



Authentic leadership promoting employees' psychological capital and creativity[☆]

Arménio Rego^{a,*}, Filipa Sousa^{b,1}, Carla Marques^{c,2}, Miguel Pina e Cunha^{d,3}

^a Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal

^b Escola Superior de Educação e Ciências Sociais, Instituto Politécnico de Leiria, Morro do Lena, Alto do Vieiro, 2411-901 Leiria, Portugal

^c Departamento de Economia, Sociologia e Gestão, Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Av. Almeida de Lucena, 1, 5000-660 Vila Real, Portugal

^d Nova School of Business and Economics, Rua Marquês de Fronteira, 20, 1099-038 Lisboa, Portugal

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 December 2009

Received in revised form 1 April 2010

Accepted 1 September 2011

Available online 28 October 2011

Keywords:

Psychological capital

Creativity

Authentic leadership

ABSTRACT

Two hundred and one employees report their psychological capital, as well as their supervisors' authentic leadership. Supervisors describe the employees' creativity. The main findings show that authentic leadership predicts employees' creativity, both directly and through the mediating role of employees' psychological capital. The study empirically validates theoretical arguments that suggest integrating authentic leadership and psychological capital in research, and indicates that both may foster employees' creativity, a crucial resource for helping organizations to face competitive challenges, take advantage of business opportunities, and improve organizational effectiveness.

© 2011 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Authentic leadership (AL) is “as a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development” (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008: 94). In recent years, the topic is a target of great interest both among scholars (e.g., Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008) and practitioners (e.g., George, 2003). Both argue that AL promotes positive employees' attitudes and behaviors and contributes to organizational performance. More empirical research is necessary for continuing to test this premise.

This paper merges the AL, psychological capital (PsyCap; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007), and creativity literatures, and shows how AL predicts employees' creativity both directly and through the mediating role of PsyCap (Fig. 1). PsyCap is an individual's positive

psychological state of development 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 (resilience) to attain success” (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007: 3). The study answers calls to integrate AL and PsyCap literatures (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Yammarino, Dionne, Schriesheim, & Dansereau, 2008) and helps to understand the process through which AL contributes to employees' creativity.

Studying the antecedents of employees' creativity is important because, to survive and prosper, organizations need to take full advantage of their employees' creative potential, so that innovation, change, learning, performance, and competitiveness can be sustained. Creativity in the workplace represents the production of novel and useful ideas or solutions concerning products, services, processes, and procedures (Amabile, 1988, 1997; Oldham & Cummings, 1997). The goal of creative performance is to solve problems, to roll out new products and services, to take advantage of business opportunities, and to improve organizational effectiveness.

Individual creativity is a function of individual and social/contextual factors (Egan, 2005; Oldham & Cummings, 1997; Shalley & Gilson, 2004). One of the most relevant contextual factors is leadership. Several researchers focus on identifying the role of specific leadership behaviors and leaders' characteristics in supporting, suppressing, facilitating, or inhibiting creativity (e.g., Hirst, van Dick, & van Knippenberg, 2009; Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, & Strange, 2002; Oldham & Cummings, 1997; Rego, Sousa, Cunha, Correia, & Saur, 2007; Reiter-Palmon and Illies, 2004; Shalley &

[☆] The authors are grateful to Bruce J. Avolio, William L. Gardner, and Fred O. Walumbwa for their permission to use the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire. They are also grateful to Fred Luthans, Bruce J. Avolio, and Carolyn M. Youssef for their permission to use the PsyCap questionnaire. Miguel Cunha acknowledges support from Nova Forum.

* Corresponding author at: Departamento de Economia, Gestão e Engenharia Industrial, Universidade de Aveiro, 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal. Tel.: +351 234 370 024; fax: +351 234 370 215.

E-mail addresses: armenio.rego@ua.pt (A. Rego), msousa@esel.ipleiria.pt (F. Sousa), smarques@utad.pt (C. Marques), mpc@novasbe.pt (M.P. Cunha).

¹ Tel.: +351 244 820 300; fax: +351 244 820 310.

² Tel.: +351 259 302 200; fax: +351 259 302 249.

³ Tel.: +351 212 822 725; fax: +351 213 873 973.

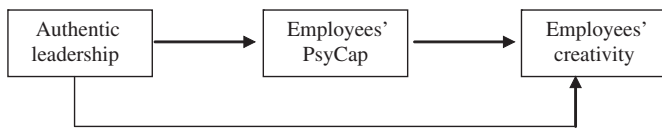


Fig. 1. Hypothesized model.

Gilson, 2004; Shin & Zhou, 2003; Tierney, Farmer, & Graen, 1999; Zhou, 2003; Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Zhou & George, 2003; Wang and Cheng, 2010). These behaviors include transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, close monitoring, developmental feedback, supportive supervision, controlling supervision, benevolent leadership, leader encouragement of creativity, leader inspirational motivation, and empowering leadership.

Studies also focus on employees' characteristics and attitudes that make them more creative. For example, Amabile (1983) suggests domain-relevant skills (knowledge and expertise), creativity-relevant processes (including cognitive styles, cognitive strategies, and personality variables), and task motivation (attitudes and motivation, such as intrinsic motivation) as predictors of creativity. Woodman, Sawyer, and Griffin (1993) model includes personality variables, cognitive factors, intrinsic motivation, and knowledge. Ford (1996) includes sense making, motivation, knowledge and ability. According to Egan (2005), the studies identify a consistent number of individual factors associated with individual creativity, including esthetic sensitivity, attraction to complexity, broad interests, intuition, and tolerance of ambiguity.

This paper adds to such lines of research, answering to a call of Shalley and Gilson (2004) for more research focusing on the interaction between personal characteristics and work context. The study focuses on how AL (a contextual factor) predicts employees' creativity, both directly and through the mediating role of employees' PsyCap (a personal strength). The paper hypothesizes that AL promotes employees' creativity because authentic leaders encourage employees' PsyCap (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Yammarino et al., 2008), with employees with higher PsyCap being more creative (Avolio et al., 2004; Bandura, 1997; Rego, Machado, Leal, & Cunha, 2009). The study also posits direct relationships between AL and creativity because authentic leaders may promote employees' creativity through mechanisms other than PsyCap. For example, AL may improve the quality of leader–member exchange, thus increasing employees' trust and the sense of freedom to propose unconventional ideas, and introduce conflicting opinions without fear (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio et al., 2004; Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000; Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997; Prati, Douglas, Ferris, Ammeter, & Buckley, 2003; Scott & Bruce, 1994). Employees may also feel psychologically safer, thus taking initiative for facing problems and opportunities in creative ways (Edmondson, 1999; Prati et al., 2003).

The remainder of the paper structures as follows. The second section discusses arguments leading to the hypotheses. The third and fourth sections present the method and results, respectively. The final section discusses the main findings, the limitations of the research, and some avenues for future research. The study seeks to contribute to enriching a research stream that is in an early stage of development and to a literature that is still short on empirical studies (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Yammarino et al., 2008). Considering that most studies about leadership come from the USA (House & Aditya, 1997), the paper also responds to a call for research in more culturally diverse samples (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1. The authentic leadership construct

The AL construct comprises four dimensions: (1) *Self-awareness* is the degree to which the leader demonstrates an understanding of

how (s)he derives and makes sense of the world and is aware of his or her strengths, limitations, how others see him or her, and how (s)he impacts others (Kernis, 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2008); (2) *Balanced processing* is the degree to which the leader shows that (s)he objectively analyzes the relevant data before coming to a decision and solicits views that challenge deeply held positions (Gardner et al., 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008); (3) *Internalized moral perspective* refers to the degree to which the leader sets a high standard for moral and ethical conduct, guides actions by internal moral standards and values (versus group, organizational, and societal pressures), and expresses decision making and behaviors that are consistent with such internalized values (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008); (4) *Relational transparency* is the degree to which the leader presents his/her authentic self (as opposed to a false or distorted self) to others, openly shares information, and expresses his/her true thoughts and feelings, reinforcing a level of openness with others that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges, and opinions.

Empirical evidence (e.g., Kernis & Goldman, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008, forthcoming) shows that a core AL factor can emerge from the relationships among the four dimensions. Walumbwa et al. (2008, forthcoming) finds that individual factors do not add any meaningful incremental validity beyond the common core higher factor, thus suggesting that the variance attributable to overall AL is more important than the variance imputable to each individual dimension of the AL construct. Considering AL as a core construct is also conceptually plausible, the literature proposing that the four AL dimensions are self-regulatory processes governed, partially, through leaders' internal standards and their evaluations of their own behavior (Gardner et al., 2005).

Therefore, the study hypothesizes considerable overlap among the four dimensions, and that the higher order AL construct will help to explain the conceptual and empirical overlap discussed above. Some research (Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey, & Oke, 2009; Walumbwa et al., 2008) also finds effects of AL on important work attitudes and behaviors, after controlling the effects of ethical and transformational leadership. Although the present study cannot include these latter constructs (because some organizations that participate in the study require applying a short survey), evidence suggests that the construct has incremental validity regarding those “older” leadership constructs.

2.2. The PsyCap construct

The PsyCap construct comprises four dimensions: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. PsyCap meets conceptual and empirical criteria of being distinct from other constructs (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). While Peterson and Seligman's (2004) character strengths and virtues are “trait-like” (relatively stable and difficult to change), the PsyCap is “state-like,” and thus relatively malleable and open to development. Both theory-building and prior research on hope, resilience, optimism, and efficacy indicate that such personal strengths are amenable to development (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Such a state-like nature also differentiates PsyCap from positively-oriented organizational behavior trait-like constructs, such as “Big Five” personality dimensions or core self-evaluations (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Thoresen, 2003).

Earlier research suggests that commonalities among the four dimensions allow considering PsyCap as a core construct (Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). This higher-order core construct has both conceptual (Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007) and empirical (Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007) support. As a core construct, PsyCap represents “one's positive appraisal of circumstances and probability for success based on motivated effort and perseverance” (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007: 550).

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات