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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The effectiveness of communication skills training on organizational psychological capital and transformational leadership style

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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of communication skills training on psychological capital and transformational leadership style in municipal managers. The statistical population of the research included 140 municipal managers of the 3rd district of Tehran, 30 of whom scored poorly in Luthans (2007) psychological capital questionnaire and Bass and Avolio's (1985) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. They were selected by convenience sampling and placed in experimental and control groups. The experimental group received McKay's (2009) communication skills training in 10 sessions. The findings showed that manager's competence in communication skills effectively improves the scores of organizational psychological capitals and their leadership style. Therefore, communication skills training increases psychological capital and transformative leadership style in managers.

Keywords: *Transformational leadership style, Psychological capital, Communication skills*

Introduction

Psychological capital with four dimensions of hope, optimism, flexibility and self-efficacy is an important psychological resource (Fraser and Hvolby, 2020). As an intangible organizational capital, psychological capital can increase employee's self-confidence, optimism, hope and flexibility, and improve the individual and organizational performance. (Hovida, Mokhtari Far and Forohar, 2017). The style and type of executive leadership in organizations are among the most strategic tools for excellence or failure in organizations. (Chen, et al., 2018). Transformational leaders have characteristics such as role modeling, personal and dedicated attention to employees, inspiring motivation and intelligent stimulation (Chin FeiGeh, Adam and Kong Tam, 2016). One of the important prerequisites of organizational behavior is individual's communication skills. Managers' communication skills mean verbal skills, hearing, and feedback skills. (Moghimi, 2016). Calvo and Garcia (2021) in their research titled 'the effect of psychological capital on graduates' perception of employability: The mediating role of communication skills' showed that increasing students' psychological capital has a positive and direct effect on increasing their competence and communication skills.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effectiveness of communication skills training on psychological capital and transformational leadership style in the managers of the 3rd district of Tehran.

Methodology

The current applied research used a quasi-experimental design with a control group, pre-test and post-test. The statistical population of the research included 140 municipal managers of the 3rd district of Tehran, 30 of whom obtained poor scores in the psychological capital questionnaire of Luthans (2007) and Bass and

Avolio's (1985) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. They were divided into an experimental and a control group. the experimental group received McKay, Fanning and Davis (2009) communication skills training in 10 sessions.

Tool:

1. Luthans Psychological Capital Questionnaires (PCQ) (2007): This questionnaire has 24 items in four subscales of hope, resilience, optimism and self-efficacy. Luthans (2007) reported its chi-square ratio as 0.97 and 0.08. Bahadri Khosrowshahi, Hashemi Nusrat Abad and Babapour (2012) confirmed its reliability in Iran through Cronbach's alpha of 0.85.

2. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5) Bass and Avolio (1985): MLQ5 contains 18 items in four components of personal attention, inspirational motivation, ideal influence and mental stimulation. Marjgol (2013) used the opinions of their supervisor and consulting professor to determine the validity of the questionnaire, and then used the opinions of several community experts to modify and finalize the questionnaire. Rohi Marjgol (2013) confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire components through Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.97.

Results

In this section, the results are interpreted using the statistical method of univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The first hypothesis of the research was that communication skills training is effective on the psychological capital of the managers of the 3rd district of Tehran.

Table 1. Results of ANCOVA of psychological capital score

	sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average of squares	F	The significance level	Parabola square
Constant	21.946	1	21.946	90.881	0.001	0.0615
Pretest	10313	1	10313	42706	0.001	0.0428
Group	3897	1	3897	16139	0.001	0.0221
Error	13764	57	0.241			
Total	625689	60				

According to the data in Table 1, the value of $F = 16.139$ with degrees of freedom (1 and 57) in the investigated variable is significant at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level. Therefore, it can be concluded that the application of communication skills training has a significant effect on psychological capital.

In order to test the second hypothesis of the research regarding the effect of communication skills training on transformational leadership in the municipal managers of the 3rd district of Tehran, ANCOVA was run again, the results of which are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The results of ANCOVA of transformational leadership score

	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F	Significance level	Parabola square
Constant	28.456	1	28.456	203.472	0.001	0.781
Pretest	3.722	1	3.722	26615	0.001	0.318
Group	4.848	1	4.848	34666	0.001	0.378
Error	7972	57	0.14			
Total	52988	60				

According to the data in Table 2, the value of $F = 34.666$ with the degree of freedom (1 and 57) in the investigated variable is significant at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of communication skills training has a significant effect on the transformational leadership style.

Discussion and conclusion

The results showed that communication skills training is effective on organizational psychological capital and leadership style of managers. The limitations of the research include lack of full access to all employees' information, study setting being limited to only one district in Tehran, and the participants being only the managers in that district. It is suggested that managers be taught communication skills and public relations, and that supervising managers consider the level of direct communication between managers and employees or clients as a criterion for their evaluation.

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