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Impact of Authentic Leadership on Employees Creativity and Innovation: Mediating Role of Psychological Capital

Abstract

Nowadays the banking sector wants innovation and creativity from its employees so that they can remain competitive by introducing new products and services for its customers. Considering this emerging challenge and following the literary gap, we aim at investing the mediating role of psychological capital between authentic leadership, innovation, and creativity. The data for this study was collected from 276 employees through google forms and results were generated using SPSS. The results revealed a positive impact of authentic leadership on creativity and innovation. Further, psychological capital was found to perform the role of mediator. Implications and limitations of the study are also discussed.

Keywords: Leadership, Banking sector, Creativity, Innovation, Pakistan.

Introduction

In today's world, businesses are facing cut-throat competition due to advance technology and globalization. Only organizations with utmost creativity and innovation in the form of goods, services, and processes can excel in this competitive environment. According to Amabile (1983), creativity is the creation of new and productive ideas. Creativity is considered to be the main element of innovation. Many factors have been reported to influence employees' creativity and innovation e.g. organizational culture, job satisfaction, individual creativity, organizational innovativeness, goal setting, physical work environment and encouragement from the organization, learning orientation and leadership styles. There are many types of research that show that employs' personal traits and aptitudes made them more creative. For example, different variables such as work-

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relevant skills (e.g. job expertise and knowledge), creativity skills (e.g. cognitive abilities, strategies and personality traits), and motivation for the task (e.g. intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) are the forecasters for creativity (Amabile, 1983). In a similar way, Ford (1996) includes the cognition, intrinsic motivation, expertise and ability as the explaining factors for creativity and innovation. Amongst all these factors, leadership styles are considered to be a key role in affecting the employees' behaviors and attitudes. Leaders' leadership styles are noted to promote, support, repress and hinder the creativity of the employees during work.

Different leadership styles are studied throughout literature that influences creativity and innovation. For example, Self-leadership is analyzed to have an impact on employees' creativity and workplace innovative orientation (Ghosh, 2015). Authoritarian leadership is studied in another research to have an impact on creativity and innovation through leader-member exchange and team identification. Another study noted that transactional, transformational and ambidextrous leadership styles have an impact on creativity and innovation through the mediating roles of promotion and empowerment. In another research transformational leadership was studied to have an impact on creativity and innovation through learning orientation. Servant leadership was also studied to have an impact on creativity through the trust factor on management (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2017). Although the subject of authentic leadership is new and there seems to be a gap in literature while studying its impact on creativity and innovation albeit many theories suggest that authentic leadership can increase creativity (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004).

However, due to an increase in financial and unethical scandals of upper management and leadership, there is the dire need for authentic leadership style to be greatly studied and implemented that focuses on the ethics of the leaders, concern for followers and others and congruence between moral values and decisions (Khan, 2010). The idea that authentic leadership plays a great role in the organization is supported by many types of research as it assists the employees to fully engage in work, building a healthful social climate and positive relationships between leaders and workers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). It is studied that leaders with a higher level of authenticity will make every effort to create honest relationships with their followers and such coordination would create a number of positive outcomes (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005). Authentic leadership also increases the psychological capital of employees by increasing their confidence in themselves. Rego and Wilson (2012) mention that Psychological Capital (PsyCap from now) may work as a mediating variable between the relationship of Authentic Leadership (AL) and creativity.

This study is the answer to the calls of going deep in detail how AL affects creativity and innovation in an employee and how PsyCap mediates between authentic leadership and creativity and innovation (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Therefore, this paper is an attempt to examine the mediating role of PsyCap between AL and Creativity. Authentic leadership possibly can increase the relationship between leader and member, therefore it might increase the belief of employees on leadership and making them feel safer to represent innovative ideas

without any fear (Avolio et al., 2004). Employees can also feel psychologically safer thus proposing innovative ideas for problems.

Literature Review

Authentic leadership

Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) explained that AL is the arrangement of behaviors of leaders that stimulates positive psychological behaviors such as high level of self-awareness and ethical decision making. There are many definitions presented in the literature of AL. The most quoted definition is presented by Walumbwa et al. (2008). He has defined AL in four constructs or dimensions: (1) 'self-awareness' is how the leader understands the world and is highly aware of his or her personal strengths and weaknesses, limitations, and how others perceive him or her and how (s) he influence others and also take feedback (Kernis, 2003); (2) 'Balanced processing' refers to the degree to which leader objectively examines all the relevant information before making a decision; (3) 'Internalized moral perspective' refers to the degree to which a leader takes the decision according to the internal moral values and standards and also take actions according to these moral values by not taking into account any of the individual, group or societal pressure; (4) transparency of the relations refers to the extent to which a manager or forerunner shows his true, realistic self (not any kind of fake self) to his followers, he shares information, thoughts and feelings without any reluctance that creates the environment of openness for followers to give innovative and creative ideas and suggestions without any fear. Relational transparency is considered to be one of the major characteristics possessed by the authentic leader especially in the modern days of today (Luthans, Zhu, & Avolio, 2006).

According to Cassar and Buttigieg (2013), the authentic leader focuses more on his/her intrinsic moral values and deemed those moral values more important than the exhibit actions. Authentic leadership focuses on the impact of these intrinsic values on follower's relationship. Thus, authentic leadership goes beyond the concept of an authentic self to create an authentic relationship with the followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). It also consists of an introspective investigation of how much the leader's behavior is the true reflection of his/her intrinsic moral values and the degree to which his/her portrayal of self is consistent with his/her moral intrinsic values (Cassar & Buttigieg, 2013). Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007) emphasized in their research paper that authentic leader shows a greater level of self-awareness and self-regulation for himself/herself and for their relationship with their followers as well, this promotes a greater level of self-development. Authentic leadership is characterized by a sincere and thorough understanding of moral and ethical intrinsic values, dependence, self-assurance, with a higher focus on the evolving the strengths of their followers, broadening their cognitive thinking abilities and to generate positive organizational behaviors (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). This study hypothesized that above mention four dimensions of AL would explain the variation in creativity and innovation in the organization.

Psychological Capital

Positive organizational behaviors are getting more and more attention in recent literature by focusing more on the positive psychology of human beings. Positive psychology can be defined as a science that focuses on positive personal experiences, personal traits and positive organizations that increases the quality of life and prevent worst things to happen when life is pointless. Positive Organizational Behaviors focus more on an individual's strength rather than his/her weakness.

PsyCap is one of the positive organizational behaviors. Psychological capital is defined as the "positive state of mind" that is demonstrated in the course of personal growth. Psychological capital lexically called as PsyCap has four dimensions; (1) the ability to take challenging and risky task and put in the right kind of effort to succeed (Self-efficacy or confidence) (2) the ability of making the present and future positive assessment of success (Optimism) (3) Having a strong will to achieve targeted goals and if obstacles cam, alternative paths must be discovered (hope) (4) the ability to bounce back in the face of adversity and get more successful (resiliency) (Longman, 2009). In a nutshell, PsyCap is the mixture of inspirations and actions trends based on four psychological factors; self-efficacy or self-confidence, optimism, hope, and resiliency.

PsyCap goes beyond the concepts of human capital that are concerned with "what you know", and social capital that is concerned with "who you know" (Hitt & Duane, 2002). PsyCap is majorly focused on "who you are" and especially "who you are becoming" (Luthans et al., 2006). PsyCap covers individual knowledge, expertise, abilities, relations, contacts, and personal experiences because that is also "who you are". Peterson and Seligman (2004) label the strength and qualities as "trait-like" (comparatively constant and unable to alter), PsyCap as "state-like" (adaptable and developable). Many types of research have shown that PsyCap has a positive impact on staff behaviors at the workplace. The complication and ambiguity of the innovation process, all the employees need to have a strong sense of self-confidence and resilience. All these factors of PsyCap work together make it a more useful phenomenon. For example, a hopeful person would decide his/her target accordingly and would make new pathways in the face of adversity and thus showing more reliance. A confident person would use his/her ability for resilience, hope, and optimism and would achieve success. PsyCap work as a synergistic psychological force to solve problems by creating the internal perception of "being in control. Next, the paper will explain the impact of PsyCap on the variable of creativity.

Psychological Capital as the predecessor of creativity

Self-confidence is defined as the man's ability to influence a certain course of action (Bandura, 1997). It is sometimes also referred to as self-efficacy or self-assurance. Self-efficacy is considered to be the main factor that provides motivation for the certain action, determination, the effort that is to be put into action in the face of adversity, selection of emotions and resilience to failure (Bandura, 1997). Self-assurance in one's ability helps a person to take steps for innovation and creativity. It is important here to mention that for innovative

behavior it is compulsory that individual must have a perception of self-efficacy in terms of creativity. It describes an individual trust in its aptitude to yield creative ideas (Tierney & Farmer, 2002). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is “generative ability” that is essential for creativity. Many studies have also shown a positive impact of self-efficacy on creativity.

Hope can be defined as the expecting and anticipating that certain actions taken now would have positive outcomes in the near future. Hope is a kind of belief that goals would be achieved. A model of hope defines it as a positive inspirational state of a human mind that highly relies on past successful experiences of an individual, resulting from goal-directed actions (Snyder et al., 1991). According to Snyder et al. (1991), employees that are more hopeful tend to take more risks and find alternative ways when a certain path is clogged.

Hope is one of the factors related to having an impact in the future. This inspirational area for future prospect increases the room for hope and positivity. Hope makes it possible for an individual to rely on its abilities in the face of challenges and adversity. Future-focused people accept the delayed reward; they recognize that long-term benefits are better than short term rewards (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2008). Hope is what creates “emotional safety” for a person and help the individual to strive for his/her aim.

Hopeful people enjoy the process of attaining the goal; they are basically intrinsically driven and find a creative method to apply their energy (Cummings & Oldham, 1997). When these hopeful people don’t achieve their goals, they take the feedback and learn from their mistakes to improve their strategy and tactics, and thus later become able to find alternative strategies and ways (Rego & Wilson, 2012).

Optimist acclaims the positive happenings in their lives that increase their level of self-esteem which ultimately increases the chances of creativity (Lyubomirsky, Tkach, & DiMatteo, 2006). They create a block between themselves and negative events of their lives thus, decreases the chances of unhappiness, misery, and depression in their lives. By keeping in view all the characteristics of optimist people, they are less probable to surrender and are extremely likely to show progressive perspective in dire situations. Such kinds of people adopt an optimistic approach more and they are likely to continue in difficult situations and search for alternative ways to solve a problem (Fredrickson, 2001). Resilient people have the ability to deal, direct, to recover and interact to get more knowledge, good companionships and to find the meaning of life. Many types of research have acclaimed that resilience increases creativity and innovation (Anthony & Cohler, 1987).

Authentic Leadership as Predecessor of PsyCap

There are multiple explanations that supported an argument which authentic leadership impacts on followers’ PsyCap. One study implies that authentic leaders use the positive PsyCap of employees’ means incorporating self-esteem, hope, optimism, and resilience to encourage PsyCap among others (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Employees learn confidence from their authentic leader by observing their mental strength. The authentic leader gives productive and useful feedback to employees in a respectful way that increases their level of self-esteem and confidence (Luthans et al., 2007). Authentic leaders that ask their followers about views that are able to challenge the norms, increase the level self-assurance.

Avolio et al. (2004) say in his research on PsyCap that authentic leaders are themselves have high hopes and optimism in every situation that helps the employees to show the same behavior which increases their will-power and self-efficacy. Authentic managers give the feeling of mutual trust, safety plus security to employees that enable them to focus on goals and find multiple paths to solve the problems and enjoy different opportunities. This positive emotion of hope combines with self-confidence improve under authentic leadership also help the employees to withstand and show great willpower to reach ultimate goals.

Many types of research have proposed that authentic leadership nurtures optimism of their employees (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). For instance, Schermerhorn, Hunt, Osborn, and Osborn (2004) said that specific tasks of genuine leadership are to foster hopefulness among followers. Authentic leaders increase the optimism of the employees by increasing their relationship and a sense of identity with them and boost their positive emotions. De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) said that ethical leadership narrates fundamentally that workers' positive perspective for future happenings. In their view, by being reasonable, thinking about workers' sentiments, advancing straightforward and open communication, compensating moral behavior, and contributing employees with voice, such leaders make workers more positive and optimistic about their work environment and workplace. These workers are more prone to stay and contribute to the success of the company. In a nutshell, authentic leaders are inclined to show comparatively dynamic and constructive styles than any other leadership style regarding problem-solving; they are more probable to influence followers to show the same kind of behavior.

One of the many tasks of authentic leadership is to increase resiliency among employees. Authentic leaders do this by using different ways a) advancing great relational connections, therefore creating conditions so workers get social help in difficult occasions, this help being essential for supporting pliability; (b) expanding subordinates' self-assurance and mental wellbeing, that enables them to be extra ready in confronting issues plus afflictions with resilience; (c) advancing followers' certain optimistic feelings, these feelings creating resilience.

Thus from the above arguments, we develop the following hypotheses:

H₁: AL has an impact on PsyCap.

H₂: PsyCap has an impact on Creativity.

H₃: PsyCap has an impact on Innovation.

H₄: AL influences Creativity.

H₅: AL has an impact on Innovation.

H₆: PsyCap mediates the relationship between AL and Creativity.

H₇: PsyCap mediates the relationship between AL and Innovation.

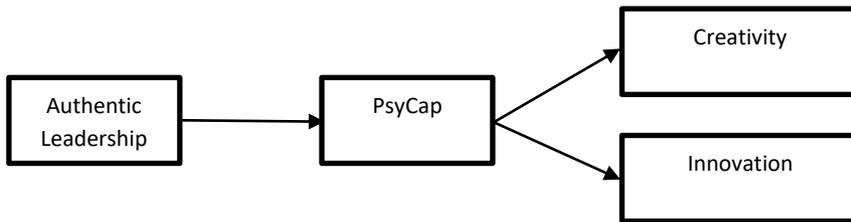


Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework

Method

Participants, procedures, and measures

Banking sector of Lahore, Pakistan was focused on this research. The Pakistani banking industry is facing fierce competition in today's scenario as they are focused on innovative and creative products to attract and retain customers. A questionnaire-based survey was used to measure authentic leadership, psychological capital, innovation, and creativity. All the variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. For data collection, Google forms were used. Google forms were used due to time constraints. Links of the form were directly mailed to the bankers through personal connections.

Questionnaires were in English as banking employees are well literate and can understand English. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. In the first section, questions about age, gender and job experience were asked. In the second section, all the dimensions of the variable were asked. The google form was developed in such a way that no one could submit the questionnaire with missing values. The email sent to 350 employees and 276 participants respond back. From these respondents, 48% were male and 52% were female. In addition to that 59% were from the age group between 21-30 years, 18% were from the age group between 31 to 40 years and 21% were above the age of 45 years. Further, 39.1% of the respondents were having 1 year of experience while 17.3% were having more than 5 years' experience. Most of the responses were received from Meezan Bank Ltd., MCB, Dubai Islamic and JS Bank.

Measures

Authentic Leadership was measured using the scale provided by Walumbwa et al. (2008). The reliability of this scale was found to be .877. Creativity was measured using the presented by scale of Zhou and George (2001). The reliability of this scale was found to be .871. Innovation is measured by Den Hertog, Van der Aa, and De Jong (2010) scale. The reliability of this scale was found to be in .924. Psychological Capital was measured using the scale presented by Donald *et al.* (2014). The reliability was found to be .871.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted to make the data consistent for further analysis. Data were analyzed for missing values, outliers, normality and multicollinearity. There were no missing values in the data. The reason for this is that respondents participate through the Google forms in which an option was unable not to submit any form that is incomplete. Outliers were identified by using histogram and p-plots and 40 questionnaires were found to be outliers and were deleted for further analysis. The normality was studied using the test of kurtosis (± 3) and skewness (± 1) and all the values of the data were found to be in this required limit (Byrne, 2010). According to the directions of Tabachnick, Fidell, and Ullman (2007) Multicollinearity was analyzed. No correlation of any variables was found to be greater than 0.85. Table 1 shows the correlations among variable.

Table 1: Correlation and Descriptive Analysis

Variables	Mean	SD	α	1	2	3
1-Authentic Leadership	3.83	0.75	0.88	1		
2-PsyCap	4.09	0.51	0.87	0.65**	1	
3-Creativity	4.06	0.51	0.87	0.56**	0.58**	1
4-Innovation	3.99	0.58	0.92	0.58**	0.48**	0.67**

In table 1, mean, Cronbach’s alpha and the standard deviation are added with correlations. The mean of all variables ranges from 3.83 to 4.09. In a similar fashion, standard deviation ranges from 0.51 to 0.75. Further, all the values of Cronbach’s alpha reliability are more than 0.70 i.e. the standard. In addition to that, all the values of correlation are positive and less than 0.85.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 2 shows the relationships among dependent and independent variables of the study. The entire hypotheses were tested using a linear regression model. H₁ states the relationship between AL and PsyCap. Result states that the relationship is significant ($\beta=.44, P<0.01$). H₂ & H₃ states the relationship of PsyCap with creativity ($\beta=.42, P<0.01$) and innovation ($\beta=.32, P<0.01$) which were accepted. Further, AL was found to influence creativity ($\beta=.38, P<0.01$) and Innovation ($\beta=.45, P<0.01$) to accept H₄ & H₅.

Table 2: Regression Analysis

Hypotheses	Relations	R ²	β	Sig.
H ₁	AL-PsyCap	.42	.44**	.000
H ₂	PsyCap-Creativity	.68	.42**	.000
H ₃	PsyCap-Innovation	.51	.32**	.004
H ₄	AL-Creativity	.56	.38**	.000
H ₅	AL-Innovation	.33	.45**	.000

Mediation Analysis

In this study psychological capital is deemed to mediate between authentic leadership and creativity and innovation. Multiple regression models were run on the collected data to test these hypotheses. Table 3 & 4 shows the results of multiple regressions. The values in Table 3 show that after adding the PsyCap in the third model, the values of AL in the third model remained significant. This shows a partial mediating role of PsyCap between AL-innovation association and H₆ is supported.

Table 3: Mediating role of PsyCap between AL-Innovation

Variables	M ₁ (β)	M ₂ (β)	M ₃ (β)
Gender	-.261*	-1.96*	-1.18*
Age	-.019	-.008	-.042
Experience	.062*	.010	-.007
<u>Independent Variable</u>			
AL		.43**	.15**
<u>Mediating Variable</u>			
PsyCap			.66**
R ²	.096	.363	.547
ΔR^2	-	.267	.184

Table 4: Mediating role of PsyCap between AL-Creativity

Variable	M ₁ (b ₁)	M ₂ (b ₂)	M ₃ (b ₃)
Gender	-.267*	-.214*	-.122*
Age	.054	-.045	.013
Experience	.065*	.022	.002
<u>Independent Variable</u>			
AL		.35**	.02
<u>Mediating Variable</u>			
PsyCap			.78**
R ²	.122	.359	.697
ΔR^2		.237	0.338

Further, the results in Table 4 show that after adding PsyCap (as a mediator) in the third model, the value of AL becomes insignificant, which means the full mediating role of PsyCap between AL-creativity associations. Thus, H₇ is supported.

Discussions and Implications

Creativity and innovation are the main strategy firms are using in today's world to keep ahead. In this research, leadership styles, business models and psychologies and trends are combined to reach a certain conclusion that AL impacts employee psychological capital (AL increases employee's self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and hope) which at the end increases the employee creativity. Employee creativity is considered to be the basic element of employee innovation. This research showed that psychological states of the employees highly impact their attitudes and behaviors at the workplace. This phenomenon is highly applied to the service sector (banking) an employee's attitudes and behaviors are main elements that put value creation in the process of service. In the end, this research fills the gap present in literature as identified by Luthans et al. (2007) that there is a need to study PsyCap with AL to see its impact on innovation and creativity.

This research mainly focused on the banking industry which implies that authentic leaders increase positive attitudes (PsyCap) among the employees. Due to the nature of work in banks, people mostly become bored with their daily routine. To resolve this issue, all the managers must try to be authentic and real with their subordinate employees to increase creativity in the service process. This research helps the management as well as all the employees for making their HR policies consistent.

This research, as all the researches ever conducted has its limitations. First, the data was collected at a single point of time i.e. data was collected cross-sectional due to less available time. This affects the causality of variables. Future studies must collect the data over a time period to strongly prove the causality. Second, research respondents were mainly from Lahore, Pakistan that shows eastern culture. Future researchers must use this in western culture to increase its generalizability as culture may affect the results differently. Third, all the responses were self-answered which may create biases in the results. Future researches must get filled the variables of innovation and creativity from managers so that biases can be erased. In the end, other variables can be added as precedent and antecedent in the model for Psychological capital such as employee performance and employee emotions.

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