

A study of the application and value of positive psychology in corporate training

Yichen Li

Suzhou University of Science and Technology, Suzhou, Jiangsu, 215009

ABSTRACT

This review comprehensively explores the application and impact of positive psychology in corporate employee training. Through combing and analyzing relevant literature at home and abroad, it elaborates on the key theories of positive psychology and their implementation in employee training. It also analyzes in detail the facilitating effect of positive psychology on employees' psychological state, work behavior, and career development, as well as its positive impact on corporate performance, culture construction, and competitiveness. At the same time, the limitations of the existing research are pointed out, and the future research direction is prospected, aiming to provide theoretical basis and practical guidance for enterprises to optimize their employee training strategies.

KEYWORDS

Positive psychology; Employee training; Psychological capital

1 Introduction

Modern enterprises face numerous challenges in the management process, such as high employee turnover, low motivation, poor teamwork, and psychological issues stemming from high work pressure. By communicating with the HR department and management of the enterprise, and observing the actual operating conditions, it can be discerned that these problems are underpinned by factors at the psychological level of employees. Furthermore, in corporate training, traditional skills training can no longer fully meet the needs of employee development. Employees not only require enhancing their professional skills but also need cultivation in terms of mental resilience, positive emotions, professional happiness, and so forth. Corporate managers are eagerly seeking effective means to ameliorate this situation.

Enterprises are now beginning to explore new training content and methodologies to elevate the overall quality of their employees. Training programs and interventions rooted in positive psychology are garnering increasing attention. Positive psychology, as a pivotal branch of psychology, continues to unveil novel theories and research findings. Applying these findings to the realm of corporate training represents a crucial direction in the practical application of psychological theory and aids in broadening the purview of psychology's applications. In recent times, interdisciplinary research spanning psychology, management, and education has garnered significant attention. Applied research in corporate training fosters interdisciplinary synergy and fosters the communal advancement of pertinent academic domains. Positive psychology, as a discipline focused on positive human attributes and mental states, has emerged as a prominent direction in interdisciplinary research, especially with the integration of enterprise management.

2 Core Theories of Positive Psychology

2.1 Positive Emotion Theory

The Expansion and Construct Theory of Positive Emotions, proposed by Fredrickson (2001), suggests that positive emotions serve two primary functions: Expansion and Construct^[1]. The Expansion function pertains to the capacity of positive emotions to broaden an individual's instantaneous thinking and action repertoires, encompassing an expansion of the individual's attention, cognition, and behavioral repertoire. The Constructive function, on the other hand, refers to the ability of positive emotions, over time, to build an individual's enduring psychological resources, such as physical, intellectual, social, and psychological resilience. Constructive functioning is realized on the basis of expansive functioning, and there can be a mutual reinforcement between positive emotions, cognitive expansion, and resource construction^[2]. This theory offers theoretical support for enterprises to stimulate employees' positive emotions through training, thereby enhancing their comprehensive literacy.

2.2 Positive personality trait theories

Trait dimensions have been utilized in positive psychology to conduct research on personality. In the Handbook of Classification of Personality Strengths and Virtues, published by Peterson and Seligman in 1994, six key virtues are

categorized based on personality strengths and virtues orientation: wisdom, courage, benevolence, justice, temperance, and transcendence. Additionally, 24 personality strengths associated with these virtues are listed, including creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, and so forth^[3]. Seligman further advocates for the cultivation of positive personality traits such as optimism, resilience, and gratitude. Individuals possessing these traits are capable of maintaining a positive mindset and coping strategy in the face of work pressure and challenges, and are more inclined to bounce back from setbacks and attain success. This theory directs companies to emphasize the cultivation of personality traits in employee training, thereby enhancing employees' adaptability and competitiveness.

2.3 Positive Organizational Behavior Theory

Under the influence of positive psychology theories, two primary research directions have emerged within the field of positive organizational behavior. Among them, the Positive Organizational Scholarship research proposed by Cameron of the University of Michigan emphasizes the development of individual exceptional qualities and the discovery and exploration of positive variables within the organization and its employees, thereby stimulating organizational vitality. The Positive Organizational Behavior research, proposed by Professor Luthans of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA, advocates for harnessing employees' human resource strengths and psychological capital measurable, developable, and manageable attributes to improve individual and organizational performance goals^[4]. According to Luthans, incorporating positive psychology, particularly findings related to positive emotional states, into organizational behavior aims to foster and enhance leadership effectiveness and employee performance^[5]. Positive organizational culture, leadership styles, and interpersonal relationships can foster a conducive work environment, ignite employees' intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm for work, and prompt employees to exhibit more positive behaviors, thereby augmenting the overall effectiveness of the organization.

3 Positive Psychology Approaches to Employee Training

3.1 Positive Mood Development Strategies

Enterprises use a variety of strategies to stimulate employees' positive emotions. For example, they organize colorful team-building activities, such as outdoor development training and theme parties, to promote communication and cooperation among employees, create a relaxed and enjoyable working atmosphere, and stimulate employees' joy and satisfaction. Positive emotions create a tendency to approach rather than avoid, and prepare individuals to seek and achieve new goals. Happy people often experience positive emotions, so they are more likely to experience these emotions while actively working towards new goals^[6]. At the same time, gratitude education courses can be conducted to guide employees to pay attention to the little moments of beauty in their lives and work, record gratitude diaries, and cultivate a sense of gratitude, thereby enhancing their sense of well-being and job satisfaction.

3.2 Positive Personality Trait Molding Methods

Enhance employees' sense of self-efficacy by setting challenging goals and providing successful experiences in the training process^[7]. For example, employees are assigned stage-by-stage, difficult but achievable work goals. When they successfully complete these goals, they are given timely recognition and rewards, allowing them to accumulate successful experiences in practice and believe that they have the ability to cope with various work tasks. In addition, relevant staff training related to hope can be conducted at the appropriate time. Hope can constantly encourage employees to maintain a good state of mind and help them dissolve pressure by sharing their goals and visions with others. When employees hold hope and work under its guidance, they will not become agitated or negative due to transient environmental changes, but will maintain a positive attitude in the face of difficulties^[8].

3.3 Active Organization of Environmental Creation Measures

Enterprises focus on creating a positive organizational environment. On the one hand, they strengthen the construction of corporate culture by conducting cultural training, disseminating values, and engaging in other related activities, so that employees have a deep understanding of and agree with the mission, vision, and values of the enterprise, enhancing their sense of belonging and cohesion. A good organizational atmosphere can regulate the relationship between organizational members, unite the collective efforts, and strengthen the team's cohesion. Communication in a good organizational atmosphere can reduce communication barriers; therefore, misunderstandings and friction caused by poor communication will be greatly reduced. The interpersonal relationships of employees in the organization will also develop positively, and their sense of belonging will be enhanced accordingly^[9]. On the other hand,

by adopting a positive leadership style, leaders should adopt a democratic, encouraging, and appreciative management style, pay attention to employees' strengths and progress, and provide them with timely feedback and support, thereby fostering a positive work environment. Positive leadership feedback will have a positive impact on employees' job satisfaction and affective commitment, mainly in a positive and constructive manner^[10].

4 The Impact of Positive Psychology on Employees

4.1 Psychological State and Well-being Enhancement

Numerous studies have shown that positive psychology training has a positive impact on the psychological state of employees. In his 2015 study, Wang Jun found that the overall level of psychological capital of employees who received positive psychology training was improved. Psychological capital is a factor that can promote positive organizational behaviors in individuals, leading to higher job performance^[11]. Guo Xinyu (2017) also pointed out that after positive psychology interventions, employees can better explore their potential. The enhancement of their own positive strengths allows employees to discover their undiscovered strengths and the bright side of their lives, leading to an increase in subjective well-being^[12].

4.2 Improvement of Work Behavior and Performance

Positive psychology training leads to positive changes in employees' work behavior. Lanxin (2016) found that positive psychological interventions can effectively improve employees' personal performance. After the implementation of positive psychological interventions, not only has the positive psychological quality of employees been improved, but their personal performance has also been effectively enhanced. At the same time, the higher the positive psychological quality of corporate employees, the higher their personal performance accordingly^[13]. Xie et al. (2011) suggested that employees' work performance is significantly positively correlated with their happiness at work, and work happiness is positively correlated with their positive psychological state at work. In other words, the enhancement of employees' positive psychological state can lead to the enhancement of work performance^[14].

4.3 Career Development and Growth Promotion

From the perspective of career development, positive psychology helps employees clarify their career strengths and development directions. Zhang Lixu (2015) pointed out that by tapping into and cultivating the qualities and potential of employees, companies can enable employees to achieve their own success. At the same time, by fully respecting and caring for employees, providing them with space and opportunities for development, and through continuous education and training, companies can enhance their professional knowledge and skills^[15]. Zhang Ling (2019) found in her research that employees' psychological capital is an important factor affecting their self-career management. Psychological capital is the positive psychological ability of humans, and having optimism enables employees to maintain a positive attitude in self-career management, have positive expectations of the results, strive to overcome difficulties and setbacks, and ultimately achieve their career goals^[16].

5 The Impact of Positive Psychology on Business

5.1 Improvements in Enterprise Performance

After receiving positive psychology training, the efficiency and quality of work of enterprise employees are improved, which directly contributes to the overall performance of the enterprise. The research of Li Yue and Wang Huaiyong (2017) showed that the sense of advantageous matching from the perspective of positive psychology can stimulate employees' innovative thinking and problem-solving abilities, bringing more innovative results and business growth opportunities for enterprises^[17]. In 2023, Li Qi found that positive psychological capital can effectively intervene in employees' tendencies to leave, thus reducing the rate of voluntary turnover. By enhancing employees' psychological capital, companies can effectively decrease employees' turnover intentions and provide a boost to the long-term development of the company^[18].

5.2 Organizational Culture Building and Brand Image Building

The application of positive psychology helps to shape a positive organizational culture. Cao Qian et al. (2021) suggest that corporate culture is the invisible wealth of an enterprise, influencing employee behavior and enterprise performance

in an invisible manner. A positive corporate culture can make the enterprise exhibit a positive, active, and open environment and atmosphere, and foster positive psychological characteristics among employees. This, in turn, can improve employees' loyalty and trust in the enterprise, ultimately enhancing the cohesion and market competitiveness of the enterprise^[19]. Reed Hua (2009) suggests that positive emotions encourage group members to approach each other proactively, making it more likely for both parties to cooperate and form a harmonious atmosphere within the group. This creates a good corporate ecological environment and fosters a positive cultural atmosphere^[20].

6 Shortcomings of Existing Studies

Although research on the application of positive psychology in corporate employee training has achieved certain results, there are still some limitations. Firstly, in terms of research methodology, most studies are based on empirical research. However, the selection of samples is often limited to specific regions, industries, or enterprise scales, lacking broad representativeness and universality. This makes it difficult to extend the study results to a wider range of enterprise groups. Secondly, in terms of research content, the synergistic mechanism among the various theoretical elements of positive psychology is not explored in sufficient depth to fully reveal the optimal mode of its comprehensive application in employee training and the path to maximize its effects. In addition, there are relatively few long-term tracking and evaluations of training effects. Most studies focus only on the immediate effects of short-term training, making it difficult to comprehensively and accurately measure the long-term impact and sustainability of positive psychology training on employees and enterprises.

7 Future Research Directions

In view of the above shortcomings, future research can be conducted in the following directions. The first is to expand the diversity of the research sample to cover enterprises in different regions, industries, scales, and forms of ownership, and to increase the number of samples in order to enhance the universality and popularization value of the research results. This will provide more targeted guidance on employee training for all kinds of enterprises. Secondly, we will strengthen the integration of the positive psychology theoretical system, explore the interactions and synergies between various elements, and use multidisciplinary theories and methods to construct a more perfect and systematic theoretical model of employee training. This will provide more solid theoretical support for the training practices of enterprises. Thirdly, we will focus on long-term tracking research, adopting multi-dimensional and multi-temporal evaluation methods, and combining qualitative and quantitative research tools to comprehensively and deeply understand the impact of positive psychology training on the career development trajectories of employees, the long-term performance of enterprises, and the evolution of organizational culture. This will provide a stronger basis for the formulation of scientific and reasonable employee training and development strategies, offering a longer-term perspective.

8 Conclusion

In summary, positive psychology holds significant application value and exerts a broad range of positive impacts in enterprise employee training. By cultivating employees' positive emotions, shaping positive personality traits, and creating a positive organizational environment, it can effectively enhance employees' psychological states, work behaviors, and career development. Consequently, this promotes the improvement of corporate performance and the construction of organizational culture. However, to further deepen our understanding and application of this field, there is a need for continuous improvement and innovation in research methods, content, and evaluation in the future. This will enable positive psychology to better play its role in corporate employee training, fostering the common development of enterprises and employees, and realizing the sustainable prosperity of enterprises.

References

- [1] FREDRICKSON BL. The role of positive emotions in positive psychology. The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions [J]. The American psychologist, 2001, 56(3):218-226.
- [2] She Zhuang, Xiao Junzheng, Niu Zhaohuan, et al. The effect of recovery experience on life satisfaction: the mediating role of positive emotions [J]. Psychological Research, 2019, 12(1):74-79.
- [3] Xiao, Shenglan. A Review of Positive Personality Theories [J]. Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University (Social Science Edition), 2012, 13(2): 95-98.
- [4] Xu Yuanlu. Using positive organizational Behavior to do a good job of ideological guidance and psychological guidance in the reform of state-owned enterprises [J]. Modern Enterprise Culture, 2023(18):145-148.

- [5] Tian Xizhou, Xie Jinyu. Impact of the positive psychology movement on organizational Behavior and human resource management[J]. Management Review, 2011, 23(7): 95-100.
- [6] LYUBOMIRSKY S, KING L, DIENER E. The benefits of frequent positive affect: does happiness lead to success?[J]. Psychological Bulletin, 2005, 131(6):803-855.
- [7] ZHOU Wenxia, GUO Guiping. Self-efficacy: Concepts, Theories and Applications [J]. Journal of the Renmin University of China, 2006(1):91-97.
- [8] Zhang Zhengguo. The application of positive organizational Behavior in the psychological guidance of young employees [J]. China Foreign Investment, 2012(9): 230.
- [9] Chen Hao-Yu. A study on the impact of organizational climate on the sense of belonging of new generation employees [D]. 2019.
- [10] WONDIMATNAFUASHENEF(Wu Di). A Study of the Mechanisms of Leaders' Positive Feedback on New Employees [D]. 2023.
- [11] Wang Jun. Research on Psychological Capital Intervention for Skilled Employees in Enterprises [D]. 2015.
- [12] Guo Xinyu. The relationship between employees' subjective well-being, psychological capital and organizational commitment and its intervention research [D]. 2017.
- [13] Lan Xin. An Empirical Study on Positive Psychological Qualities on Enhancing Employee Performance [D]. 2016.
- [14] Xie Xiaoming, Jiang Guoqing. Employee Management in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Based on Positive Psychology [J]. Modern Marketing (Academy Edition), 2011(10):90-91.
- [15] Zhang Lixu. The application of positive psychology in staff education and training of Spower supply company [J]. Journal of Economic Research, 2015(15):175-176, 80.
- [16] Zhang Ling. Research on the relationship between employees' career values, psychological capital and self-career management [D]. 2019.
- [17] Li Yue, Wang Huaiyong. Research on the influence of superiority matching sense on employees' innovative Behavior under the perspective of positive psychology [J]. Science and Technology Progress and Countermeasures, 2017, 34(16):148-154.
- [18] Li Q. Research on the Influence of Employees' Psychological Capital on Turnover Propensity in Tourism Enterprises [D]. 2023.
- [19] Cao Qian, Lin Na, Li Zhenwei. Effective Application of Positive Psychology in Business Management [J]. Psychology Monthly, 2021, 16(23): 235-237.
- [20] Reeva. Enterprise management strategies based on positive psychology [J]. Future and Development, 2009, 30(3):68-71.