



Research Paper

Synergizing Organizational Values and Psychological Capital for Wellbeing: Insights from Sri Lankan Public Administration

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Abstract

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The role of human cognitive processes and constructs such as psychological capital (PsyCap), wellbeing, and values in encouraging positive behavior has been extensively examined in the existing body of knowledge, especially capturing the attention of scholars and practitioners in the domains of management and organization studies. However, how these concepts interactively create positive behavior is rarely taken into consideration in scholarly discussions. Thus, the present paper aims to explore how the values professed by an organization (i.e. espoused values) could lead employees towards positive behaviors through PsyCap and wellbeing. The research setting is Sri Lankan public administrative organization (SLPAO) and the study participants are top-level managers. This study takes an interpretivist approach with a qualitative inquiry by employing a series of in-depth interviews and organizational documents, where the initial findings on espoused values of SLPAO were then subjected to a secondary qualitative framework analysis based on the theoretical lenses of CHOSE and PERMA models of PsyCap and well-being. The findings of the present study show that the public administrators' perceived espoused values carry reflections of wellbeing and encompass the dimensions of PsyCap. Accordingly, positive emotions are reflected by the values independence and humanity & morality; engagement by service boundedness and duty consciousness; positive relations by fairness & justice and concern on employees; meaning by public interest and effectiveness; and accomplishment by efficiency, expertise and formality & order. The findings clearly highlight how the espoused values become a source of PsyCap, encompassing hope and optimism while also tending to the collective well-being, and thereby enhancing positive behaviors overall. The findings suggest the potential application of PsyCap and well-being to leverage espoused values as a precursor of positive behavior among public servants. Nonetheless, the study emphasizes the necessity for further scholarly endeavors to explore the intricate connections between organizational values, PsyCap, wellbeing, and positive organizational behavior.

Keywords: Espoused values, Positive behaviour, Psychological capital, Public sector, Sri Lanka, Well-being

1. Introduction

Organizational values, the normative drivers of behaviour held at individual and collective levels of an organization (Bourne, Jenkins, & Parry, 2017), persist to be an extensively researched, discussed and debated area in the disciplines of management, organization studies, and psychology. Especially, the role of organizational values as an antecedent of individual and social behaviour have been explored in relation to various psychological aspects such as attitudes (Homer & Kahl, 1988), perceptions (Bao et al., 2012), motivation (Mayer et al., 2004), and thoughts, feelings and emotions (Barrett, 2013). Among the different perspectives in which organizational values have been explained, espoused values; the values declared and professed by the top management (Schien, 2004; MAglinio & Ravlin, 1998) are widely used to represent the ideal standards that guide the thinking and behaviour of the members of an organization (Chandrakumara, 2011) at the collective level.

At the same time, psychological capital (PsyCap) remains an area that has gained the interest of scholars and practitioners in the areas of management and organizational behaviour during the last few decades (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007; Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Li, 2005; Kim, Oja & Anagnostopoulos, 2023). Pyscap has been defined as a “positive appraisal of circumstances and probability for success based on motivated effort and perseverance” (Luthans et al. 2007, p. 550), thus affecting to individual behaviors such as work-related attitudes, deviance behavior, and organizational outcomes including performance (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). It has been understood as particularly important in wellbeing (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015) and positive behaviours and attitudes at work (Avey et al., 2011; Luthans & Frey, 2017). The role of PsyCap relating to wellbeing has been explained in extant literature referring to many dimensions such as desirable attitudes and performance at work Donaldson, Lee, & Donaldson, 2019; Donaldson et al., 2021), attitudinal outcomes (such as perceived psychological empowerment, employee satisfaction, normative organizational commitment and turnover intentions) (Shah et al., 2019), perceptions and individual and organizational outcomes (Srivastava & Maurya, 2017), student personality and academic achievements (Nambudiri et al., 2019), supportive climate and employee outcomes (Luthans et al., 2008), and organizational values and employee attitudes (Riemenschneider et al., 2023). However, discussions on how the organizational values contribute to wellbeing and PsyCap is notably sparse and has been given only a little attention in the available knowledge. Therefore, it is worthwhile to study how espoused values of an organization – as a determinant of individual behaviour and organizational outcomes – support wellbeing and PsyCap of the members leading them towards positive behaviours. Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to explore how the espoused values of an organization contribute to wellbeing and PsyCap.

Thus, in this paper we argue that the espoused values of an organization indicate positive expectations of ideal work behaviours that reflect employees’ PsyCap and wellbeing while leading to positive behaviours at work. This ground provides further insights on how positive psychology could act as a barrier for counter-productive work behaviours. In building our argument, we draw from a study we carried out on espoused values of public sector employees in a post-colonial context of a previously colonized island – Sri Lanka – where we identified that the expressions of public officers reflect positive expectations of the wellbeing of organization and its members. We adopt a combination of well noted two models in the positive psychology literature, i.e., PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) and CHOSE model (Luthans, 2002) to further analyze the identified espoused values in relation to PsyCap and wellbeing. Our argument could advance the existing knowledge in the areas of positive psychology, by

enabling the formulation of appropriate strategies to incorporate positive psychology into organizational values.

The first part of the paper will discuss the available literature on PsyCap, and organizational values referring to PERMA and CHOSE models and the conceptual framework of the study that combines the two models. Then after a brief explanation of research methods the data, analysis and findings are presented before giving the concluding remarks.

2. Literature Review

Overcoming the negative views towards human nature and human condition (Gable & Haidt, 2005), psychology of positive human functioning (Seligman, 2000) has been researched and theorized to advance the understanding, prediction and intervention to human actions at organizational settings, thus recognizing positive impulses at workplace. This concern has been addressed in the past two decades through several scholarly attempts (e.g., Luthans, 2002; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Peterson et al., 2011; Seligman, 2011). Resultantly, current knowledge on positive human behavior (Luthans, 2008) and positive psychology are rich with conceptualizations and models for further investigations. PsyCap and wellbeing have been valued as vital conditions of human cognition at workplace. Development of employee positive psychological capital (PsyCap) has been suggested as a potential human resource management strategy (Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010) as well as a support for wellbeing in organizations (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015).

2.1 Psychological Capital and Wellbeing

PsyCap and wellbeing are considered as expressions of positive psychology that bring positive effects to the organization. PsyCap is defined as “an individual’s positive psychological state of development” (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 542). Luthans et al. continue to explain the characteristics of PsyCap as to consisting of (a) confidence (self-efficacy) necessary for exerting effort at challenging tasks; (2) positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) perseverance toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain goals, when encountered problems and adversity (2007, p. 542). PsyCap is identified as a state-like construct and therefore can be developed through education, learning experiences, and social interactions (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Thus, PsyCap is taken as a construct built on other human capital sources such as intellectual capital, social capital, and cultural capital. Wellbeing, also known as flourishing, is defined as a combination of cognitive and hedonic happiness and meaning. The concept of wellbeing is further explained referring to five key elements: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, widely known as PERMA (Seligman, 2011).

Both PsyCap and wellbeing have been identified as higher order constructs of a respective positive psychological resources (Luthans et al., 2015; Lorenz et al., 2016; Goodman et al., 2018; Ho & Chan, 2022) and the dimension of PsyCap and wellbeing presented above have been widely accepted in literature (Kovich et al., 2023; Goodman et al., 2017; Kern et al., 2015). For instance, Peterson et al., (2011) reiterate that PsyCap is a higher-order core construct confirming efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. In a more detailed account, efficacy is defined as a person’s confidence about his or her motivational drives, abilities to use cognitive resources, and successful execution of courses of actions for performing a specific task, while hope is recognized as a positive motivational state that is based on the sense of goal-directed

energy and plans to meet such goals. Optimism is noted as a positivity-oriented future expectation as well as an attribution style that interprets positive events through personal, permanent, and pervasive causes and negative events through external, temporary and situation-specific ones. Then, resilience is known as the capacity to recover from adversity, conflict, failure, or even positive events, progress, and increased responsibility (Luthans et al., 2015). Tests of the impact of PsyCap at workplaces are not rare, and they have been reported on diverse organizational outcomes. The impact of PsyCap on subjective well-being (Hoseini, et al., 2016), employee well-being (Avey, et al., 2010), employee engagement (AlKahtani, et al., 2020), job performance (Kappagoda, Othman & Alwis, 2014), affective commitment (Ribeiro, et al., 2021), workplace stress (Çelik, 2018) provide evidence for some of them. The significance of wellbeing is also strongly established in the extant literature relating to organizational contexts (Amrani et al., 2020; Sahai & Mahapatra, 2020).

2.2 *Espoused Organizational Values*

Organizations, being intentional, valuing and acting social entities (Aadland, 2010), have core values that help employees make sense of and guide their everyday interactions (Howell, Kirk-Brown & Cooper, 2012). Organizational values are defined as the core beliefs and principles that guide both individual and collective behaviour, decision making and culture of an organization (Enz, 1988), and has been viewed in multiple perspectives. One of the basic classifications of organizational values is the distinction made between espoused values and enacted values. Espoused values are identified as conscious representations of strategies, goals, and philosophies of the organization (Schein, 1984) endorsed by the leadership (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Having explicitly declared (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Daly et al., 2004) espoused values represent the intention of the organization and encourage certain behaviours from the members (Bourne, Jenkins & Parry, 2017). They are mostly articulated by owners or the senior management (Schien, 2004; Argyris & Schon, 1974), encompassing the ideal norms professed to believe in and uphold by the organization (Enz, 1988) and thus represent the formalized part of organizational culture (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). The role of espoused values in stimulating positive behaviours at work has been widely recognized through its contribution to promote ethical behaviours (Kaptein & Schwartz, 2008), social integration (Coleman, 2016), organizational commitment (Howell et al., 2012), and sense of identity (Hitlin, 2003).

2.3 *Synergizing organizational values, PsyCap and wellbeing for positive organizational behaviour*

Integration of psychological constructs and the synergistic affect generated by such integration is fundamentally acknowledged by psychological resource theories including key resource theories as well as multiple-component resource theories (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan & Avolio, 2015). Values are viewed as internalized cognitive structures that guide judgments and choices of humans (Oyserman, 2015). In light of Cognitive Mediation Theory (Lazarus, 1991; 1993) values are identified as a cognitive construct that cause emotional arousal influencing cognitive appraisal, emotional responses, and choice of coping strategies. Based on the strong correlations between PsyCap and cognitive dispositions, Avey (2014) suggests stable individual differences as an important antecedent PsyCap. According to Hannah and Luthans (2008) values represent a significant Cognitive Affective Processing (CPA) unit, that affect PsyCap when activated in adaptive encoding. Upon this theoretical ground the role of values in encouraging (or discouraging) PsyCap becomes noticeable and worth investigating.

Organizational values contribute to shape the behaviours through a wide array of psychological constructs such as attitudes (Homer & Kahle, 1988; Adler, 2008), perceptions (Feather, 2003), thoughts and emotions (Barrett, 2013), motivation (Kasser, 2002; Mayer et al., 2004), and subjective norms (Dalila et al., 2020) ensuring a stronger behavioural control that in turn tends to strengthen Psycap. PsyCap itself is considered as a POB (Luthans et al., 2005) and with its ‘state-like’ nature PSyCap regarded as a developable psychological characteristic (Castillo & Lopez-Zafra, 2021). However, despite the proven theoretical significance, the attention paid on the role of espoused values as a useful antecedent of PsyCap in scholarly discussions is near to the ground.

3. Methodology

The present study was carried out as a single case study (Yin, 2018) on Sri Lankan public administrative organization (SLPAO). It employed a qualitative approach using qualitative secondary analysis (Heaton, 2008; Ruggiano & Perry, 2019) to re-analyze the data gathered in a previous study aimed at exploring the espoused values of the selected organization. Accordingly, the data gathered in the previous qualitative study through in-depth interviews and document reviews (Kaufman, Guerra & Platt, 2006), and thematized for identifying main categories of espoused values were re-analyzed in a different angle in a framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) within the theoretical frame works of CHOSE model (Luthans, 2002) and PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) relating to PsyCap.

For the initial study in-depth interviews were conducted with fourteen purposively selected most senior managers of SLPAO based on their designations, since the top management of an organization is often considered as holding the responsibility of articulating its espoused values (Kabanof & Daly, 2002). Thus, the sample consisted of 14 top level managers from highest tier of management, all belong to class I and III of the administrative service with work experience ranging from 11 to 33 years (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample profile of the key informants

Key Informant	Level in the top management	Service experience (years)
Key Informant 1	I	35
Key Informant 2	I	33
Key Informant 3	I	32
Key Informant 4	II	33
Key Informant 5	II	32
Key Informant 6	II	27
Key Informant 7	II	28
Key Informant 8	II	19
Key Informant 9	III	17
Key Informant 10	III	19
Key Informant 11	III	15
Key Informant 12	III	14
Key Informant 13	III	14
Key Informant 14	III	11

Source: Developed by the authors

Interviews were steered by an interview guide seeking expressions of key informants regarding the underlying values which are believed to be the ideals espoused by the organization, and each interview lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes. Parallely, key regulatory documents of the organization including Establishment Code, Financial Regulations, Code of Ethics, and the chapter III of the Constitution of Sri Lanka which pertains the public service were carefully reviewed for identifying the expressions of espoused values they hold, based on the wide recognition of organizational documents are as a useful source of data for identifying organizational values (Martin and Siehl, 1983; Rousseau, 1990; Kabanoff, 1996; Kabanoff and Daly, 2002; Daly, Pounder, and Kabanoff, 2004; Kabanoff and Holt, 1996). Initial data analysis process started with transcribing the interviews recorded as audio files. Initial transcripts were checked against the audio recording and transferred into MS word format with relevant memos and notes. At the same time, relevant sections (which contains value expressions) of the selected documents were extracted. Once data from both sources were organized, thematic analysis was carried for each data set separately, following the steps for assuring reliability (Braun & Clark, 2006), subject to slight adjustments to suit the study's unique purpose of identifying espoused values. After ensuring credibility through member-checking and peer-debriefing (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 2005), the analysis finally generated fifteen espoused values. Table 2 elaborates the value dimensions and themes such identified.

Table 2. Espoused values of SLPAO

Value themes	Description (based on categories and codes)
Public interest:	being concerned on the interests of the public and uphold such interests in a public centric manner while empowering the public for their common good
Service boundedness	being obligated to serve in a responsible and accountable manner
Formality and order	being formal and disciplined, adhering to rules and working in structures
Efficiency	being quick, responsive, productive and results oriented
Effectiveness	being rational, logical and strategic
Duty consciousness	being diligent, committed and hardworking
Humanity and morality	being considerate, respectful, and ethically and morally righteousness
Independence	being independent, straight forward and reasonably autonomous in making decisions and work
Integrity	being honest, truthful and transparent
Fairness and justice	being fair, equal and just in work
Loyalty	being loyal to the State
Expertise	being knowledgeable, skillful and exposed to the world
Thriftiness	spending funds & other resources carefully and economically
Exemplary leadership	being led by a strong and noble model leadership
Concern on employees	being concerned on employees' wellbeing, financial strength and growth

Source: Developed by the authors

For the present study, a qualitative framework analysis (Rosen et al., 2023) was conducted with the proven applicability of the method in social policy research (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). The coding structure for the present study was developed based on the selected analytical framework and using it as a matrix. First, the already identified espoused value themes were relevantly charted into the matrix cells carefully considering the content of each theme summarized in codes and categories. Accordingly, the fifteen espoused value themes were found fitting into the dimensions of PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) (Table 2). Secondly, the entire interview database was re-scrutinized to derive data relevant to the analytical framework, where a broader category emerged containing the expressions of key informants regarding the

how espoused values determine work behaviors. Coding structure for this category was also developed based on the analytical framework of the study and having coded, the data were charted into the matrix cells relevantly (Table 3). The relevant data were found fitting into the dimensions of CHOSE model (Luthans et al., 2018).

3.1 Analytical Framework

There are scholarly attempts that encapsulate the constructs of PsyCap, thus organizing the existing knowledge around these constructs. CHOSE model (Luthans, 2002) and PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) are two of the well-used models capturing PsyCap and wellbeing in the positive psychology research. CHOSE stands for confidence, hope, optimism, subjective wellbeing, and emotional intelligence, while PERMA denotes positive emotions, engagement, positive relations, meaning, and accomplishment. These two models capture the most important set of positive organizational behaviour elements of employees at work organizations. PERMA model has been tested in different organizational contexts for measuring well-being. One such example is testing the effects of music-making in school contexts (Lee, Krause & Davidson, 2017). Despite several attempts which captured all the concepts in a single model, many past studies have attempted to test PsyCap by using a few constructs. Connections between academic PsyCap (i.e., hope, self-efficacy, resilience, optimism) and student engagement is proven in education research (Luthans, Luthans, & Palmer, 2016).

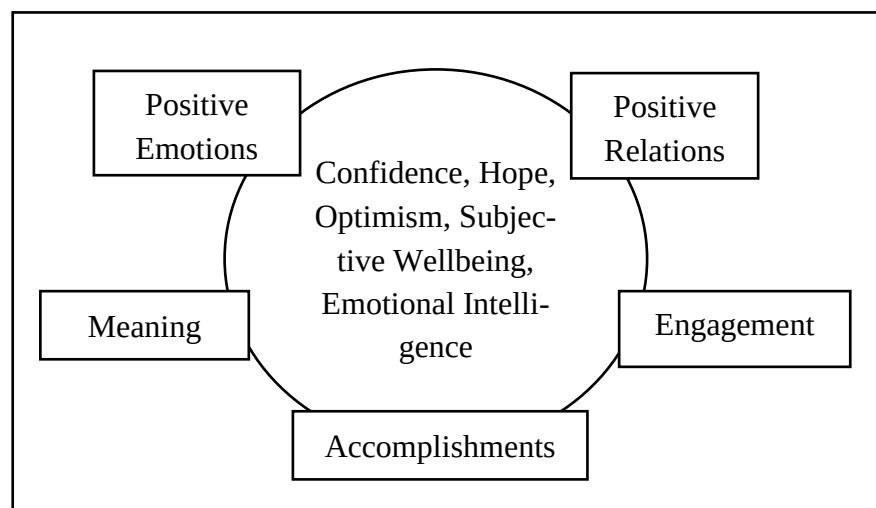


Figure 1. Analytical framework for exploring PsyCap and well-being in espoused values of public sector employees
Source: Developed by the authors

Further, optimism, self-esteem and subjective well-being and personality have been tested among trainees (Srivastava & Singh, 2015). Studies of PsyCap in managerial context are also not rare. Hoseini et al. (2016) explain managerial behavior in the field of marketing by using confidence, hope, optimism, subjective wellbeing, and emotional intelligence. Impact of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism have been investigated on white-collar employees' work engagement and job performance (Alessandri, Consiglio, Luthans, & Borgogni, 2018). Thus, past findings evidence that the constructs in these two models have been well used in the studies of PsyCap and wellbeing, including organizational managerial contexts. However, almost all such attempts have been limited to partial explanations as they capture only handful of constructs in a single study.

On the other hand, the wellbeing elements in the PERMA model (positive relations, positive emotions, engagement, meaning and accomplishment) activated in individuals at workplace cannot be created merely at individual cognitive level without having stimuli from/ response to the elements at their work environment. But, still, the elements captured in the CHOSE model (confidence, hope, optimism, subjective wellbeing, and emotional intelligence) seemed to be the constructs of human mind even in the absence of such immediate environmental stimuli/ responses. Thus, we understand that the elements in the two models imply two levels of constructs, i.e., individual cognitive level as well as their interactive level. Subsequent to this observation, we identify that a combination of these two models create sufficient grounds for us to understand the inspirations of public sector employees at their cognitive and interactive levels at work.

3.2 Research context

Being the largest employment provider of the country Sri Lankan public sector occupies nearly a 15 percent of the country's total workforce and continues to grow in terms of employment. The total public sector employment increased to 1.434 million at the end of 2019, compared to 1.424 million in 2018 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020). Employees of Sri Lankan public sector earn higher income than private sector employees where women earn 97.3 percent more, and men earn 44 percent more in the public sector (Hausmann, Nedelkoska & Noor, 2020). However, the country's public sector is often criticized for poor quality service delivery (Nafeel, 2014), evident in many indicators such as strikes and work stoppages (Amarasinghe, 2009; Amaradasa, 2012), tardiness and absenteeism, lack of accountability (Amaradasa, 2012), corruption (Transparency International, 2014), unethical practices (Fernando, 2010; de Alwis, 2009), and observance of power politics (Samarathunga & Benington, 2002; Nanayakkara, 2015), which disturbs the development of overall productivity of the country's economy (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2014).

Even though the failure of the SLPAO in fulfilling the service and development expectations of the public is repeatedly criticized, SLPAO continues to be the main, and sometimes the only, provider of public services. As such, it is important to explore how the negativities of the SLPAO can be avoided, the positives can be enhanced and productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness can be improved. Infact, there are key success factors that are commonly identified to play a vital role in every aspect of a country's public sector performance, such as quality management (Piemental & Major, 2016), knowledge management (Nagavi, Hossein & Hossein, 2013), customer relationship management (Lawson-Body et al., 2011), e-governance (Gil-Garcia & Pardo, 2005). However, apart from few discussions that highlight the importance of values in improving the SLPAO (Somasundaram, 1997; Warnapala, 2013; Weeramantry, 2005) there are hardly any studies that have been carried out in Sri Lanka looking at the cognitive factors that drive the public administrative organization towards success.

4. Results

This section presents the findings of the analysis elaborating the reflections of PsyCap and wellbeing in the espoused values of the Sri Lankan public administrative organization as perceived by its senior managers.

4.1 Reflections of wellbeing in the Espoused values of SLPAO

It was interesting to note that the espoused values of SLPAO as perceived by its highest tier of management indicate positive emotions, engagement, positive relations, meaning, and accomplishment reflecting different aspects of wellbeing (Seligman, 2011).

4.1.1 Positive emotions in espoused values

It was noted that the organization values independence of its officers and operations. Refusing the negative political interferences and interventions, top-level managers expressed the organization's expectation in empowering the public administrative officers to make independent, straight forward and reasonably autonomous decisions and to act accordingly. They further pointed out various explicit guidelines documented in key sources which enable them to be independent in performances. It was commonly agreed that the expectation of being independent makes public officers proud and happy. Even though humanity and morality has not been directly expressed in organizational documents as an espoused value, it was highlighted at the interviews with top managers in different angles. They are of the view that the public administrative organization has a fundamental obligation towards the society where employees need to attend the matters with a substantial consideration and respect towards the public while preserving the principles of ethical and moral righteousness. Both these values; independence and humanity & morality were explained as means of bringing happiness into work life. For instance, key informant 06 (Class I administrative officer, 27 years of service, female) pointed out, *"knowing and remembering that the humanity and morality are acknowledged by the organization as key ideals itself gives me immense happiness"*. She further explained that many of the public officers enjoy the satisfaction of being in an organization where humanity and morality are core concerns.

4.1.2 Engagement in espoused values

Seligman (2011) explains engagement as a component of well-being. This aspect of positive behaviour was clearly expressed in two identified espoused values, service boundedness and duty consciousness. Highlighting the traditional native ideology saying *"Service to the king (government) is superior than the service to the God"* one senior manager (key informant 2 – Special class administrative officer, 33 years of service, male) expressed the need for being obligated to serve in a responsible and accountable manner as a fundamental value endorsed by the organization. And also, as per the views of the top-level managers the organization needs its members to exercise a very high degree of diligence, commitment, and hard working. Notably, Establishment Code; the organization's key administrative regulation, explicitly mentions that negligence of performances as an offense.

4.1.3 Positive relationships in espoused values

Feeling supported, loved & valued by others has been explained as main aspects of positive relationships (Seligman, 2011). Few espoused values identified in the study clearly indicated the significance given by the organization to positive relationships. Firstly, being fair, equal, and just in performances was stated as a serious concern of the organization. Especially in its role as the government welfare service provider these concerns on fairness and justice were mentioned as the fundamental elements of organization's routines. As key informant 01 (Special class administrative officer, 35 years of service, male) said, *"every person should be treated in a fair and just manner as the officers are obliged to serve the public and not entitled to exercise any unfair discrimination"*. Importance of a strong and noble model leadership was thoroughly emphasized by the top-level managers indicating the need of a powerful guidance at every level of the organization for positive leadership. As per the words of key informant 08

(Class I administrative officer, 19 years of service, female) a proper leadership never leaves the subordinates in trouble but support them to make correct decisions and to adhere the right conduct. Further, most of the senior managers stressed the value of employees' wellbeing, financial strength and growth, while explaining the importance of concern on employees in formulating and implementing relevant organizational strategies.

4.1.4 Meaning in espoused values

As explained by Seligman (2011) when individuals believe that they are belonging to and serving for something greater than themselves, it gives them the meaning and creates positive behaviour. Among the espoused values identified in SLPAO, such a meaning could be especially noticed in three value expressions. First and most prominent value pointed out by all most all the top managers was public interest. The top managers were keen on being concerned on the interests of the public and upholding such interests in a public centric manner while empowering the public for their common good. They expressed the organization's concern for serving the public interest over the personal interests of the officers as one of the most important value they try to uphold. At the same time, public interest was expressed to be another core value where making rational, logical, and strategic decisions has been viewed by the top managers as one of the key concerns of the organization. As the public funds and resources are being utilized for the performances of the organization an extreme attention is said to be required in doing the right thing to ensure the meaningfulness and the usefulness of the tasks, while overcoming waste and mismanagement. Key informant 01 said *"We use public funds, and we are responsible in utilizing them in the most appropriate way. We always try to make correct and rational decisions, as it is what we are ought to do"*. Apart from entire set of financial and administrative regulations which provide guidelines for honest, truthful, and transparent performances, top-level managers also emphasized the organization's intention to uphold integrity in all its personal and collective level endeavors.

4.1.5 Accomplishment in espoused values

Mastery and competence have been stated as another two aspects of positive behaviour, where the same idea was expressed as efficiency and expertise. Top level managers stressed that being quick, responsive, productive and results oriented in all organizational tasks are expected. These aspects together indicate how efficiency is espoused as one of the organization's core values. At the same time, according to the top managers, public officers are supposed to be knowledgeable and skillful individuals who are capable enough to carry out the tasks to the satisfaction of the public while assuring the development goals. Another aspect of accomplishment was evident in expressions valuing formality and order where inclinations of being formal and disciplined, adhering to rules and working in structures were highlighted. According to Seligman (2011) this aspect of well-being is often pursued for its own sake, even when it yields none of the other elements of well-being such as positive emotions and meaning. It was interesting to note that many of the senior managers have acknowledged the over-emphasis given to formality and order in certain instances yet expressed it as an ideal condition.

Table 3 summarizes how the above discussed value themes fitted into the components of PERMA model in the framework matrix.

The above discussion elucidated the aspects of psychological wellbeing supported by the espoused values while probing the second inquiry: how espoused values contribute to promote psychological wellbeing. The analytical framework of the present study that acknowledges the close connection of PsyCap and wellbeing on the grounds of extant literature (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2015). Accordingly, the query was addressed by analyzing the

primary data against the framework matrix where it was found that the emergent category fits well into the components of the CHOSE model of PsyCap (Luthans, 2002) resulting in the following findings.

Table 3. Codes and categories of espoused value expressions for PERMA components

PERMA component	Value theme	Value dimensions (Codes/ Categories)
Positive emotions	Independence	Impartiality; political neutrality; unbiased decisions and performance
	Humanity & Morality	Humanity; Politeness; friendliness; consideration; respect; ethicality; morality
Engagement	Service boundedness	Obligation to serve; responsibility & accountability; service quality
	Duty consciousness	Diligence; commitment; dedication; hard work; duty consciousness
Positive relations	Fairness & justice	Non-discrimination; democracy and participation; equity; fairness; benefits to the needed
	Concern on employees	Welfare; personal growth & development; health & safety; financial strength
Meaning	Public interest	Public interest; public focus; concern on public funds; loyalty to the public; people empowerment
	Effectiveness	Effective decisions; rationality & logic; strategic thinking; sustainability; holistic vision; creativity & innovativeness
Accomplishment	Efficiency	Efficiency; productivity; result-oriented; responsiveness
	Expertise	Expertise; knowledge & awareness; competency & skillfulness; vast exposure; language proficiency;
	Formality & order	Conformity to rules; priority to structures and procedures; proper conduct & discipline

Source: Developed by the authors

4.2 Reflections of PsyCap in espoused values of SLPAO

The identification of how espoused values contribute to psychological wellbeing left a question what attributes of espoused values lead the psychological wellbeing. Accordingly, the emergent category; ‘impact of espoused values on work behaviors’ carried expressions that reflected the collective determination to fulfill the value expectations and positive attribution of value related achievements in SLPAO, connecting with constituents of PsyCap. The emergent broader category that enclosed expressions of the key informants regarding how the espoused values contribute to shape the functioning of the organization, was analyzed against the framework matrix developed based on CHOSE model of PsyCap (Luthan et al., 2002). Key informants commonly agreed that in a broader sense, the espoused values indicate expectations of the ideal work behaviours at both collective and individual levels, and thus make the public officers hopeful and optimistic about the ideal performances. Table 4 brings some example quotes from the primary data relating to emergent themes.

4.2.1 Hope embedded in espoused values of SLPAO

As elaborated by Luthans et al. (2007), hope is founded on three concepts i.e., agency, pathways, and goals. These three concepts denote the will to accomplish (motivational energy to pursue a goal), identifying goals and sub-goals and the alternative ways to accomplish them. According to the views of top managers these espoused values which make them a positive

expectation of the future conditions and act as a motivational energy for public officers to sustain their positive behaviours. Key informant 07 (Class I administrative officer, 28 years of experience, male) mentioned, “these espoused values act as a silent source of strength which help us to decide the correct thing to do by guiding the officers to select the suitable courses of action from among the alternatives in day-to-day duties”. Further these espoused values have been referred by the key informant 06 as an invisible source of courage that helps the officers to sustain their endurance against undue political, social and personal conditions that force them towards counter-productive behaviours at work. Thus, it is clear that the espoused values give them the motivational energy while serving as a framework to identify and pursue appropriate goals.

4.2.2 Optimism embedded in espoused values of SLPAO

Expressing his insights into how espoused values impact the behaviours of employees at work, Senior manager 10 (Class I administrative officer, 19 years of experience, male) stated that these accepted espoused values help the public officers to stay positive even among many disappointments they face in the service due to unfavorable political and social factors. He further said “*These values show us the dream organization we need to have. They remind us of what our organization acknowledges as good and, gives us the feeling that we are not alone when we fight for the correct thing*”. Luthans et al. (2007) relate optimism to positive attributions people make when dealing with the present and the future. Positive attributions are identified when people make internal, stable, and global attributions regarding positive events (e.g., fulfilled accomplishment), whereas negative attributions are observed when people make external, unstable, and specific attributions regarding negative events (e.g., missed accomplishment) (Luthans et al., 2007). Accordingly, senior managers’ view clearly indicates the role of espoused values as a convincing ground for positive attribution.

Table 4. Example quotations for CHOSE components as codes

Code (CHOSE component)	Example quotes
Hope	KI 7: “Espoused values act as a silent source of strength which help us to decide the correct thing to do by guiding the officers to select the suitable courses of action from among the alternatives in day-to-day duties” KI 8: “Espoused values give us the expectations of future as it always reminds us of the good motives that we need to uphold in our work.” KI 14: “We look forward a day where these values become realities in our organization.”
Optimism	KI 5: “These values show us the dream organization we need to have. They remind us of what our organization acknowledges as good and, gives us the feeling that we are not alone when we fight for the correct thing.” KI 3: “Even though we, as public officers, happen to struggle with many dilemmas in our jobs, we always know our espoused values will work and we wait for them to lead all our business.”

Source: Developed by the authors

5. Discussion

The above analysis draws insights into how espoused values of an organization leads positive behaviours and attitudes through PsyCap and well-being. As a whole, the bundle of espoused values creates a convincing ground for employees to keep a positive expectation of future which give them hope and optimism at the individual level. On the other hand, the

content of identified value themes give rise to positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishment in the interactions of individuals within larger external environments. Thus, espoused values can be identified as an antecedent of positive behaviours and attitudes, which restricts counter-productive behaviours in SLPAO (Figure 1).

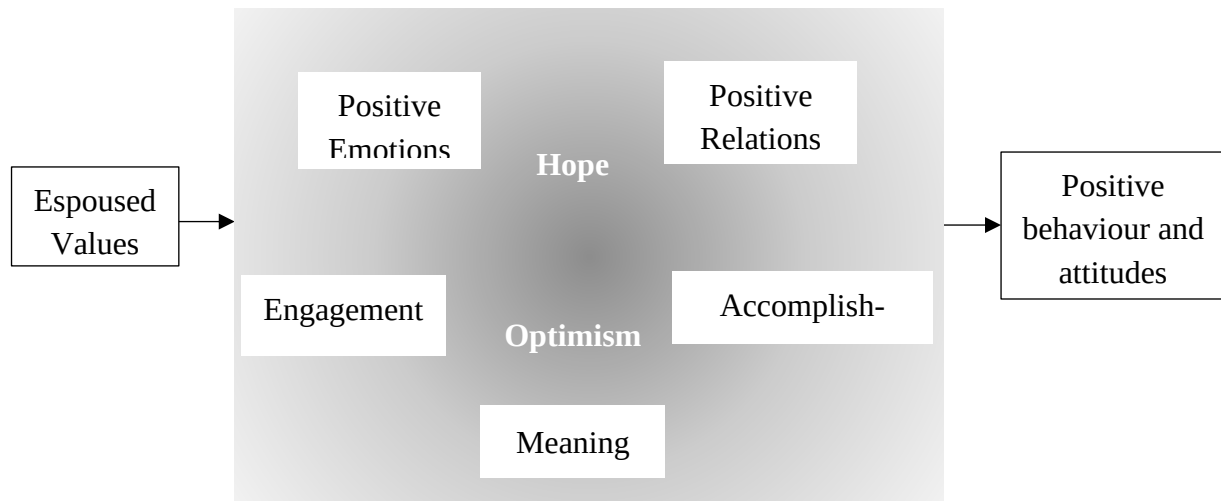


Figure 2. Espoused values as an antecedent of positive behaviour through PsyCap and well-being
Source: Developed by the authors

The exploration of organizational values and their impact on individual and collective behavior is crucial for understanding the dynamics within an organization. The present study focused on the espoused values of a public sector organization in Sri Lanka, examining their relationship with Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and well-being, utilizing the PERMA and CHOSE models.

The identified espoused values encompassed various dimensions, ranging from public interest, service boundedness, and duty consciousness to integrity, fairness, and loyalty. These values collectively create a framework for positive expectations of ideal work behaviors at both individual and collective levels (Brummette & Zoch, 2016; Greenhaus et al., 1983; Sims & Keon, 2000; Yu, 2014). Aligned with the available knowledge, the present study proposes that these values serve as a motivational force, instilling hope and optimism among employees. Further, the concept of PsyCap, incorporating elements such as confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience, aligns with the identified espoused values. The study also verifies that organizational values act as a silent source of strength, providing employees with the motivational energy to pursue their goals (Luthans, 2000; Koronios et al., 2019; Ren, 2010). For instance, the emphasis on independence and humanity & morality contributes to positive emotions, fostering a sense of pride and happiness among employees. Duty consciousness and service boundedness contribute to engagement, creating a commitment to responsible and accountable service.

The integration of the PERMA and CHOSE models provides a comprehensive understanding of the PsyCap and wellbeing elements embedded in the identified espoused values. Understanding and of these values and the need for upholding them provides the employees with positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, aligns with the study's findings. The organizational values contribute to positive emotions by emphasizing independence and humanity & morality (Bates, 2021; Cehn et al., 2022; Staub, 2013). Engagement is fostered through service boundedness and duty consciousness (Anitha, 2014; Heckscher, 2018; Rabinowitz & Hall, 1977), while positive relationships are built on fairness & justice and concern for employees (Colquitt & Zipay, 2015; Forret & Love, 2008;

Moorman, 1991). Meaning is derived from public interest and effectiveness (King et al., 2010; Morgan, 2019), and accomplishment is reflected in efficiency and expertise. On the other hand, the study findings show that the espoused values encompass hope and optimism contributing to PsyCap of the employees at the collective level. The espoused values contribute to hope by providing a sense of agency, pathways, and goals (Park & Chen, 2016; Synder et al., 2006). Optimism is fostered through positive attributions regarding organizational values. The study indicates that these positive psychological states act as a barrier against counterproductive work behaviors, contributing to overall well-being (Baer et al., 2018; Fida et al., 2015). Thus, it is evident that hope and optimism associated with espoused values offers motivation and perseverance required for positive organizational behaviours, through positive appraisal of circumstances and anticipation of success prospects (Luthans et al. 2007).

6. Conclusions

Present paper attempted to explore how the espoused values of an organization reflect PsyCap and psychological wellbeing of the employees leading to positive behaviours, based on the espoused values and its role in the context of SLPAO. It was clearly apparent that the espoused values, as a whole, create a convincing ground for hope and optimism among the individual members by giving them positive expectations of ideals. And more specifically the content of espoused values aligns with well-being aspects; positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishment, in their interactions with each other and rest of the external environment. It was confirmed that both PsyCap elements at individual level and the well-being elements at collective level act as drives of positive behaviour and attitudes among the public officers. Thus, it is clear that the espoused values act as an antecedent of positive organizational behaviour through elements of PsyCap and well-being. This finding addresses the puzzle on what grounds public sector employees are still remaining attached to their work and organizations, and what forces have been able to outweigh their performances against an array of negative comments flowing from general public domain. This understanding would draw useful managerial implications where policy makers can design and encourage appropriate espoused values focusing on the potential contribution of such values to enhance hope and optimism among the employees at individual level, while addressing the collective well-being in a collective perspective. Present findings imply the need of revisiting the nature and contents of the training programs to be designed for the public sector employees, and further they shed light on the aspects of social capital and cultural capital to be looked into and incorporated in employee development programs. Further, we understand that there is ample room for future research regarding the impact of organizational values on positive organizational behaviour, where the role of PsyCap and well-being in this relationship needs to be adequately verified.

The findings of the study contribute to the literature on positive psychology and organizational values, particularly referring to the public administration of a developing country context. The integration of the PERMA and CHOSE models enhances the understanding of how espoused values plays a role in PsyCap and well-being. This understanding can inform the development of strategies to incorporate positive psychology into organizational values. Most importantly, this work sheds light on the importance of cultivating positive psychological states through organizational values, potentially mitigating challenges faced by public sector employees. By promoting a positive work environment aligned with organizational values, the public sector can enhance employee well-being, engagement, and performance.

While this study provides valuable insights, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The focus on a single public sector organization in Sri Lanka may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could explore similar relationships in diverse organizational contexts to enhance external validity. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study limits the ability to infer causation. Longitudinal studies could provide a more nuanced understanding of the dynamic interplay between organizational values, PsyCap, and well-being over time.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the relationship between organizational values, PsyCap, and well-being, providing a foundation for future research and practical applications in fostering positive organizational cultures.

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