

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND ORGANIZATION-BASED SELF-ESTEEM: THE INTERACTIVE ROLE OF ABUSIVE SUPERVISION

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Abstract

The paper has been written to review the relationships among several constructs (i.e. abusive supervision (AB), psychological well-being (PWB), and organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). Also, the study asserted the interactive role of AB in the existing connection with PWB and OBSE. The data were collected by the purposive sampling and Participants of the study were 516 teachers who have working experience at the public colleges within Pakistan between January-December 2015-16. The findings recommended that PWB is positively correlated with OBSE and AB is inversely connected with PWB. However, it is not supported the hypothesis suggesting that AB may play an important moderating role between PWB and OBSE. This study contributes in the existing literature on AB, OBSE, and PWB in the West-Asian context. Also, it contributes to both organizational theory and practice by enriching the current knowledge about the potential moderators of PWB so that employees' health can be significantly increased.

Keywords: Abusive Supervision, Organization-Based-Self-Esteem, Psychological Well-Being, Purposive Sampling.

JEL Classification: Z000

Introduction

Employee well-being is a primary problem for organizations. Due to employees' low psychological health, their productivity decreases, and organizations confront productivity loss. Given the decreasing productivity effect to which low psychological health leads, increasing it significantly could create a sustainable competitive advantage for organizations. Psychological well-being (PWB) is a main area of positive psychology. Employees' PWB has become important in daily life, as well

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as at the workplace. In this sense, it is necessary to determine the antecedents of psychological well-being. OBSE is one of the antecedents of PWB and has come to investigation recently (Tang & Gilbert, 1994), and OBSE has gained interest of the researchers in various fields. OBSE is one of the constructs that is based on self-esteem and which may be extracted more job-related experiences within organization (Pierce, Gardner, & Crowley, 2016: 181), and so it provides that employees observe themselves as an important, meaningful, capable, and valuable (Pierce et al., 1989). In this respect, based on Disposition Approach (Staw & Ross, 1985; Staw, Bell, & Clausen, 1986), Spillover effect (Lambert, 1990) or Need Theories (Maslow, 1943), OBSE may be a positive predictor of PWB. In simple words, those high in OBSE is likely to have higher PWB compared with those low in OBSE (Pierce et al., 2016).

In vice versa, study on the effects of AB on PWB has generally been ignored. AB is the bad image of leadership (Liu et al., 2012) and means employees' perceptions regarding antagonistic nonverbal and verbal attitudes without physical contact of managers or leaders (Tepper, 2000). There are destructive effects on the PWB of AB. Indeed, AB affects generally many positive attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes (Tepper, 2007; Bowling & Michel, 2011; Martinko, Harvey, Brees & Mackey, 2013). Thus, AB needs to be determined effects on psychological-health. In this respect, AB may be a moderator of PWB. Because employees consider AB as a source of injustice, disrespect, and distrust, these employees are likely to have low levels PWB (Tepper, 2000). Naturally, employees who are lower in AB and high in their OBES will be high in their PWB. Despite the importance of the relationship between OBES and PWB apart from a research work conducted (Pierce et al., 2016), scholars in the fields of organizational behavior have rarely focused on PWB. Especially, while the literature with respect to potential mediators and moderators of the relationship is still in its infancy, it is slowly growing. For instance, Pierce and colleagues (2016) conducted a study with two samples consist of students, employees at a Mid-Western US university and they found that job-related engagement moderated the association between OBSE and subjective happiness. However, the number of studies that investigated the relationship remains small.

Considering this point, the main concern of this study is to find out the association among OBES, AB, and PWB among teachers in the education sector in the light of the above-mentioned theories and approaches. The paper has an objective to highlight and contributed in the existing literature related to these constructs in a multiple way. Firstly, current study aimed to answer a relevant question— whether a spillover influenced may be occurred due to the influence of OBSE upon PWB? Last but not the least, a potential gap has been found in the existing literature regarding whether AB moderates the association between OBSE and employee well-being. Therefore, we focused in this study on the gap and asserted the moderating role of AB in the positive association among PWB and OBES. Our intention is to contribute to both organizational theory and practice by enriching the current knowledge about the potential moderators of PWB so that employees' health can be more significantly increased. The main research question is “Is there a moderating role of AB in the association between OBES and employees' PWB?”

Literature Review

Scheier et al. (1994) defines self-esteem is a sense of self-worth, which carries the implication that one will be accepted rather than rejected by others, and that one is not failure in one's life". The concept of OBSE is one of the constructs that is based on self-esteem and which may be extracted job-related experiences within organization (Pierce et al., 2016). OBSE is defined as "the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member" (Pierce and Gardner, 2004). Therefore, individuals high in OBSE should perceive themselves as "important, meaningful, effectual, and worthwhile within their employing organization" (Pierce et al., 1989).

Diener et al. (2003), PWB, "people's emotional and cognitive evaluations of their lives, includes what lay people call happiness, peace, fulfillment, and life satisfaction". PWB is a broad concept that measured the life satisfaction, happiness, and self-rated anxiety (Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979). Rook (1984) found that the negative side of social interaction has a negative impact on PWB. According to Brown and Ryan (2003), mindfulness might contribute to the well-being and happiness in a direct way. Crocker et al. (1994) determined that the subscales of collective self-esteem were highly correlated with the well-being measures. Also, O'Donoghue et al. (2016) ascertained that the perception of abusive leadership correlated negatively with employee well-being.

According to the Tepper (2000), AB refers to "subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact". AB's outcomes are associated with the success and survival of organizations. Besides, the outcomes are interrelated to happiness and cognitive health of their employees (Martinko et al., 2013). Similarly, Tepper (2007) has examined a set of researched variables which overlap with AB and found that AB diminished PWB. In addition, Kernan et al. (2011) found that AB affected positively 'negative well-being' whereas Hobman et al. (2009) found a negative relationship between AB and psychological well-being. Also, Scheuer (2013) determined that demand appraisals and coping behavior were significant mediators of the relationship between AB and well-being.

The moderating role of AB

Another study reported a positive connection in OBSE and PWB according to Disposition Approach (Staw et al., 1986), Spillover effect (Lambert, 1990) or Need Theories (Maslow, 1943). Disposition Approach (Staw & Ross, 1985; Staw et al., 1986) includes "the measurement of personal characteristics and the assumption that such measures can aid in explaining individual attitudes and behavior. Although distinctions are sometimes made between the concepts of personal dispositions, traits, personalities, and individual characteristics, these terms are used almost interchangeably in the literature". In this respect, it is possible to describe individuals' behaviors across situations. Consequently, the dispositional trait of OBSE shapes PWB of individuals and so those high in OBSE

is likely to have higher psychological well-being compared with those low in OBSE.

According to spillover effect, OBSE spills over onto general well-being (Pierce et al., 2016). Spillover effect includes “the transfers of one’s functioning (e.g. attitudes, emotions, behavior) from one domain to another, and where functioning in one domain (e.g. home) is influenced by a person’s functioning and experiences in a different domain (e.g. work)” (Lampert, 1990; Pierce et al., 2016: 185). Due to this spillover effect, if employees perceive then that perception will transfer another domain (general health), and consequently, will impact positively PWB.

There are 5 sets of goals (basic or deficiency needs) that are associated with one another and are organized in a system of prepotency in A Theory of Human Motivation by Maslow (1943). Satisfaction of the self-esteem causes “feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world”. Self-concept that is shaped around an individuals’ work and OBSE will spill over, affecting an individuals’ subjective and PWB, in other words, positive attitude towards life (Widmer et al., 2012; Pierce et al., 2016). Personality dispositions or traits like neuroticism, self-esteem, and extraversion can significantly affect subjective well-being (Diener et al., 2003). According to Pierce and Gardner (2004), OBSE is associated with “job satisfaction, organizational commitment, motivation, citizenship behavior, in-role performance, and turnover intentions as well as, other organization-related attitudes and behaviors”. It follows that;

H_1 : Organization-based self-esteem will be positively related to psychological well-being.

Theory X of McGregor (1960) says that some managers assume people are sluggish, and have lower level of ambition and responsibility. So these managers can behave their workers badly and abusive. Thus, the employees’ PWB is negatively affected. Adams’s (1965) Justice Theory refers to “the extent to which employees perceive workplace procedures, interactions, and outcomes to be fair in nature. These perceptions can influence attitudes and behavior for good or ill, in turn having a positive or negative impact on employee performance and the organization’s success”. Justice theory ensures some understanding into why AB causes negative influences on employees’ attitudes and well-being. Interpersonal justice, one type of justice, is related to the interpersonal aspect of fairness and is especially considerable in comprehension the negative consequences of supervisor abuse (Kernan et al., 2011).

O’Donoghue and colleagues (2016) determined that AB is negatively associated with employee well-being (i.e. job satisfaction & engagement). According to Tepper (2000), employees consider AB as a reason of injustice that, in turn, has conclusions for their attitudes and well-being. AB affects negatively employees’ PWB and behaviors (Chan & McAllister, 2014: 44). It follows that;

H_2 : AB will moderate the connection between PWB and OBSE such that those lower in AB and who are highly their OBSE will be high their PWB.

Methods

Sample and Procedure

Present study has been performed by using survey method. The data are collected by the purposive sampling method. Survey questionnaires were distributed to 600 teachers, who actively work at the public colleges within Pakistan between January-December 2015-16. We received responses from 532 teachers with a response rate of 89%. However, 16 of them were discarded due to the excessive missing cases. Thus, participants in the study are 516 teachers.

The demographic characteristics of our participants were as follows: 59.3% were female and 40.7% were male; 37.2% were aged 22–25 years old, 56.8% were aged 26–35 years old, and 6% were aged from 36 years old or more; 66.3% were single, and 33.7% were married; 40.1% had been working in this field of employment from for 1 years or less, 57% for 1–10 years, and 2.9% for 11 years or more.

Measures

The selected variables for presented studies have been adopted from previous well known studies and evaluated by using five-point Likert guidelines. Mean scale scores were used for these scales.

Organization-based self-esteem (OBSE)

OBSE is adopted from Pierce et al. (1989) study and that scale has ten items. The instrument was adapted into the Pakistan language and was found to be both valid and reliable. An example item is “I am trusted in my employing organization.”

Psychological well-being (PWB)

PWB has been used in current study by taking eight-item as well as the flourishing scale (PWB scale), developed by Diener et al. (2010). The instrument was adapted into the Pakistan language and was found to be both valid and reliable. An example item is “I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.”

AB (AS)

AB was measured using the fifteen-item the AB scale, developed by Tepper (2000). The instrument was adapted into the Pakistan language and was found to be both valid and reliable. An example item is “My manager reminds me of my past mistakes and failures.”

Control variables

The effects of age, gender marital status and tenure on work-related subjective well-being and PWB were examined (Austrom, Baldwin & Macy, 1988; Wilks & Neto, 2013).

Data Analysis and Results

This study used IBM SPSS 22.0 for data analysis. Firstly, authors of this study had performed an overall “exploratory factor analysis (EFA)” to assess the construct validity of them as the scales were used with a new sample. The best fit of data was obtained with an EFA with a Varimax rotation and screen pilot showed that three factors should be retained. As a result of the EFA, the analysis showed that all scales were valid. The EFA identified 32 items in the 3-factor categories of OBSE, PWB, and AB. A cross-loading item of AB (fifth item in original scale) was excluded from analysis. Thus, these factors explained 60.26% of total variance in participants’ responses. The Chronbach’s alphas of all construct (all $\alpha > .70$) are in Table 1 (Muqadas et al., 2017; Rahman et al., 2017).

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables are indicated in Table 1. Table 1 shows that the independent variable OBSE has strong positive relations with the dependent variable PWB. Also, the moderator variable AB has moderate negative relations with the dependent variable PWB. Therefore, these correlations provide some preliminary evidence that organizational-based self-esteem is positively related to PWB.

To test hypotheses, hierarchical regression analysis was used (see Table 2). Firstly, control variables (gender, age, marital status, tenure) was entered the regression. Secondly, OBSE and AB were added the regression to verify hypothesis 1. In Step 2, it was found that OBSE was strongly predictive of PWB. On the other hand, it was found that AB was no predictive of PWB. Thus, hypothesis 1 is well supported ($\beta=0.497$; $p<0.001$). In Step 3, the interaction term (OBSE x AB) was entered the regression to confirm the moderating effect of AB on the relationship between OBSE and PWB. Hypothesis 2 is not supported by the regression analysis results in Step 3 ($\beta=0.015$; $p>0.05$).

Table 1
Correlations, means, and standard deviations

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	1.52	.41							
2. Age	1.62	.52	-.28**						
3. Marital status	1.31	.44	-.00	.23**					
4. Tenure	1.53	.51	-.13	.41**	.11*				
5. OBSE	4.18	.50	-.04	.04	.05	.07	(.91)		
6. AS	1.10	.85	-.01	.01	.01	.10	-.28**	(.77)	
7. PWB	4.41	.80	.01	.03	.06	.04	.51**	-.17**	(.86)

“Notes: OBSE: Organization-based self-esteem; AS: AB; PWB: Psychological well-being. Cronbach’s alphas appear on the diagonal for multiple item measures. $n=486$; * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$. 1 = male, 2 = female; 1 = single, 2 = married.”

Table 2
Results of Regression Analysis

Variable	Psychological well-being (PWB)		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Gender	.01	.03	.03
Age	.01	.01	.01
Marital status	.06	.04	.04
Tenure	.03	.01	.01
Organization-based self-esteem (OBSE)		.50***	.50***
AB (AS)		-.03	-.03
Interaction term (OBSE and AS)			.02
Total R ²	.005	.259***	.259***
Δ in R ²		.254***	.000
Δ in F	.624	82.136***	.131

$n = 486$; *** $p<0.001$

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings reveal that OBSE is a significant determinant of employees' PWB. This finding is consistent with Tang and Gilbert (1994); Carson et al. (1997); Diener et al. (2003), Pierce and Gardner (2004) and Pierce et al. (2016). Employees' self-concept constituted basis work and OBSE positively spills over and affect their PWB comprising "such indicators as life satisfaction, flourishing, happiness, positive and negative affect, and the ratio of positive to negative affect" (Pierce et al., 2016). Indeed, situational factors (e.g., messages that may be sent by using various organizational contextual factors specifically related to job and organizational design) have a significant impact on both directly affecting PWB via effects on OBSE, and interactively with the disposition (Pierce et al., 2016). Given these explanations, it is important to create organizational climate increasing OBSE to enhance PWB.

Also, the findings suggest that there is a negative relationship between AB and PWB. This finding is consistent with Tepper (2007); Hobman et al. (2009); Kernan et al. (2011); Martinko et al. (2013), O'Donoghue et al. (2016). With decreases in AB, that is the dark side of leadership, employees' PWB may increase. On the other hand, it is not supported the hypothesis suggesting that AB may play a moderating role in the relationship between OBSE and PWB. Interaction ascertains that AB is not affected the positive spillover effects of OBSE on PWB. In our study, the directions of relationships between AB and moderator, and dependent variables are negative, but the level of AB is quite low. The level of quite low may lead to no significance of interaction effect.

Given the findings, it may be concluded that managers do not exhibit AB on teachers at their organizations. Moreover, the collecting from teachers that was employed at colleges s in the levels of the different teaching of the data may lead to being non-significant the moderator role of AB. Additionally, it may be stated that employees high in OBSE, and trusting their skills pay no mind much to the AB behaviors of managers. Therefore, why AB did not moderate the relationship between OBSE and employee well-being could be examined in further research. In conclusion, the findings are important for managers who are responsible for human resource management. Accordingly, they should focus on variables increasing, or decreasing PWB of employees who contribute to organizational success because while the low AB and high OBSE may conclude high performance, high interest to job and be decreasing of health costs, the opposite of this situation may deteriorate both employees' psychological and physical health (e.g., heart health).

Naturally, there are some limitations of this study. Firstly, this study is a cross-sectional study (same measurement time effect) and the responses are measured as self-reported (common rater effect), so the data is susceptible to common source bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Consequently, this common source bias may lead to inflated relationships.

The result of "Harman's single-factor test" (Harman, 1979) conducted to assess the data

for common method variance is 25.173 (the result of test < 50). Also, all items from each of the constructs were entered an EFA and were extracted three factors and one general factor does not account for a majority of the covariance between the measures. Thus, it can be said that systematic error variance shared among variables measured is not (Harman, 1979). Also, we suggest longitudinal designs and data collected from different sources (e.g., colleagues and subordinates) for next studies. Second, the data of this study is obtained from public education sector (scope limitation). Due to this limitation, our findings are not generalized to other sectors (e.g., IT, health and military). In this regard, in further studies, the data can be selected from different professions, unlike teachers. Moreover, these relationships may be examined comparatively public and private sectors. Finally, it is a content limitation. Future directions beyond this study may include testing additional variables affecting organizational outputs (e.g., performance, work attendance (Pierce et al., 2016), presenteeism, absenteeism), and possible interactive variables of such a nature of association; for example, level of stress, type of work, personality traits organizational climate, organizational support (Pierce et al., 2016).

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