

IN SUPPORT OF OTHERS: AN EXAMINATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND JOB SATISFACTION IN ACADEMIC STAFF

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction among academic support staff. An online questionnaire served as the primary data source with follow-up personal interviews used to provide descriptive information that complemented the quantitative data. This study explores the relationship between the personal asset of psychological capital brought to the job and the work characteristics of the job itself.

This study applies the emerging concept of psychological capital to the previously understudied population of academic support staff in higher education. This study is also the first to examine psychological capital and job satisfaction within the context of higher education. This expansion of research into academic support staff offers additional insights for institutional leaders and highlights opportunities for leadership and performance enhancement. It suggests a relationship between reports of psychological capital by academic support staff and their reports of job satisfaction. It shows that institutions of higher education may wish to consider the inclusion of a psychological capital assessment in their hiring process for new academic support staff. Additionally, academic support staff may wish to consider including a self-assessment of psychological capital as part of their annual performance review and professional development planning.

This paper presents the findings from an exploratory investigation into the relationship between reports of psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007) and reports of job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) among academic support staff at a private institution of higher education in the northeastern United States. *Academic support staff*, the unit of analysis in this investigation, are defined as full-time, non-teaching, non-supervisory staff members. The administrative tasks performed by academic support staff include, but are not limited to, student advising, budget and operational management, data analysis, and student recruitment. Published academic research literature has generally ignored the role of academic support staff (Pitman, 2000). A number of international researchers (Gornitza & Larsen, 2004; Kusku, 2003; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009; Strajeri, 2009; Szekeres, 2006) have examined academic support staff within an organizational structure unreflective of the contemporary American model. Noticeably absent from the knowledge base are investigations of the work performed by academic support staff within the American model of higher education and the personal assets they bring to the work. This exploratory case study was designed to address this void by investigating the relationship between academic sup-

port staff's reports of psychological capital and their reports of job satisfaction.

Psychological capital was defined in this study as a positive psychological state of development comprised of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). For the purposes of this study, job satisfaction was defined as the perceived presence of the core job dimensions of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. As defined by Hackman and Oldham (1980), the presence of these job dimensions corresponds to the three psychological states of experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility, and knowledge of results. Individuals who display self-efficacy (confidence), optimism (positive expectation of future success), hope (perseverance to goals), and resiliency (ability to sustain through adversity) may display high levels of job satisfaction and, by extension, enhanced levels of job performance.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT STAFF

Germane to this investigation was the addition of specialized non-supervisory academic support staff functions to assist in operating the organization (Rudolph, 1962). Postsecondary institutions have responded to the growth

and expansion that took place in the second half of the 20th century by increasing their size and restructuring the work of the organization (Gornitza & Larsen, 2004; Leslie & Rhoades, 1995). Faculty members, for the most part, have continued to focus their efforts on teaching and research, while maintaining their involvement in shared governance and leadership in areas such as developing curricula and managing departments and programs (Henkin & Persson, 1992). While academic support staff can fill such supervisory roles as director or manager, a growing segment of academic support staff perform in non-supervisory work roles focused on student advising, budget and operational management, data analysis, and student recruitment. These staff members fill many diverse roles and now manage many different operational and clerical processes of the institution (Freeland, 1997). While these academic support staff are hired to do work other than academic instruction to students, the performance of their work duties is important to the delivery of an effective academic program. Their work requires substantial interactions with other members of the administration and may demonstrate the increasing leadership role for non-faculty administrators in higher education.

Despite the noticeable growth in and important organizational functions carried out by academic support staff, this population has neither been extensively written about nor examined. The two-volume work of Bess and Dee (2008) detailing the organization of college and university work does not make a single reference to academic support staff, focusing instead on the role of the officer-level positions of vice presidents and deans. Szekeres (2006) further noted that academic support staff have been marginalized in academic research, while studies that have included a consideration of academic support staff have tended to focus solely on the differences between faculty and academic support staff (Kusku, 2003; McInnis, 1998; Szekeres, 2004). In most cases, the research, contended Szekeres (2004), has defined non-academic academic support staff not by what they do, but by what they do not do. Given that academic support staff serve critical support functions within postsecondary institutions, it would seem important to begin to gain a basic understanding of their reports of the motivating potential of their work and the personal assets they bring to that work environment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Two complementary conceptual models were used to guide this study. The first model was the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), which focuses on the motivating potential of a job and, by extension, employee job satisfaction. The second conceptual model that guided this study was the Psychological Capital Model

(Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007), which encompasses an individual's psychological development. The Job Characteristics Model focuses on the aspects of the work as structured, while the Psychological Capital Model examines the individual assets that are brought to the work. Together, these two models provided an enhanced understanding of the work and the worker within the environment of higher education. The combination of these models allowed for an examination of the relationship between the two: what the work is and how the worker perceives that work.

Job Characteristics Model

The size and cost of administrative operations at institutions of higher education has increased dramatically during the 1980s and 1990s (Gornitza & Larsen, 2004; Leslie & Rhoades, 1995). While institutions of higher education have been slow to respond to environmental changes with organizational and structural enhancements (Diamond, 2002; Teichler, 2006; Tierney, 2008), the complex and competitive environment of higher education in the United States challenges institutions to maximize performance and manage complexity (Balderston, 1995; Clark, 1983; Rudolph, 1962). In order to enhance the quality of operations, institutions that place an increasing reliance on academic support staff for delivery of programs and services will need to pay greater attention to the job performance and, by extension, the job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2001) of this population. While a strong relationship exists between job satisfaction and job performance (Judge et al., 2001), there seems to be scant published research (Brown & Sargeant, 2007; Clayton et al. 2008) that has focused on the job satisfaction of academic support staff at contemporary institutions of higher education.

Hackman and Oldham (1980) proposed a model for examining the conditions under which employees will be intrinsically motivated to perform their work well. Job satisfaction occurs when an individual, "experiences positive affect to the extent that he learns that he personally has performed well on a task that he cares about" (p. 256). This positive affect serves as an incentive for continued performance in future work activities. The rewards of performance are self-generated to the extent that the individual values the internal rewards derived from good performance. The design of the work is an important influence in the potential of the job to contribute to employee satisfaction. The theory proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1980) focused on the actual work performed by individuals, specifically on the perceptions of job characteristics that lead to the critical psychological states. While each job characteristic (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) can affect the responses

of a person to a job, Hackman and Oldham (1980) proposed that the effect of the characteristics became more significant when they occurred in combination. According to Hackman and Oldham (1980), the presence of these characteristics prompts the psychological states of experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility, and knowledge of results. A minimum presence of all three psychological states is needed for a strong internal work motivation to exist. As proposed by Hackman and Oldham, the Motivation Potential Score (MPS) is a measure of the overall motivating potential of a job. MPS is a measure of job satisfaction, which is broken into three job characteristics: (a) the job ranks highly on at least one of the three dimensions that lead to experienced meaningfulness, (b) the job ranks highly on autonomy, and (c) the job ranks highly on feedback.

Psychological Capital Model

Job satisfaction has also been found to relate positively to the constructs of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), optimism (Seligman, 1998), hope (Snyder, 2000), and resiliency (Masten & Reed, 2002). These positive psychological constructs have also been synthesized by Luthans, Avolio, Avey, and Norman (2007) to form the Psychological Capital Model. Psychological capital is defined as an “individual’s positive psychological state of development” (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007, p. 542). In accordance with the findings of Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007), this individual asset, functioning similarly to financial, emotional, or political capital, may be used by academic support staff to influence their perceptions of their satisfaction with the characteristics of their job.

The results of several studies have indicated a positive relationship between individual reports of psychological capital and employee well-being (Avey et al., 2010), job satisfaction and performance (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007), trust (Walumbwa et al., 2009), commitment to organizational mission (Luthans & Jensen, 2005), and positive work attitudes (Larson & Luthans, 2006). Preliminary research (Luthans et al., 2006) indicated a summary affect regarding psychological capital; levels of psychological capital might have a stronger relationship to job satisfaction than any one of the four constructs that comprise psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resiliency) do alone. To date, no published research has used the Psychological Capital Model to examine the psychological capital of individuals serving as academic support staff at institutions of higher education. The recognition of psychological capital as a personal asset brought by an individual to their work could highlight an important, yet undeveloped, component of professional development. This development may assist an institution achieve

its goals in the complex and competitive environment of higher education.

METHOD

Two surveys, the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) and the Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1974), were administered as a single questionnaire via an Internet-based survey administration system. The questionnaire contained eight demographic questions and included an opportunity for participants to volunteer for a personal interview by providing their contact information. A personal interview guide was developed by the researcher specifically for use in this study. The guide contained seven major questions, and related prompts, that were aligned with the components of the Psychological Capital Model (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) and the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The purpose of the interview was to provide descriptive information that expanded and complemented the survey data. A semi-structured interview method was used to provide a further description of the phenomena. Based on participants’ response, the researcher deployed the techniques of elaboration, clarifying, or continuation probes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Study participants were recruited from Johnson Moore College (pseudonym), a private institution of higher education located in the northeastern United States. Study recruitment and research took place over a period of three months. Thirteen academic support staff completed the online instrument and a subsample of four participated in a personal interview. Survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Quantitatively-based findings were determined by item response rates where 50% or more of the responses clustered around similar anchors. The researcher coded the interview data, which consisted of word-for-word transcripts and field notes, using procedures associated with qualitative research (Creswell, 2009).

Psychological Capital Questionnaire

The Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) was used to gather participants’ reports of psychological capital. The instrument has 24 items that measure the four components of Luthans, Youssef, et al.’s (2007) psychological capital model—self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency. The items are evenly distributed across the four components (i.e., six items per component). Survey respondents were to select the number on the 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree) that best described how they thought about themselves at that moment. The

Total score was obtained by summing the ratings on the 24 items, yielding a total score range of 24-144.

To better describe the results of the Psychological Capital Questionnaire, the researcher calculated three ranges—low, moderate, and high—for characterizing and reporting the raw Total scores, with the specific scores corresponding to each range calculated as follows. The minimum score for the high range required a response of five or more on all items. The minimum score for the moderate range required a response of three or more on all items. All scores below the minimum score for the moderate range were classified as low.

Job Diagnostics Survey

The short-form of the Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1974) was used to solicit participants' reports of their job satisfaction. This survey was constructed to measure the five major classes of variables—skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback—in Hackman and Oldham's theory of work motivation. There are 15 items (three items per job dimension) with a 7-point Likert scale response format. The first part of the survey contains five items (1-5), one for each job dimension, and each has three item specific anchors. The second part of the survey contains 10 items (6-15), two for each job dimension. For these items, respondents are asked to indicate how accurate vs. inaccurate each statement is in describing their job (1 = very inaccurate, 2 = mostly inaccurate, 3 = slightly inaccurate, 4 = uncertain, 5 = slightly accurate, 6 = mostly accurate, 7 = very accurate). The Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1974) yields a Motivation Potential Score. The Motivation Potential Score is a product of the scores for Experienced Meaningfulness, Experienced Responsibility, and Knowledge of Results. The possible range for the Motivating Potential Score is 1-343; higher scores indicate high levels of motivation potential predictive of job satisfaction.

To better describe the results of the Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1974), survey respondents' Motivation Potential Scores were characterized as low, moderate, and high. The minimum score for the high range on the scale was determined to be 126, indicative of a high range on each of the contributing subscales. A minimum score of nine was established for the moderate range. This minimum score indicates a moderate range on each of the contributing subscales.

Personal Interviews

Similar to the survey results, and to enhance description of the results of the interviews, the researcher characterized an interviewee's responses as expressions of *low, mod-*

erate, or high levels of the variables under examination. Interviewees were distinguished as expressing high levels of psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) or job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) if they provided examples of all components of a particular model. Interviewees were characterized as expressing moderate levels of psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) or job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) if they provided examples of at least three components of a particular model. Interviewees were distinguished as expressing low levels of psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) or job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) if they provided examples of two or fewer components of a particular model.

LIMITATIONS

The researcher identified four potential limitations of the study. First, as a member of the administrative staff at a neighboring institution of higher education, the researcher may be acquainted with some of the participants in the study. Based on the acquaintances' understanding of the researcher's professional work role, these participants may offer responses that reflect a desire for acceptance rather than their actual reports. Second, researcher bias may also be a limitation of this study. The researcher is a supporter of psychological capital as a method to enhance job satisfaction. His belief that academic support staff should develop the personal asset of psychological capital to achieve greater levels of job satisfaction could affect the researcher's interpretation of academic support staff reports. In addition, the professional career of the researcher has taken place exclusively within private institutions of higher education. The researcher holds a favorable view of private institutions. This belief could influence his interpretation of participant responses. Third, this study is limited by the lack of complexity of the sample. Respondents for this study were selected solely based on the common characteristic that they work as academic support staff at a private institution of higher education. In addition, participants in the personal interviews were a self-selected sample. The personal interview sample may not be representative of the participants that completed the quantitative surveys. Fourth, the results of this case study cannot be generalized to a larger population. It is not possible to extend the findings of this study to past or future situations.

RESULTS

Results from the survey and the personal interviews revealed that participating academic support staff presented moderate to high levels of psychological capital, as characterized by the researcher for this investigation. On the

survey, 53.8% ($n = 7$) of academic support staff ($N = 13$) reported a moderate level of psychological capital while 46.2% ($n = 6$) of academic support staff ($N = 13$) reported a high level of psychological capital. In the personal interviews, two of the participating academic support staff ($n = 4$) could be characterized as having moderate levels of psychological capital and two of the participating academic support staff ($n = 4$) could be characterized with high levels of psychological capital.

A comparison of the current results with those from other similar samples cannot be made at this time because no published studies of the psychological capital of academic support staff seem to have been completed before the current study. Previous research (Avey, et al., 2009; Avey, et al., 2010; Avey, et al., 2006) has examined the relationship between psychological capital and various work activities. No benchmarking of psychological capital by work type has been completed, however. In addition, longitudinal data on the development of psychological capital within a population does not seem to have been published.

In the present study, the mean Motivating Potential Score was 180.04 ($SD = 74.1$, range 78-343). Eleven of the survey respondents ($N = 13$) reported what could be characterized as a high level of job satisfaction, as measured by the Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1974). Two interviewees provided examples of three of the components of the Job Diagnostics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), suggesting a moderate level of job satisfaction. Two interviewees provided examples of only two of the components, suggesting a low level of job satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study suggest moderate to high levels of psychological capital in the participating academic support staff at Johnson Moore College. At the levels reported in this study, psychological capital in academic support staff may represent an unrealized asset to the institution. Leveraging this asset in pursuit of institutional goals and individual performance may be a potential source of enhanced learning and job satisfaction. While it may be encouraging to observe these levels of psychological capital in the participating academic support staff, additional exploration is required in order to draw further conclusions.

When taken together, findings from the survey and the personal interviews revealed that participating academic support staff were satisfied with their jobs. On the survey, the motivation potential scores for 84.6% ($n = 11$) of the respondents ($N = 13$) were at high levels, indicative of job satisfaction. In the Job Diagnostics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), job satisfaction results from the three psychological states of experienced meaningfulness,

experienced responsibility, and knowledge of results. On the survey, 92.3% ($n = 12$) of respondents ($N = 13$) reported high levels of experienced meaningfulness. Additionally, 76.9% ($n = 10$) of survey respondents ($N = 13$) reported high levels of experienced responsibility while only 53.8% ($n = 7$) reported moderate levels of knowledge of results. While all of the interviewees ($n = 4$) provided examples of at least one of the three psychological states contributing to experienced meaningfulness, none of the interviewees provided a single example of their job requiring the completion of an entire and identifiable piece of work. The absence of interviewees reporting skill variety is notable, given the survey data indicating that 76.9% ($n = 10$) of survey respondents ($N = 13$) reported a high level of skill variety. More specifically, the four interviewees each reported moderate to high levels of task identity on the survey. A possible reason for the discrepancy between survey and interview results relative to skill variety may be in the perception of the worker. In the survey, respondents are asked to describe *their perceptions* of the work they perform. During the interviews, the interviewees were asked to describe *their work* or provide examples. It is possible that the participating academic support staff perceive their work as having a level of skill variety that is only evident in the examples provided. This interplay between perception and reality strikes at the very core of the research questions posed for this study.

Norms for the Job Diagnostics Survey were established in the late 1970's by Oldham, Hackman, and Stepina (1978). These norms provide a point of comparison to evaluate the results of the current study. The established Motivating Potential Score norms for the Job Diagnostics Survey reveal that men ($M = 131.54$, $SD = 71.50$) scored slightly higher than women ($M = 112.29$, $SD = 66.09$). Norms for the Job Diagnostics Survey also described individuals in managerial and positions as rating highest while individuals in clerical and processing positions were described as rating lowest. At the time the norms were established, Oldham et al. found that, typically, "high Motivating Potential Score jobs were populated by males over 40 years old" (p. 42). In the current study, a sample comprised primarily of women in clerical or processing positions revealed a mean Motivating Potential Score of 180.74 ($SD = 74.1$), exceeding Oldham et al.'s previously established benchmarks. There could be several plausible explanations for this phenomenon. The diversification of the workplace, and particularly institutions of higher education, may play an important role in worker roles and the characteristics of their jobs. These notions were not explored in the current study and are a potential area for future research.

Overall, the survey scores of participating academic support staff demonstrated a relationship between reports of psychological capital and reports of job satisfaction, ac-

according to the measures associated with the Psychological Capital Model (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007) and the Job Diagnostics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). On the survey, 15.4% ($n = 2$) of respondents ($N = 13$) reported a moderate level of psychological capital and a moderate level of motivation potential score, indicative of job satisfaction. Additionally, 38.5% ($n = 5$) of respondents ($N = 13$) reported a high level of psychological capital and a high level of motivation potential score, indicative of job satisfaction. Nevertheless, this same relationship was not revealed in the results of the personal interviews. This relationship, evident in the survey finding, affirms the results of the studies conducted by Larson and Luthans (2006) and Luthans, Avolio, et al. (2007) linking psychological capital and job satisfaction. Notably, those studies neither examined the population of academic support staff nor did they use personal interviews to expand upon the quantitative survey data. Although 61.5% ($n = 8$) of respondents' ($N = 13$) scores demonstrated a relationship between reports of psychological capital and reports of job satisfaction, the precise nature of this relationship is unknown and worthy of further examination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The increasing complexity of the higher education industry in the United States has presented a challenge to its institutional leaders and those who deliver its programs and services. The enhanced role of academic support staff, working alongside academic teaching faculty, in the delivery of these programs and services will test the adopted structures that form the nature of work in higher education. Institutional leaders have cause to investigate the reports of academic support staff regarding job satisfaction as well as the personal assets those individuals bring to their work. Only with this set of complementary approaches can leaders begin to understand the potential productivity and efficiency that can be provided to the institution by academic support staff. While the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction has been the subject of preliminary research in the service and technology manufacturing environments (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007), similar research has not been focused within the environment of higher education. The possible presence of psychological capital as the yet unidentified moderator in the Job Characteristic Model is an intriguing addition to the current study.

Recommendations for Practice

Institutions of higher education should consider the inclusion of a psychological capital assessment in their selection process for new academic support staff. Similar to education, experience, and political assets, individuals

bring the personal asset of psychological capital to their work (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007). Before engaging in an employment relationship, institutions of higher education should assess and consider the psychological capital assets of potential academic support staff. Pre-employment testing of personality, learning styles, and response to conflict are common in many industries (Hendrick & Raspiller, 2011). Others (Rhoades, 1990; Tierney, 1988) have opined that institutions of higher education have a proclivity for resisting change. With this in mind, the administrative needs of the institution may be best served by hiring workers who display high levels of psychological capital because workers with high levels of psychological capital are capable of managing in a stagnant environment by adapting their perceptions (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007).

Academic support staff may wish to consider including the assessment of their psychological capital as part of a reflective process focused on personal and professional growth and development. Academic support staff do not need to wait for institutionalized approaches to the development of psychological capital. They can and should take advantage of narrative or reflection exercises, as endorsed by Snyder (2000), as one path to enhancing their psychological capital. As a personal asset, psychological capital can be enhanced through the process of *personal mastery*. According to Senge (1990), personal mastery is one of the building blocks of a learning organization. Senge identified the two components of personal mastery as the identification of a goal and the measurement of the path to that goal. Once a worker has become familiar with the concept of psychological capital, they can assess their current level of psychological capital and identify a path to further development. Academic support staff have the opportunity to go beyond the job-related assessments of a typical performance review and delve into their developing psychological capital. The individual is also demonstrating the importance of their personal assets in performance of their work duties. This approach reaffirms the personal vision of the worker, synthesizing the personal and the job-related into a holistic review that can serve the needs of the institution and the individual.

Future Research

The results of this study help identify several recommendations for future research. This investigation was conducted at a single, private institution of higher education in the northeastern United States. Other investigators should repeat this study at other public or private institutions of higher education, either within the same region or across different regions of the country. Further, data could be collected from similar groups of academic support staff

to pursue the investigation of psychological capital as a group-level asset.

The sample for this study consisted of only 13 academic support staff working at a private institution of higher education. Other investigators should conduct survey research with a national sample of academic support staff at public or private institutions of higher education. A larger sample would also help to further explore the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction.

Given that the norms of the Job Diagnostics Survey were established nearly 35 years ago, it would seem appropriate to revisit these norms within contemporary work environments. The introduction of information technology (Black & Lynch, 2001), enhanced ethnic, gender, and racial diversity (Brief, Umphress, Dietz, Burrows, Butz, & Scholten, 2005), and the changing nature of the relationship between employer and employee (Berkley & Watson, 2009) have all shaped the very nature of professional work over the last three decades. A recreation of the comparison norms within a contemporary context would provide further insight into the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and potentially offer enhanced application of the model in the future.

Other investigators should explore the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction among different categories of academic support staff at public or private institutions of higher education. It would seem valuable for those in the field to explore the relationship between psychological capital and job satisfaction among different categories of academic support staff. This differentiation might be accomplished by sampling a large number of academic support staff and comparing the results of the investigation when grouped according to participant age, experience, gender or other variables. While administration of the established surveys would provide results suited for quantitative analysis, the value of the personal interviews to informing the quantitative results should not go underappreciated. As evidenced by the results of this study, the personal interviews provided some participants the opportunity to discuss aspects of psychological capital and job satisfaction that were not revealed in a purely quantitative method.

CONCLUSION

The increasing complexity of American higher education has required institutional leaders to better understand the motivating potential of academic support staff job characteristics. Complementary to this understanding is the need to understand the psychological capital assets brought to work by academic support staff. This complexity in the environment of higher education demands an

understanding of the work (job characteristics) and the assets brought to the work by the worker (psychological capital).

Work redesign in higher education is difficult (Keller, 2008). The job satisfaction and job performance of academic support staff may be improved, not only by changing the characteristics of their jobs, but by also enhancing the personal assets of the individual worker. The development of these assets may allow individual workers to find satisfaction and enhanced performance within the very same jobs. In the environment of higher education, it may be more efficient to develop the personal assets of academic support staff rather than attempting to change the characteristics of the job. This investigation of the relationship between the personal asset of psychological capital and job satisfaction is a starting point for the examination of these possibilities.

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