Eine Positive Psychologie der Arbeit

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Michael Frese
Leuphana, Universität Lüneburg, Germany
Und
National University of Singapore, Business School

e-mail: michfrese@gmail.com
Outline

• Proactive behavior as Positive Psychology
• Theoretical issues
• Measurement
• Outcomes of active behavior at work: wellbeing, positive mental health, achievement, optimal functioning, positive cycles
• Changing active behavior – training effects
Work is Fundamental to Humans

- Tool use
- Systematic tool use with some division of labor
- Tool use for useful products (societal usefulness)
- Tools are means to achieve productive goals in some form – in this sense theories are tools
- Active approach to work: active tool use and active tool development
- Wrong theory of some Greek philosopher who thought of work mainly as toil without thought – in contrast, only through systematic, thoughtful, and dynamic tool use can we develop humanity
Requirement for a Positive Psychology of Work and Organization

• Should be functional for doing work well
• Should emphasize the personal development that appears because of work
• Should emphasize the contributing role of work for societal development
• Should emphasize the positive function of work for mental health
Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior Concepts

• Intrinsic motivation (Ceci and Ryan)
• Positive Psychological Capital (Luthans)
• Engagement as the opposite of Burnout (Schaufeli, Bakker)
• Personality enhancement of work (Hacker)
• Personal initiative (Frese)
Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior Concepts – Intrinsic Motivation (Ceci and Ryan)

• Intrinsic motivation is motivation as part of certain tasks
• This motivation is reduced when external reinforcer such as money is introduced (Deci, E.L., Koestner, R. & Ryan, R.M. (1999). A meta-analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Psychological Bulletin, 125*, 627-668.)
• Intrinsic motivation works via autonomy and feedback
• Problem: It does not work well in the area of organizations because most work is paid/reinforced by money (Eisenberger, R., Pierce, W.D. & Cameron, J. (1999). Effects of reward on intrinsic motivation – negative, neutral, and positive: Comment on Deci, Koestner, and Ryan (1999). *Psychological Bulletin, 125*, 677-691)
Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior Concepts – Positive Psychological Capital (Luthans)

• Consists of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy
• These are useful concepts. However, not integrated to the work situation – look more like personality concepts that predict how we deal with work. They come out of nowhere. Are they not related to work at all?
• Empirically, hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy cross-sectionally related to job satisfaction and performance (question of what comes first is important – are people more hopeful, optimistic, self-efficacious, and resilient when they are satisfied and perform well?)
• Why is there no active approach to work? Why is activity at work unrelated to how people’ hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy develop?
Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior Concepts – Engagement as the opposite of Burnout (Schaufeli, Bakker)

• Engagement consists of vigor, dedication, and absorption
• Engagement is negatively related to Burnout (although not as strongly as originally conceived)
• Engagement is related to work characteristics and to work outcomes, such as job satisfaction and performance (longitudinal studies)
• And engagement is intimately tied to work – it is something that develops as part of work activity – highly useful concept

• Persönlichkeitsförderlichkeit der Arbeit: Entwicklung der individuellen Möglichkeiten des Handelns
• Voraussetzungen: Hohe Handlungsspielraum (Freiheitsgrade) der Arbeit und hohe Herausforderung (Komplexität) der Arbeit, so dass Weiterentwicklung der Fähigkeiten durch schöpferische Verrichtungen, positive Bewertung der Arbeit durch die Gesellschaft, soziale Kooperation in der Arbeit
Positive Psychology of Work Can Build on Prior Concepts – Personal Initiative, Proactive Behavior at Work (Frese, Parker, Grant, Morrison, Crant)

In the following concentrate on personal initiative
Active Behavior (= Personal Initiative)

- Self-starting
- Pro-active (future oriented)
- Persistent (overcoming barriers)
- Changing the environment

The Opposite of Personal Initiative Is the Reactive Approach:
- Does what one is told
- Is oriented towards now, not future
- Stops when difficulties arise
- Reacts to environment
Meaning of Self-Starting

- Being different from the “normal” or obvious approaches (contextual approach)
- Doing the obvious $\rightarrow$ PI is low
- If a high ranking manager takes up an innovation that is “in the air”, that other managers also talk about, it is not personal initiative
Meaning of Pro-Active

• Scanning for opportunities and problems in the future
• Preparing one-self at the present time for dealing with problems and exploiting opportunities
Meaning of Persistence (Overcoming Barriers)

• Protecting one’s goals and adapting one’s plans to overcome problems on the way towards a goal
• Active dealing with problems instead of giving up
• Self-regulation one’s anxieties and frustrations
Why is Active Behavior an Important Topic of Positive Psychology?

• Aristotle already talked about an active approach to life as being part of well-being (*Eudaimonia*) because it leads to **positive outcomes** in terms of wellbeing and achievement

• Because it is likely to lead to **optimal functioning**

• Similarly Johoda: positive mental health: **active orientation**

• Most important: **Positive cycles** – because active behavior changes the environment, we produce environments that produce positive effects in terms of becoming more active
Discuss these five topics:

• positive outcomes: wellbeing
• active orientation and positive mental health
• positive outcomes: achievement
• optimal functioning
• positive cycles

Many studies done in this area. I use two groups of studies here: Studies on personal initiative in normal employees (most important study in East Germany – longitudinal study)
And: most active – entrepreneurs – often in developing countries
Short description of operationalization of concepts
Outline

• Active behavior as Positive Psychology
• Theoretical issues
• **Measurement**
• Outcomes of active behavior at work: wellbeing, positive mental health, achievement, optimal functioning, positive cycles
• Changing active behavior – training effects
Personal Initiative: Measure – All Interview, Coded Answers

• Retrospective initiative and prompts
• Overcoming barriers: Situational interview – performance measure within interview
• Initiative in continuing education - now
• Overall rating by interviewer (includes behavior during interview)
• Comparison between interview and questionnaire measure
Personal Initiative: Questionnaire

(1) I actively attack problems.
(2) Whenever something goes wrong, I search for a solution immediately.
(3) Whenever there is a chance to get actively involved, I take it.
(4) I take initiative immediately even when others don't.
(5) I use opportunities quickly in order to attain my goals.
(6) Usually I do more than I am asked to do.
(7) I am particularly good at realizing ideas.

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Five topics:

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• positive outcomes: achievement
• optimal functioning
• positive cycles
Personal Initiative and Positive Well-Being, Positive Mood, Negative Mood

• Relationship between personal initiative and job satisfaction: Meta-analysis: Correlation between personal initiative and job satisfaction $r = .16$ (Tornau & Frese, 2011) – issue of constraints at work and initiative as a result of dissatisfaction
Personal Initiative and Active Mental Health

• Personal initiative (questionnaire) and depression: $r = -0.34$
• Personal initiative (questionnaire) and negative affectivity: $r = -0.22$
• NO good data at this moment – because a positive and active form of mental health scale needs to be used
Positive and Negative Mood, Affective Shift and Engagement

![Graph showing the relationship between mood and work engagement. The x-axis represents the level of negative mood in the morning, ranging from low to high. The y-axis represents work engagement in the afternoon, ranging from 2.5 to 5.5. Two lines are shown: one for high positive mood and one for low positive mood. The high positive mood line shows an increase in engagement from low to high mood, while the low positive mood line shows a decrease in engagement from low to high mood.](image-url)
Five topics:

• positive outcomes: wellbeing
• active orientation and positive mental health/
• positive outcomes: achievement
• optimal functioning
• positive cycles
Personal Initiative and Achievement/Performance

• Relationship between personal initiative and performance at work: Meta-analysis: k=16, N=2914: Correlation between personal initiative and perceived performance $r=0.31$, also clear relationship with objective performance: $r=0.17$ (Tornau & Frese, 2011)

• Personal initiative and work engagement

• Ugandan entrepreneurs (Koop, deReu & Frese, 2000):
Zum Vergleich

1) Viagra und besseres Funktionieren der Sexualität bei Männern: .38
2) Schlaftabletten und Verringerung von Insomnia: .30
3) Ausmaß der Zerstörung von Gehirnmasse und Verschlechterung des Lernens (Untersuchungen an Affen): .17
4) Blei im Blut und in den Zähnen von Kindern und Verringerung des Intelligenzquotienten dieser Kinder: .12
Personal Initiative and Work Engagement


![Diagram showing the relationship between personal initiative (PI), self-efficacy, and work engagement](image)

- **Self-efficacy T2**
  - **Vigor**: 0.85***
  - **Dedication**: 0.94***
  - **Absorption**: 0.91***
- **Engage T2**
  - **PI T2**: 0.57
  - **Individual Perform. T2**: 0.555
  - **Individual Perform. T2**
    - **Self-efficacy T2**: 0.64*
    - **Vigor**: 0.45*
Relationship Between Personal Initiative and Entrepreneurial Success in Uganda (Correlations)  

Initiative \( r \) with Success \( .42^{**} \)

Replicated several times, e.g., in East Germany, Malaysia

This means: Of those entrepreneurs who are high on personal initiative: **41% have highly successful firms**

Those who are low **21% have highly successful firms**


Change Situation:

Traditionally: Resistance to change
Positive Psychology: Initiative to participate in change
Company Level: Climate for Initiative Items

- People in our company actively attack problems.
- Whenever something goes wrong, people in our company search for a solution immediately.
- Whenever there is a chance to get actively involved, people in our company take it.
- People in our company take initiative immediately – more often than in other companies.
- People in our company use opportunities quickly in order to attain goals.
Definitions of Process Innovations

1. Business Process Reengineering (BPR)  

2. Supply-Chain Partnering  
   An informational network with other relevant companies for the purpose of overlapping company improvement in customer orientation and resource utilization (Handfield & Nichols, 1998).

3. Learning Culture  
   A continuously changing company with the goal of facilitating constant learning to its employees (Pedler, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1991).

4. Just in time production  
Gross Return on Assets

Level of Innovation

Low

High
Pro-Initiative Climate Moderating the Relationship between Levels of Process Innovation and Economic Performance of Company

Baer & Frese (2003) Innovation is not enough: Climates for initiative and psychological safety, process innovations, and firm performance; Journal of Organizational Behavior, 24, 45-68
Five topics:

• positive outcomes: wellbeing
• active orientation and positive mental health
• positive outcomes: achievement
• optimal functioning
• positive cycles
Personal Initiative and Optimal Functioning in Difficult Situations

High personal initiative leads to:
• Better career plans and better execution
• If unemployed they find jobs faster and they become less easily unemployed
• Higher employability as seen by others
• More innovativeness
• Higher propensity to become self – employed
• All achievement parameters
Five topics:

- positive outcomes: wellbeing
- active orientation and positive mental health
- positive outcomes: achievement
- optimal functioning
- positive cycles
Personal Initiative and Reciprocal Determinism: The Issue of the Positive Cycle
Central for our Theory: Changing the environment

High personal initiative leads to higher performance
Higher performance leads to higher personal initiative

High personal initiative leads to higher well-being and positive affectivity
Higher well-being and positive affectivity leads to higher personal initiative

High personal initiative leads to better career plans
Higher career plans lead to higher personal initiative
Positive Cycle: Reciprocal Determinism

Active behavior

Increase
Work Complexity
Work Control


PosPsych11
Antecedents and Consequences of Personal Initiative (Frese et al., 2007)

WORK CHARACTERISTICS

PERSONAL INITIATIVE

CONTROL ORIENTATION

T3 T4 T5 T6

.54* .20* .36* .42*

.59* .34* .21* .21*

.38* .74* .81* .75*

.67* .24* .18* .25*

.42* .41* .18* .33*

.29* .43* .29* .25*
Antecedents and Consequences of Personal Initiative

ie = interviewer evaluation
si = situational interview
qi = qualitative and quantitative initiative at work
poc = perceived opportunity for control
s-e = self efficacy;
asp = control aspiration

Complexity
Control
WORK CHARACTERISTICS

PERSONAL INITIATIVE

CONTROL ORIENTATION
Antecedents and Consequences of Personal Initiative

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Complexity
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Training Studies on Personal Initiative

Studies done on:
- Unemployed
- Employees
- Firm owners

8 studies
Training Study on Active Career Self-Management

Active goals, information collection, planning, and feedback seeking were developed with regard to career. → Effects were better pay, higher speed in job transitions and higher career satisfaction

Teaching Initiative (3 days)

• Business (personal) project and planning/goal setting
• Vision
• Check each situation for how you can structure it (strategic focus)
• Love it, leave it, or change it
• Take responsibility for everything you do
• Think of how you can do things differently
• Proactively think of opportunities and problems and prepare today
• You can do it (self-efficacy)
• (Ellis - ABCDE) Don’t allow negative emotions to dominate you, you should regulate them
Randomization: Intervention and Waitlist Control Group with a 1 year waiting period; Dependent variables were success variables of increasing sales and increasing number of employees

Also: Was personal initiative increase the mediator of the relationship between intervention and higher success?
Study Results:
1) Increase of sales level from 2.66 Mill Shilling to 3.39 Mill. Shilling for intervention group
2) Increase of number of employees from 7.9 to 10.7 employees after a year
3) The success of the control group actually decreased because of the difficult environment in this year
4) Personal Initiative was, indeed, the mediator between the intervention and the success of the business owners
Training Study in Germany

(p < .05)

Before training

1 year after Training

Experimental

Control
Summary

• Personal Initiative is one part of positive psychology applied to work
• Personal initiative and positive functioning
• Personal Initiative: Positive Cycles: change of the job conditions (job crafting and job change)
• Training Personal Initiative leads to positive effects

Why are People Active?

• An ontological given (orientation reflex, curiosity, mastery motive)

• Active approach leads to:
  • better handling of errors
  • active approach leads to better action oriented mental model
  • better knowledge of situation (exploration)
  • development of self-determined goals and tasks
  • better survival (including sexual procreation and better support for your genes through work)

• Active approach in learning: deliberate practice – boundary lines of your skills

• Active goal developments reduce monotony

• Active performance → more use of conscious level of approaching tasks