Developing and Prioritizing Measures of Emotional Capital in Public Service Organizations

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ABSTRACT

This research is to construct emotional capital of public service organizations (PSOs) through employees’ perspectives. The content analysis method and analytical hierarchy process were used to collect and analyze data. According to the results, the study divides organizational emotional capital of public service sectors into three dimensions: Personal Emotional Capital, Group Emotional Capital, and Organizational Emotional Capital. The research also develops 12 indicators for organizational emotional capital of PSOs assessment. Measuring organizational emotional capital can be used to help formulate public strategy, provide an evaluation method for governments and allocate resources for PSOs.

Keywords: Capital, Emotion, Emotional Capital, Public Service, Public Service Organizations

1. INTRODUCTION

The rise in the topic of emotion management is a significant trend in today’s workplace. Many people who are unhappy in their jobs need to be happy in their interaction with customers or the public (Schweingruber & Berns, 2005). In this era of organizational downsizing, budget shortfalls, and personnel reshuffling, developing effective public agencies within public sector organizations is very important (Cupps & Olmosk, 2008). Recently, more attention has been given to positive psychological phenomena (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). Today, there are indications that the former spirit of pessimism is being changed and traditional approaches are being revised by a new positive psychology. The focus is shifting from fixing flaws to building strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Brendtro et al., 2005). Positive psychology’s purpose is to pursue excellence through the understanding and enhancement of areas that lead to growth (Berman & Davis-Berman, 2005). Some of these are positive emotions, positive individual traits, and prosocial attitudes (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Based on the resource-based view of an organization, performance differences among organizations can be attributed to variances in their resources and capabilities. Innovative and worthwhile resources have the ability to provide a foundation for organizational

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competitive advantages (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993; Hitt et al., 2001). The central point of human capital theory is that employees are an asset whose value can be improved by investments in training, technology, incentives, and other fields (Walker, 2007). Gendron (2007) suggested that emotional capital is regarded as capital, a tangible asset in which people, institutions and society should invest in, as it has important returns for the individual (allows well-being and sustains personal development), for society (social cohesion), and for life (individual and social). In a time of considerable change, businesses experience great difficulty in maintaining competitive advantage. If organizational knowledge is viewed as a strategic resource, much research has concentrated on delineating areas of knowledge to make sure competitive advantage is kept going (SubbaNarasimha et al., 2003). Businesses may utilize both tangible and intangible resources as well as a variety of methods to attain good results.

This investigation explores measures and the prioritization of emotional capital to improve organizations’ competitive advantage. This study is organized as follows: Section 2 is a review of emotional capital with regards to its components. The research design and methodology of this paper are covered in Section 3, while Sections 4 and 5 present the analytical results and conclusions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Emotion Capital in PSOs

Over the past few decades, psychology has been sought to direct attention toward the attributes and traits that constitute individual strengths as well as to the quality and meaning of life improvement (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Giacalone et al., 2005; Luthans et al., 2007). Positive psychology is composed of different behaviours, including emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Morand, 2001; Pellitteri, 2002; Freshman & Rubino, 2002). Emotional capital has been a valuable topic for attracting attention. There is a tendency in existing literature to show emotional capital together with educational success and academic attainment (Gillies, 2006).

Cahill (1999) introduced emotional capital and explores how it is implicated in the process of professional socialization, occupational selection and exclusion, and in the social reproduction of status distinctions. Reay (2000) adopted the emotional capital concept to investigate how mothers’ emotional involvement affected their children’s education. Schweingruber and Berns (2005) proposed two concepts to describe how managers and salespeople work with emotional capital. One is emotion mining, which is the personal search for and development of potential emotional capital in workers’ experiences that was not recognized before. The other is an emotional bridge, which refers to how emotional capital is used to connect the worker’s previous self to the new self in relation to the outside world. Gendron (2007) suggested that balanced emotional capital (personal and social emotional competencies) can help students to utilize their best potential in the classroom as well as workers at their workplace.

Balanced emotional capital is based on self-improvement, growth, life-long learning, and healthy interaction with others. Emotional capital plays an important role in an individual’s well-being and success in life. It can also provide a useful conceptual tool using emotions as resources and focusing on emotion practices (Zembylas, 2007). Emotional capital is sensitive to peoples’ repertoires of emotions and can be seen as a form of gender created knowledge (O’Brien, 2008). Emotional capital also takes integrity and self-awareness to construct open and trusting relationships which strengthen the creation of social capital (Marti & Enache, 2008). In summary, it is essential to make emotional capital real and effective personal, professional, social and organizational assets.

3. METHODS

To identify the components of emotional capital, this study was gathered from employees
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