions.

The theory is that positive emotions not only can expand individual instantaneous thinking - action system, and can build enduring personal resources, from physical resources and intellectual resources to the social and psychological resources (Fredrickson, 2001).For example, interest can encourage people to explore, absorb new information and experience, and thus expand themselves. More importantly, the persistent personal resources that are often experienced in positive emotions can be transferred to other situations and emotional states in the future, helping to promote the function of individual survival. The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions predicts that positive emotional experience can accumulate. Induced by a positive emotional psychological broaden can add people to the subsequent acceptance of happy or significant events, people involved in the subsequent events to find opportunities to positive, and the chance to experience more positive emotions.

To sum up ,"positive emotions momentarily broaden people's attention and thinking, enabling individuals to draw flexibly on higher level connections and wider-than-usual ranges of percepts and ideas. In turn, these broadened and flexible outlooks help people to discover and build survival-promoting personal resources" (Fredrickson and Kurtz, 2011). Positive emotions can improve individual mental and physical health. Talikas and Fitzpatrick believe that positive emotions play a role in promoting mental health. Some research suggests that all positive emotions share an emotion, or Duchenne smile, which is turned up in the corners of the mouth and is accompanied by a contraction of the muscles of the eye.

Keltner and Bonanno's (1997) found the dead companion is described, with Duchenne smile, and no Duchenne smile, compared to the former report more positive emotions, such as love;Less negative emotions and stress, especially less anger. Positive emotions promote physical health, mainly because positive emotions can improve people's immune system function. Current research evidence mainly focuses on laughter and humorous research. The study found that people who laugh can increase the positive emotion, and improve the immune system function, and, more importantly, the improvement of the immune system function is through the subjective experience positive emotions to adjust (Bachorowski & Owren, 2001;Mahony, Burroughs, & Lippman, 2002).One of the resources is psychological resource, such as be resilient to adversity. Fredrickson et al. (2003) reported the buffering effect of positive emotions in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack. They found that positive emotions were the active force driving the "bounce back" effect of the resilient personalities. Moreover, in an experimental study by Fredrickson et al. (2008), increases in participants' positive emotions following an intervention predicted changes in their level of ego resilience, which is an element of hope. Drawing on this theory, Ouweneel et al. (2011) have found that positive emotions among students had a significant effect on future personal resources (academic selfefficacy, study-related hope and optimism) after controlling the baseline personal resources and study

engagement. Findings from a diary study among restaurant employees have shown that daily positive emotions were positively related to personal resources (e.g., day level self-efficacy, and optimism) Thus, positive emotions can be conceptualized as an antecedent of the resource of PsyCap for achieving desirable work outcomes.

It is therefore hypothesized that:

H1 Positive emotions will have a negative relationship with PsyCap.

H2 Positive emotions will have a positive relationship with PsyCap.

H3 PsyCap will mediate the relationship between Positive emotions and Job burnout.

2. METHOD

2.1 Sample and Procedures

This study mainly adopts the questionnaire survey method, and the sample is from the large state-owned enterprises in Beijing. The data collection is completed with the support of its human resources department. Before the survey, the researchers identified the subjects with the human resources specialist. Participants were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. In total, 385 questionnaires were distributed and 304 were returned, making a response rate of 79%. The ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 54 years (see Table 1). Most participants were male (77.3.4 %, n = 235). The participants' tenure in the present organization ranged from 6 months to 35 years.

2.2 Measures

PSyCap.PsyCap was measured by the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) developed byLuthans et al. (2007). The four scales measuring the four components of PsyCap (resiliency, optimism, hope and self-efficacy) have been validated by confirmatory factor analysis across multiple samples (Luthans et al. 2007). The original scale consisted of 24 items. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which each item applied to them over the past 3 months and rate their agreement on a six-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 6 = totally agree). Higher scores for each dimension indicate higher levels of self-efficacy, hope, resiliency and optimism, respectively. The alpha coefficient for PsyCap was .85.

Positive emotions.Research by Watson et al. Development of positive emotions negative emotion scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), scale by positive emotions and negative emotions of two subscales, only in positive emotions scale, this study contains 10 mood describe the term project, asked participants to evaluate each within a certain time to experience emotional intensity, using Likert7 point scale (0 = never, 6= always). The alpha coefficient for Positive emotions was .87.

Job burnout.The study was developed by Maslach et al., and the "emotional exhaustion" subscale in the Chinese version of the MBI-GS (Maslach Burnout Inventory - General Survey), revised by li chaoping. There are five entries in the component table, using the Likert 7 point scale (0 = never and 6 = always). The alpha coefficient for job burnout was .76.

A back-translation method (Brislin 1980) was used to translate the scales into Chinese if the Chinese version is not available.

Table 1
Depicts the Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variable			Percentage
Gender	Male	235	77.3
	Female	17	5.6
	Missing data	52	17.1
Age	≤25	39	12.8
	26-30	95	31.3
	31-35	58	19.1
	36-40	29	9.5
	41-45	33	10.9
	46-50	26	8.6
	≥51	18	5.9
	Missing data	6	2
Seniority	1-2	19	6.3
	3-5	51	16.8
	6-10	90	29.6
	11-15	40	13.2
	16-20	22	7.2
	21-30	47	15.5
	≥31	27	8.9
	Missing data	8	2.6
Education	Junior high school or below	7	2.3
	Missing data	8	2.6
	High school/secondary school	94	30.9
	junior college	143	47
	undergraduate	38	12.5
	Master or above	9	2.9
	Missing data	13	4.3
Marital status	married	231	76
	single	46	15.1
	Divorced or widowed	1	0.3
	Missing data	26	8.6
Position	general staff	248	81.6
	Grassroots Leadership	26	8.6
	operational management	12	3.9
	department head	1	0.3
	Missing data	17	5.6

3. RESULTS

Data statistics first used confirmatory factor analysis to investigate the discriminant validity of similar variables and then used reliability analysis to verify the internal consistency coefficient of the measuring tool.

The confirmatory factor analysis was completed by Amos 18.0, and the reliability analysis was mainly completed by SPSS 18.0.

3.1 Distinguish Between Positive Emotion and Psychological Capital

To review the differences between positive emotions and psychological capital, this research mainly adopts the following method, namely confirmatory factor analysis was carried out on the two concepts at the same time, compare the two factor model (that is, the two concepts belong to two related factors respectively) and a factor model (that is, the two construct also belong to the same factors) and data fitting, according to the statistical indicators of advantage to judge the relationship between the two construct.

When confirmatory factor analysis, considering the limitation of Amos operation and the survey sample size (although accord with the requirement of structural equation model analysis, the sample is relatively less, on the advice of the (2002) such as Little scholars program, let's pack (Parceling) for data processing.

The average score of the four dimensions of psychological capital is taken as the observation variable.For the positive mood this single dimension latent variables, first carries on the exploratory factor analysis, and then according to each item in the factor load of exploratory factor analysis, combined load of the maximum and minimum entry, in turn one by one, two, until finally the respectively were generated five and three variables.

Confirmatory factor analysis results of positive emotion and psychological capital, as shown in Table 2:

Table 2
Model Fit Summary of Measurement Model of the Proposed Model (N = 304)

Model	χ2	*df*	Δχ2	GFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Virtual model	1246.2	36							
Two-factor model	39.7	26		0.97	0.97	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.05
One-factor model	290.7	27	251.0***	0.81	0.77	0.78	0.68	0.78	0.19

Note: $^{*}p<.05$; $^{**}p<.01$; $^{***}p<.001$

χ2Chi square, df degree of freedom, CFI comparative fit index, NNFI non-normed fit index, SRMR standardized root mean square residual, RMSEA root mean square error of approximation, AIC Akaike's Information Criterion

The two factors model of positive emotions and PsyCap have reached the recommended standard and better than the competitive model of one factor.

The results show that positive emotion and psychological capital are two independent variables.

3.2 Reliability Analysis

The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's value) of each variable is between 0.76 and 0.87, which is above the recommended value of 0.7, indicating that the reliability of these scales is acceptable (see table 3 for details).

Table 3
Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Cronbach's Alphas Among Variables (N = 304)

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender	.93	0.251	1								
Age	34.32	9.009	-.103	1							
Seniority	13.27	9.970	-.092	.948***	1						
Position	1.18	.506	.035	0.144*	.154**	1					
Education	2.82	.814	-.056	-.111	-.143*	.298**	1				
Marriage	1.17	.388	-0.035	-.352**	-0.33**	-.110	.215**	1			
PE	3.27	1.049	0.044	-.226**	-0.198**	.058	.125*	.100	（.87）		
PsyCap	4.35	0.552	0.016	0.045	0.034	.312**	.115*	.-.037	.408**	（.85）	
Job burnout	2.87	0.745	0.021	0.021	0.031	-.147*	-.075	-.057	-.194**	-.424**	（.76）

$^{*}p<.05$; $^{**}p<.01$; $^{***}p<.001$,Cronbach's alphas are in diagonals, PE=positive emotions.

To further examine the mediating role of psychological capital between positive emotions and job burnout, we have four steps to examine in accordance with the recommendations of Baron and Kenny (1986).

The first step was to use regression analysis to investigate whether the positive emotions significantly predicted job burnout (coefficient c);In the second step, the regression analysis was used to investigate whether the positive emotion significantly predicted psychological capital (coefficient a);In the third step, after the introduction of psychological capital (coefficient b), the influence of positive emotion on job burnout (coefficient c) was significant. In the fourth step, if the coefficient a and the coefficient b are not significant, the significance of the mediation effect is predicted with Sobel test.In each regression analysis above, the regression equation

was first introduced into the control variables, including education degree, position, age and seniority.

The results of regression analysis are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
PsyCap Mediates the Relationship Between Positive Emotions and Job Burnout (n=304)

Variable		PsyCap		Job burnout		
M1		M2	M3	M4	M5	
Control Variable	Education	.012	-.015	-.004	.009	.003
	Position	.308***	.283***	.152*	-.139*	-.021
	Age	-.048	.079	.081	.021	.054
	Seniority	.035	-.002	-.039	-.021	-.022
Independent Variable	Positive emotions		.388***		-.183**	-.021
Mediating Variable	PsyCap					-.418***
	F	7.34***	16.87***	1.67	3.16**	10.47***
	R2	.097	.237	.024	.055	.188
	Δ R2	.097***	.140***	.024	.031**	.000

Note：$^{*}p<.05$; $^{**}p<.01$; $^{***}p<.001$

It can be seen that after joining the intervening variable, positive emotions no longer significantly predict job burnout (β= -0.021), shows the mediation effect of psychological capital significantly. The results show that psychological capital has full mediating effect on positive emotion and job burnout, and hypothesis 3 is verified.

4. DISCUSSION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

4.1 Discussion

Positive emotion is a new trend of emotion research advocated in positive psychology. Since Fredrickson proposed the expansion and construction theory of positive emotion, it has rapidly become a new hot spot in academic research and practice. Although academia research in the field have made some progress, but about positive emotions in organizations is a new concept of meaningful, how does it affect employee's work, what is its action mechanism and other issues still exist a lot of controversy.

In this study, we try to discuss the findings of the findings.

Positive emotion and psychological capital are moderately correlated but independent variables. This study results show that the positive emotion and psychological capital both points belong to different nature of the variables, according to the characteristics of the division of classes and state variables, positive emotions more so the state variables of a class, and psychological capital is both the nature of the characteristics state class variables and class variables. From the content point of view, positive emotions are interested in, high spirit energy, having enough, and passion, pride, high alertness, encouraged, determined, focused, energetic ten items. Psychological capital includes four dimensions: optimism, self-efficacy, hope and resilience.

Although the content of the two concepts is intersected, the classification is obviously different, while the positive emotion emphasizes the immediacy of the individual positive level, while the psychological capital emphasizes the stability of the individual positive level. More importantly, in this study, the employees' positive emotions and there is no limit in the workplace conditions, that is to say, measuring for the employee positive moods from work can also be in daily life, and psychological capital is fully in view of the employees work attitude and behavior ability or reaction. Therefore, the connotation and extension of positive emotion and psychological capital are obviously different.

Control the influence of demographic variables on employee status, attitude and behavior. This study found that as the age of employees (seniority) was significantly negatively correlated with positive emotions. Some scholars have found that younger workers have more positive emotional experiences than middle-aged employees.

Other studies have shown that adolescents are more likely to have higher expectations and stronger responses to positive emotional stimuli and positive outcomes (Ernst et al.,2005), which is consistent with the results of this study. In addition, there is a significant positive correlation between employee position and psychological capital, which is negatively correlated with job burnout. In recent years, studies have found that entrepreneur's stress level is relatively low with employees, in part because of the high level of psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience).Psychological capital and negatively correlated with the pressure, and pressure with entrepreneurs negatively correlated with subjective well-being, which seems to account for the enterprise managers have high psychological capital, to deal with work stress and burnout (Baron, 2016).This study found that the degree of education and positive emotions were significantly positive correlation, and psychological capital has significant positive correlation, seems to show that a higher degree of education, to predict the staff of the higher level of positive emotion and psychological capital, it needs to be validated in future studies. In conclusion, in order to better verify the hypothesis of this study, demographic variables need to be controlled.

Positive emotions were negatively correlated with job burnout. PsyCap plays an intermediary role between positive emotion and job burnout. The mechanism of active emotion is discussed in this study. The study found that positive emotions were negatively correlated with job burnout. Fredrickson (2000) also found in the study of cardiovascular patients that positive emotional experience can promote the effective emotional control of individuals and accelerate the recovery of cardiovascular patients from negative emotional experience. The results of this study seem to indicate that in the workplace, the positive emotions have negative influence on employees' job burnout. In addition, PsyCap plays an intermediary role between positive emotions and job burnout. Studies have shown that positive emotions can promote their mental health level by building individual resources such as resilience, coping style, social support, interpersonal trust, etc. (Ferrin, Dirks, & Shah, 2006;Schnider, Elhai, & Gray, 2007;Meneghel, Salanova, & Martinez, 2016)The results support our workplace conditions put forward by the extension and construction model of positive emotions, employees' positive emotions can through the mediating role of PsyCapl influences its job burnout.

4.2 Enlightenment

This study proposes and verifies the expansion and construction model of positive emotion in the workplace. The description of personal resources in this theoretical model includes not only psychological resources but also other resources such as physical resources. For the division of resources, individual can also include the internal resources and external resources, so, in addition to the future for psychological capital of the introduction of other personal resources, greatly enriched the theory under the working conditions of application. The survey and research objects of this study are relatively fixed in region, profession and industry. Therefore, the external validity of the research results need to be realized by further expanding the sampling scope.

Although the multivariate statistical method makes up for the deficiency of the sample to some extent, the generalization of the conclusion needs to be realized by further investigation. Along with the progress of the theory of positive emotions, the researchers need to develop more effective positive emotions intervention plan, so that on the one hand, able to more effectively support the innovation of the theory of positive emotions, on the other hand, no matter for employee mental health, the health organization construction, or the cultivation of positive social mentality will have better practical guiding significance.

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