



Article Title

Psychological Capital in the Quick Service Restaurant Industry: A Study of Unit-Level Performance [Summary]

Citation

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Abstract

In this study, the construct of psychological capital (PsyCap) is explored within the quick service restaurant (QSR) industry. PsyCap, a second-order construct composed of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy, has received little attention in hospitality research despite its relationships with improving attitudes and behaviors. This study tested the relationships among PsyCap, service quality, customer satisfaction, and unit revenues through bivariate and mediational tests. Data were collected from a national chain of QSR employees, mystery shops, customer evaluations, and company records. The results indicate that collective PsyCap is positively related to all variables. Additionally, the results showed that service quality and customer satisfaction fully mediates the collective PsyCap to unit revenues relationship. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords psychological capital, revenues, service quality, customer satisfaction, quick service restaurants

Summary:

The findings from this research suggest that organizations should implement and develop training or intervention programs designed to enhance their employees' overall levels of PsyCap, which should then enhance group-level performance. Organizations and supervisors have often recognized an employee's job performance under the rubric of his/her relatively stable personality traits, employee-organization fit, employee-job fit, and core self-evaluation. However, employee

training programs to increase PsyCap, conducive to performance impact, are thus far not widely recognized. Positive psychological interventions for public health purposes are effective in enhancing overall individual wellbeing and reducing depression symptoms

For QSR employees, who tend to be younger and less experienced as discussed previously, managers may use one of the social network platforms (Twitter or Facebook, through a free private group account) embedded with these guidelines to develop unit-level PsyCap instead of face-to-face training. More specifically for each QSR unit, QSR companies can involve employees in developing and reaching QSR unit-level goals by asking for employee feedback. More specifically, how to improve performance when considering situations that require enhanced resilience, optimism, hope, or self-efficacy.

Conclusion

This study was the first to examine PsyCap in the QSR context in the hospitality literature. The results of this study extend the limited research on collective PsyCap in predicting objective performance measures such as revenues, service quality, and customer satisfaction. The results supported positive relationships among all variables of interest, in that, direct relationships between PsyCap and customer satisfaction, service quality, and revenues, were supported.

When considering PsyCap, service quality and customer satisfaction together, results suggest full mediation in that service quality and customer satisfaction carry the full effect of PsyCap in predicting revenues. As mentioned previously, research on PsyCap has focused primarily on individual outcomes, whereas the present study focused on aggregated group-level outcomes. Because PsyCap has been shown to be more effective in the service industry compared with others such as manufacturing (Avey et al., 2011), this study extends this stream of research by showing how attitudes such as PsyCap can transform individual group members to create improved customer service and satisfaction as well as financial performance.

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