The Relationship Between Psychological Capital and Proactive Career Behavior of Chinese

White Collar Workers in Their Early Career

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Abstract

Within the background of China's fast growth, young workers in China are having increasing job choice and opportunities. How proactive they are when they are concerning about their future career after graduated from university and worked for several years predict how successful their career will be in the future. We investigated the relationship between psychological capital and proactive career behaviors using a sample of 152 Chinese white-collar workers in their early career. Results indicate that individual's psychological capital has significant positive relationship with their proactive career behaviors and career process goal works as a mediator between the two variables. Theorectical and practical implications and limitations are discussed.

Keywords: psychological capital (PsyCap), proactive career behaviors, career process goal, Chinese white-collar worker, early career

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The background and meaning of psychological capital

Until the end of last century, psychology was mostly focus on fix the negative side of

people. Seligman (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) realized that psychology should be,

instead of focus on how to fix the wrong side of people, 'it is about identifying and nurturing

their strongest qualities, what they own and are best at, and helping them find niches in which

they can best live out these strengths,' and started the positive psychology movement.

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) suggest that the purpose of positive psychology '…is

to begin to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with

repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities.'

Received the impact of positive psychology movement, research on the positive side of

organizational behavior flourished in recent years. One of the emerged concepts is positive

organizational behavior advocated by Luthans (Luthans, 2002a, 2002b). He defined positive

organizational behavior (POB) as "the study and application of positively oriented human

resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and

effectively managed for performance improvement" (Luthans, 2002b). Compare to other

approaches which study the positivity of individual or organizational, such as positive

organizational scholarship - POS (Cameron & Caza, 2004; Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn,

2003;), or positive emotions (Fredrickson 1998, 2000), the following criteria were set for

including constructs in this definition of positive organizational behavior: (a) grounded in

theory and research; (b) valid measurement;(c) relatively unique to the field of organizational

behavior; (d) state-like and hence open to development and change as opposed to a fixed trait;

and (e) have a positive impact on work-related individual-level performance and satisfaction

(Luthans, 2002a,b; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007).

So far, positive psychological constructs that meet the include inclusion criteria include self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism, and when combined, represent what has been termed psychological capital or PsyCap (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Luthans defined PsyCap as: 'An individual's positive psychological state of development that is 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 (resiliency) to attain success (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). They suggest that psychological capital goes beyond the widely recognized and researched human capital (i.e. what you know, see O'Leary, Lindholm, Whitford, & Freeman, 2002) and social capital (i.e., who you know, see Adler & Kwon, 2002), and is basically 'who you are' (E. Luthans, K. W. Luthans, and B. C. Luthans, 2004; Luthans and Avolio, 2003). Previous research found PsyCap has significant relationship with creative performance (Luthans & Avey 2010), satisfaction and performance (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman 2007) and competitive advantage (Luthans, Youssef, 2004). In addition, research in Chinese context found that PsyCap is significant related to factory worker's performance (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa & Li, 2005; Luthans, Avey, Clapp-Smith & Li, 2008).

Proactive behavior and proactive career behaviors

According to Grant and Ashford, proactive behavior is defined as "anticipatory action that employees take to impact themselves and/or their environments" (Grant & Ashford, 2008), which build on the conceptualization of Parker and colleagues (Parker, William & Turner, 2006). Also, they defined proactivity as a process that can be applied to any set of

actions through anticipating, planning, and striving to have an impact (Grant & Ashford, 2008).They argued that, the key criterion for identifying proactive behavior is not whether it is in-role or extra-role, but rather whether the employee anticipates, plans for, and attempts to create a future outcome that has an impact on the self or environment (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Parker, William & Turner, 2006).The definition distinguishes proactive behavior from more general motivated behavior and more reactive, passive behavior in two noteworthy ways, proactive behavior is acting in advance and intended impact (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Parker, William & Turner, 2006).

There are also other definitions of proactive behavior by other researchers, for example, Crant (2000) refers to proactive behavior as "taking initiative in improving current circumstances; it involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting present conditions" (p. 436). While Fryer and Payne (1984, p. 273) defined proactive behavior as ''when a person chooses to initiate, intervene in or perceive situations in a way that allows the person (agent) to act in valued directions rather than respond passively to imposed change.''

When it comes to individual's career related dimension, Grant and Parker (2009) identified the further higher-order dimension, which called proactive career behaviors. Compared to other types of proactivity, proactive career behaviors refer to proactivity beyond a specific job, instead of within the context of a designated job. Career initiative (Tharenou & Terry, 1998) and ante i-deals (Rousseau et al., 2006) are two examples of proactive career behaviors.

De Vos discerned two components of proactive career behaviors, a cognitive and a behavioral component (De Vos & Soens, 2008). While the former refers to the insights individuals develop into their own career aspirations, the latter refers to the behaviors they initiate with the aim of managing their career. (De Vos, De Clippeleer & Dewilde 2009)

In Clae sand Ruiz-Quintanilla's work, they distinguished four proactive career

behaviors:(i) Proactive career planning behavior refers to initiatives and interventions that shape future careers. It includes setting goals, exploring options, and formulating plans. (ii) Proactive skill development behavior refers to initiatives and interventions that lead to mastery of the various tasks involved in one's occupation.(iii) Proactive consultation behavior refers to initiatives and interventions that seek information, advice, or help from others. (iv) Proactive networking behavior refers to initiatives and interventions that build interpersonal networks in which to seek information, advice, or help. Proactive career behavior was showed significantly related to career success in early career (Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998).

Antecedents of Proactive behavior and proactive career behavior

Generally, individual differences and work environment variables are suggested that affect proactive cognitive-motivational states, which, in turn, lead to proactive behavior (Parker, William & Turner, 2006). Within the individual differences dimension, demographics, personality, knowledge and abilities were concerned as the most important factors which influence proactive behavior. Demographics factors include age, gender, ethnicity and culture factors. Personality factors include proactive personality, which refers to the tendency of an individual to influence their environment and to bring about change across multiple contexts and times (Bateman & Crant, 1993), conscientiousness, openness to experience and learning goal orientation. Knowledge and abilities factors include cognitive ability, educational background and job-specific expertise (Bindl & Parker, 2010). In addition, job design, leadership, and climate-related variables were concerned as main factors of work environment, or situational antecedents (Bindl & Parker, 2010). Job design includes job autonomy, complexity and control, and job enrichment. Leadership factors, such as participative leadership, transformational leadership and leader-member exchange (LMX) were showed have positive relationship with proactive behavior at work, while supportive

leadership with proactive behaviors have been found inconsistent across studies. In addition, research shows that those individuals who report being satisfied with their work group (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998) and who have a good relationship with the individuals who would be affected by their proactive action (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton 1998) are more likely to engage in proactive behavior.

Although proactive career behaviors are one dimension of proactive behavior, its antecedents seems so different with other proactive behaviors such as proactive work behavior. Grant and Ashford argued that certainly situational antecedents, psychological mechanisms, dispositional moderators, and consequences that are unique to specific proactive behavior (Grant & Ashford, 2008). For example, conscientiousness was showed linked to proactive career behaviors such as proactive job search (Kanfer, Wanberg & Kantrowitz, 2001), and career planning behaviors (Carless & Bernath, 2007), it is unimportant for proactive work behaviors such as taking charge and individual innovation (Parker & Collins, 2010). Some specific antecedents of proactive career behaviors include occupation, employment experience and mobility experience (Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998), future work self salience (Strauss, Griffin & Parker, 2011).

PsyCap as proactive career behavior antecedent

From a motivational perspective, most attention has been given to two cognitive-motivational processes that underpin proactivity (Parker, William & Turner, 2006): first, one's perceived capability of being proactive, and second, one's wish to, or interest in, performing proactive behaviors. PsyCap components exactly predict one's perceived capability and interest, we suppose that PsyCap is also related to proactive career behaviors as both individual differences and cognitive-motivational process. We will show evidences that support our assumption.

Self-efficacy and proactive career behavior

Self-efficacy is the positive belief or confidence in one's ability to perform specific tasks (Bandura 1997). Specifically, applied to the workplace it can be defined as "one's conviction (or confidence) about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context" (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Efficacy is not related to a person's actual skills, but rather the beliefs one possesses regarding what he or she can do with those skills (Bandura, 1997).

Because proactive behavior is a risky behavior which 'rocks the boat' and may yield uncertain outcomes due to its change-oriented motivation (Frese & Fay, 2001), and those higher in efficacy are more likely to undertake risky, challenging activities such as creative task engagement (Bandura, 1997), it make sense that self-efficacy has great influence on proactive career behaviors.

Also, there are many robust researches that showed self-efficacy actually related to proactive career behaviors. For example, Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) found a significantly positive correlation between job search-related self-efficacy and proactive job search. Other researches, while not exactly proactive career behaviors, also showed positive relationship with other proactive behaviors such as, a combined measure of problem solving and idea implementation (Parker, William & Turner, 2006); personal initiative (Ohly & Fritz, 2007); voice, taking charge, and strategic scanning (Parker & Collins, 2009). Thus, we suggest that self-efficacy is positively related to proactive career behaviors.

Hypothesis 1: Self-efficacy is positively related to proactive career behaviors.

Hope and proactive career behavior

Hope is defined as the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways (Snyder et al., 2002). Hope was also defined that has two components and is "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful: (1) agency (goal-directed energy) and (2) pathways (planning to meet goals)' (Snyder, Irving & Anderson, 1991). While efficacy relates to people's belief about what they can do with their skills, hope relates to the willpower to use those skills along with the ability to generate multiple paths to accomplishing the same goal (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Also, Hopeful individuals are generally independent thinkers and highly autonomous (Luthans, Youssef, &Avolio, 2007). Thus, those with high hope are likely to be motivated and have more alternative pathways to conduct proactive career behaviors. Hopeful individuals may set higher goals for their career and drive themselves to act more proactively to pursue their goals. We suggest that hope is positively related to proactive career behaviors.

Hypothesis 2: Hope is positively related to proactive career behaviors.

Mediating role of career process goal

On the basis of hypothesis 1 and 2, we suggest that individuals who have higher self-efficacy and hope may set higher career goals, and thus lead to more proactive career behaviors. Research shows that career process goal have positive relationship with career planning and networking behaviors (De Vos, A., De Clippeleer, & Dewilde, T. 2009).

Hypothesis 3: Career process goal will mediate the relationship between self-efficacy, hope and proactive career behaviors.

Optimism and proactive career behavior

Optimism is depicted as an explanatory style whereby positive events are attributed to personal and permanent characteristics by the individual, and negative events are attributed to external, temporary factors of the situation (Seligman, 1998). Proactive behavior such as proactive career behaviors may encounter numerous obstacles from the environment because they essentially change the environment. Optimism can help individuals to have positive explanatory style and help them to overcome obstacles when they conduct proactive career behaviors. Also, optimists build positive expectancies that motivate their goal pursuit and approach coping behavior in the future (Carver & Scheier, 2002). Therefore, individuals who are optimism are more likely to take proactive career behaviors because they are motivated to pursuit their goal. Thus, we suggest that hope is positively related to proactive career behaviors.

Hypothesis 4: Optimism is positively related to proactive career behaviors.

Resilience and proactive career behavior

Resilience is defined as a "positive psychological capacity to rebound, to 'bounce back' from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility" (Luthans, 2002a). Resiliency allows individual and environmental protective mechanisms to operate through enhancing the assets and/or reducing the risk factors within individuals and/or their environment (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). When conducting proactive career behaviors, individuals would experience pressure from the environment and experience a lot of failures. Resilience can help individuals to recover from failure and continue to conduct proactive career behaviors after encounter with failure. In addition, resilient people can thrive and grow through set-backs and difficulties. They bounce back not only to their

original but to even higher levels of performance, and find meaning and value in their lives in the process (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). This could facilitate individuals to display even more proactive career behaviors after they bounce back from failure. Thus, we suggest that hope is positively related to proactive career behaviors.

Hypothesis 5: Resilience is positively related to proactive career behaviors.

Overall PsyCap and proactive career behavior

Rather than the four distinctive components of PsyCap, the overall PsyCap could be a better predictor of proactive career behavior. PsyCap is proposed as a measurable higher-order construct indicated by the components of hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience, and there may exists interactive synergy when the four psychological capacities are combined and interacted. For example, research shows that, without resilience to recover from failure, failure that results from proactive behaviors may undermine efficacy, decreasing the likelihood of doing so (Lindsley, Brass, & Thomas, 1995). Similarly, if an individual does not have hope, they may not even initialize proactive career behaviors even he has high optimism and resilience. Therefore, we suppose that PsyCap has a positive relationship with proactive career behavior and has more contribution than its four components.

Hypothesis 6: PsyCap is positively related to proactive career behaviors.
Hypothesis 7: PsyCap relates more positively to proactive career behaviors than does any of its individual components.

Chinese context that related to the research

Chinese individuals are having more working opportunities attribute to the fast economic

growth. Foreign companies are constantly entering the Chinese market and local private companies and venture companies develop rapidly. Although Chinese individuals have abundant working opportunities, most of them are not well-prepared. Thom (2008) argues that, individuals educated in China's university and vocational educational systems are inadequately prepared and causing a scarcity of qualified employees across the spectrum of the work force from manufacturing to management (Adecco Institute, 2007). A report of MyCos Institute in 2011 (2011) shows that, 60% of the 2010 graduates are not satisfied with their current job, 34% leave their first company within half a year and 69% leave within three years. This indicates that most Chinese university graduates are not well-prepared and don't know enough about the work place before they enter the company. Therefore, after working in their companies for a certain period of time, they find their true desire and leave to search for a better company. This phenomenon cause a great lost for both graduates and employers. However, the human resource system in China still give these employees, who left their company in a short time, plenty opportunities to find a job. Unlike other Asian countries such as Japan and Korea, Chinese employers are willing to recruit employees even they are not first year graduates because they have more working experience.

Thus, proactive career behaviors becomes rather important for Chinese individuals in their early career because, first, they have more knowledge about the real work place and may better identify their desire, second, they have working experience and have more competence than first year graduates, third, they are still young and still have potential to develop. Proactive career behaviors can also benefit employers because individuals who proactively think, plan, consult, develop skills for their future career may fit better to organization and have higher performance. In addition, a research within the Chinese context, indicates that Chinese worker's Psycap is positively related to their performance (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa & Li, 2005).

Method

Sample

In this study, we made a questionnaire and put it on a free online questionnaire site in China. 152 Chinese office workers under 30 from various companies answered our questionnaire. The average age is 25.70 years with a standard deviation of 2.17 years. 63% are and male 37% are female, and the marriage rate is 12.5%. 51% of the participants has a bachelor degree from university, 34% has master degree, 5% has PhD or higher degree. 7% graduated from junior college (3 years education) and 3% has only high school education.

We also asked about their working environment. 34% of the participants work in SOEs (State-owned enterprise), 34% work in private-own enterprise, 27% in foreign invested and 5% in joint venture. 22% work in companies which organizational size is no more than 100 persons, 16% in 100 to 200people size, 22% in 200 to 1000 people size, 27% in 1000 to 10000 people size and 13% in over 10000 people size.

Table1 Demographics

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	96	63.16%
Female	56	36.84%
Marriage		
Single	133	87.50%
Marriaged	19	12.50%
Education		
High school	3	1.97%
Junior college	11	7.24%
Undergraduate	78	51.32%
Master	52	34.21%
PhD	8	5.26%
Organization		

Ownership		
State-owned	51	33.55%
Private	51	33.55%
Foreign invested	41	26.97%
Joint-venture	9	5.92%
Organization size		
Fewer than 100	34	22.37%
100-200	24	15.79%
200-1000	34	22.37%
1000-10000	42	27.63%
over10000	18	11.84%

Measures

In addition to demographic questions, our questionnaire included PsyCap, career process goal and proactive career behaviors.

PsyCap was measured by the Chinese translated version of Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) Psychological (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). The Chinese translation was developed by Li (Li, 2007).The PCQ contains six items for each of the four dimensions adapted from published measures on efficacy (Parker, 1998), hope (Snyder et al., 1996), optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985), and resilience (Wagnild & Young,1993). We selected 5 items for resilience and 4 items for optimism that have higher loadings on the factor? Cronbach's alpha for this scale was α = .88.

Career process goal was measured using the scale used by De Vos and others (De Vos, A., De Clippeleer, & Dewilde, T. 2009). It include 4 items and the four items are 'It is important for me to develop my career to a high level of responsibility'; 'Making promotions is important for me'; 'It is important for me to be able to permanently develop myself during my future career'; 'Professional growth opportunities are important to me in my future career'. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was α = .65.

Proactive career behavior was measured using the scale used by Stauss (Strauss, Griffin& Parker, 2011). The items combine 12 items from Bachman, O'Maley, and Johnston

(1978) and Penley and Gould (1981). The items contains four dimensions of proactive career behavior, proactive skill development and networking (Penley and Gould,1981), career consultation and career planning (Bachman, O'Maley, & Johnston. 1978). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was α = .89

Results

Table 2 presents the results of the correlation analysis among demographic variables and proactive career behaviors. Table 3 presents the mean of proactive career behaviors score of 4 types of company ownership.

Table 2.   Inter-correlations among demographic variables and proactive career behaviors

	Mean	SD.	Career planning	Skill development	Consulting	Networking	Proactive career behaviors
Gender	1.37	0.484	-.035[**]	-0.001	-.089[**]	-.028[**]	-.052[**]
Age	25.81	2.206	.035[**]	.148[**]	0.01	.056[**]	.074[**]
Marriage	1.13	0.332	.112[**]	.105[**]	.188[**]	0.237	.211[**]

Table 3. Mean of proactive career behaviors sorted by 4 types of company ownership

	Career planning	Skill development	Consulting	Networking	Proactive career behaviors
State-owned	3.84	4.37	3.63	4.10	3.99
Private	3.86	4.30	3.61	4.04	3.95
Foeign invested	4.14	4.37	3.81	4.22	4.14
Joint venture	3.98	4.19	3.59	3.86	3.90

Table 4 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations of all study variables. The results indicate that self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism were all significantly related to proactive career behaviors. Furthermore, the overall PsyCap was more significantly related to proactive career behaviors than its four individual components. Hypothesis 1, 2, 4, 5,

6, 7 are all supported by the results.

Table 4.   Inter-correlations among study variables

		Mean	SD.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Self-efficacy	4.63	.79									
2	Hope	4.46	.89	.60**								
3	Resilience	4.43	.86	.60**	.68**							
4	Optimism	4.39	.96	.51**	.63**	.62**						
5	PsyCap	4.48	.74	.79**	.87**	.86**	.83**					
6	Career planning	3.90	.83	.36**	.48**	.49**	.40**	.52**				
7	Skill development	4.30	.70	.47**	.47**	.42**	.34**	.50**	.58**			
8	Consulting	3.63	.89	.46**	.53**	.50**	.45**	.57**	.45**	.45**		
9	Networking	4.02	.83	.38**	.38**	.42**	.42**	.48**	.40**	.42**	.52**	
10	Proactive Career Behaviors	3.96	.63	.53**	.60**	.59**	.52**	.67**	.78**	.76**	.80**	.76**

** significant at p<0.01 level

Finally, we performed mediated regression to examine hypothesis 3, According to Baron and Kenny (1986), four conditions are necessary to establish mediation: (1) the independent and mediating variables must be significantly related; (2) the independent and dependent variables must be significantly related; (3) the mediator and dependent variable must be significantly related; and (4) the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable should be non-significant or weaker when the mediator is added.

Table 5 presents the result of the mediated regression.

Table5. Mediated regression among study variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
efficacy	0.076	0.061	0.095	1.243	0.216
hope	0.126	0.062	0.179	2.035	0.044
resilience	0.171	0.063	0.233	2.732	0.007

optimism	0.049	0.052	0.074	0.945	0.346
Career process goal	0.354	0.064	0.368	5.504	0

All the 4 conditions were cleared and we can see the relationship between Psycap components and proactive career behaviors is weaker when career process goal is added as a mediator, but the result still shows that the relationship is significant. Thus, hypothesis 3 is also confirmed.

Discussion

As we can see on Table 2, gender has negative correlations with proactive career behaviors (we set male as 1 and female as 2), which means men are more proactive than women in career. The result is consistent with other studies (Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998; Kanfer, Wanberg & Kantrowitz, 2001). Surprisingly, age showed positive relationship with proactive career behaviors. We suggest that the result is inconsistent with previous research (Kanfer, Wanberg & Kantrowitz, 2001) because our samples are all under 30 years old. With age increase, individuals get more working experience, more information about the world of business and realize more clearly about their desire. Because the labor market in China is fluid, individuals who work longer and still have chance may conduct more proactive career behaviors. Another surprising result is that marriage condition is positively related to proactive career behaviors (we set single as 1 and married as 2). This may because individuals who under 30 and also married have more financial responsibility than those who are not married. They have to seek for positions or jobs with higher salary to make their family a better life, especially in the Chinese context that income is still not as much as developed countries while the income difference is huge. We can also observe that there is no significant difference among employees of their proactive career behaviors in different ownership companies. Proactive career behaviors score is higher in joint-venture employees may only

because the sample size is too small (less than 10 people).

PsyCap and its components are all positively significantly to proactive career behaviors. This indicates that PsyCap can well predict proactive career behaviors and cultivate PsyCap may increase the intention of proactive career behaviors. In addition, we can observe the relationship between certain PsyCap components and certain proactive career behavior. For example, hope and resilience have stronger relationship with career planning behavior. This may because the pathway power of hope helps individuals to make more deliberate plans and resilience help individuals to reconsider and re-planning after failure. Optimism is not very strong related with skill development compared with other components.

When career process goal is added as an mediator, all the four components of Psycap still have significant correlation with proactive career behaviors but weaker than without mediator. We hypothesized that the mediator would only work in the relationship of self-efficacy, hope and proactive career behaviors. Surprisingly, the result shows that resilience has the greatest relation with proactive career behaviors when the mediator is added and self-efficacy and hope have stronger correlation than optimism. We suppose that the reason resilience is so strongly related to proactive career behaviors is that people with higher resilience always have failed a lot, and they know better with their desire and their perseverance to achieve their goals. Therefore, people with higher goal setting conduct more proactive career behaviors and people with low ability set low goals and do not conduct much proactive career behaviors because they know they do not have the perseverance to achieve the goal and their proactive career behaviors will be just wasting time.

Implication

There are literatures research on the relationship between PsyCap and other variables such as performance (Luthans, Avey, Avolio & Peterson, 2010; Luthans, Avey, Clapp-Smith &

Li, 2008; Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman, 2007; Luthans, Norman, Avolio & Avey, 2008), satisfaction (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman, 2007), as well as organizational citizenship (Avey, Luthans, &Youssef, 2010). However, there is no research showed relationship between PsyCap and its components with proactive career behaviors. The results support Savickas' career adaptability theory (1997, 2002) that social and psychological capital was an important factor in predicting successful career transitions. This study also provides another important antecedent for predicting proactive career behaviors. Although there exist plenty of literatures investigating self-efficacy and proactive career behaviors, there are few researches focus on other psychological capacities such as hope, resilience and optimism. This study may help to better understand the mechanism of proactive career behaviors.

In addition to theoretical implications, this study also has some important practical implications. First, because PsyCap is open to development, it is important to cultivate PsyCap in order to conduct more proactive career behavior and, thus can cause better career choice and career development. For example, self-efficacy can be developed by experiencing success and modeling, hope can be developed by clearly communicated, specific, realistic, measurable, and challenging goal-setting, enhancing preparedness and mental rehearsal. Optimism can be developed by "leniency for the past", "appreciation for the present" and "opportunity seeking for the future". Resilience can be developed by providing resources that increase the probability of positive outcomes despite the presence of risks (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). This may help career counselors, supervisors and university student advisors to better understand the importance of psychological capacity in career development and help their customer.

Second, in addition to previous studies which indicates people who have higher PsyCap also have many characteristics beneficial for organizations, this study shows that people who have higher PsyCap also conduct more proactive career behaviors, which means they choose

their job more carefully and are more well prepared. This may be another reason that higher PsyCap employees have higher performance and satisfaction because they are more fitted to the organization. Employers should hire people who are confident, hopeful, optimistic and resilient because they are more likely to fit for the organization. Employers should also take care of employees who worked for a long time, married and still under 30 years old. These people are mostly tend to seek for promotion or company with higher salary. And because these employees have more work experience, it will be a great loss to lose them.

Third, for young employees themselves, they should be aware of their PsyCap status in order to get a satisfactory position or job in the future. They should intentionally try to increase their PsyCap, for example, find a role model to increase self-efficacy, learn how to make better goal-setting to be more hopeful. In other word, be psychologically stronger may also be important for individuals to have brighter career in the future.

Limitations

In this study, we investigated the correlation between PsyCap, its four components and proactive career behaviors. Although theoretical literatures supports the causal relationship that PsyCap is the cause of proactive career behaviors, there may also be a possibility that proactive career behaviors although leads to higher PsyCap. Individuals may conduct some proactive career behaviors when they are confronting some dramatic environmental changes such as bankruptcy, personnel change and restruction. Proactive career behaviors could help them to realize their competence and increase their self-efficacy, notice more chances to be more hopeful, and be more optimistic and resilient after recover from failure. Thus proactive career behaviors could also be the cause of high PsyCap.

Second, for the PsyCap scale, we used the existing translation which is translated by a professional and published. But for the career process scale and proactive career behavior

scale, because there is no existing translated version, we translated the items by ourselves. This may cause some slightly meaning difference from the original English version. We had better use the re-translation method (Brislin, 1980), but we cannot find any English native speakers who know Chinese very well.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates a significantly positive relationship between the emerging psychological capacity of Psycap and its components, self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism with proactive career behaviors. Individuals with higher self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism are more likely to conduct proactive career behaviors. This result may contribute to both academic and practical field and future research should investigate the role of Psycap with other proactive behaviors.

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