

The Impact of the HPO Framework on Employee Service Behaviour in Public Universities: Psychological capital as a mediator

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Abstract

Purpose- The purpose of the study was to establish the mediating effect of psychological capital in the relationship between the high performance organisation(HPO) framework and service behaviour and to establish the relationship between the HPO framework, psychological capital, and service behaviour in public institutions in Uganda. A multi-theoretical approach was utilised to explain a successful living practice.

Design/Methodology/approach- This study utilized a cross-sectional and quantitative approach, collecting data through a questionnaire survey from a sample of employees of public universities. The collected data was analysed to identify patterns and relationships using correlations and regression.

Findings- The findings demonstrated that the HPO framework (management quality, workforce quality, openness and action orientation, long-term orientation and continuous improvement and renewal) influence the service behavior of employees in education institutions in Uganda. The results also suggest that psychological capital is a critical component of service behaviours.

Practical/Managerial implications- The public universities endeavor to utilise the HPO framework to create strategies for sustainable solutions, such as creating new ecologically and socially responsible products and services and improving current ones to improve on their service behavior.

Originality/ value- This research advances knowledge about the HPO framework by revealing if all aspects of the psychological capital are significantly related to the service behaviors of employees in public Universities in Uganda.

Keywords- *HPO framework, psychological capital, service behaviors. public Universities, Uganda.*

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1. Introduction

Encouraging proactive behaviour among employees is a crucial pathway for companies to adapt swiftly and gain a competitive edge (Xu, Liu, and Huang, 2024). In the public sector, public service organisations account for the largest number, which are public organisations that provide services essential to the socio-economic life of the country, the community or ensure national security (Tran *et al.*, 2021; Vö & Löfgren, 2019). In Uganda, customer complaints in most public service institutions show that they are guilty of offering much less to their customer expectations; customer satisfaction is enhanced by service quality (Genzi, Pardo & Georges, 2020) with a fully-fledged liberal economy where competition for the best services should be the norm, most public service institutions in Uganda seems not to be offering the best services to their clients (Abanis, 2013). Service behaviour consists of employees' self-reports of role-prescribed and extra-role behaviours (Tsaor & Lin, 2004). Employees today lack positive service behaviour such as ethics, courtesy, empathy, and timeliness hence customers have continued to complain about services (Steven, 1999). It has been proven by researchers that high performing organisations (HPOs) can increase their ability to adapt and respond to change by continually monitoring progress against target and goal attainment (de Waal, 2020). HPO Framework can yield an accurate picture of the current status of this company (i.e. how far along it was towards becoming an HPO, Do and Mai (2020) validated framework, the HPO framework (de Waal, 2023)

A high-performance work organisation is one that is intentionally designed to bring out the best in people and thereby produces organisation capability that delivers sustainable leadership business results (Blanshard, 2006). It is further considered; "as a company that is more successful than its competitors in areas such as profitability, customer service, and strategy." Organisational and people capabilities drive performance and enable strategy (Waal 2014). However, people capabilities such as psychological capital (PsyCap) which consists of four dimensions namely; self-efficacy, hope, resiliency and optimism as suggested by (Luthans *et al.*, 2008), has not yet been considered as probable mediating variable between the HPO factors and service behaviour in the public service organisations.

Employees with high degree of psychological capital are able to handle their professional in – role service requirements at ease (Pradhan & Jena, 2016). Adjusting behaviour do meet specific needs of customers enhance service delivery (Garg & Dhar, 2020). Emotions that are managed properly reduces burnout leading to high service delivery (Yin, Wang, & Lu, 2020).

Researchers have been attempting to find out factors that contribute towards the service behaviour of employees serving in the public Universities. Existing research in this area indicates a positive relationship with high-performance human resource practices (Dhar, 2015), creative self-efficacy (CSE) (Teng *et al.*, 2020), psychological capital (Ozturk and Karatepe, 2019), optimism (Bouzari and Karatepe, 2020), organisational culture (Eid and Agag, 2020) etc.

That the HPO framework is valid for many countries is shown implicitly through the case studies of successful HPO transformations in various countries such as Nepal, the Netherlands, Philippine, Tanzania, South-Africa, UK, USA and Zambia. Explicitly we have researched this for the following countries: China (de Waal and Wang, 2017), Ecuador (de Waal, 2012a), Egypt (de Waal, Habil and Goedegebuure 2016), Palestine (de Waal, 2012a; Sultan, de Waal and Goedegebuure, 2017), Peru (de Waal and Orcotoma Escalante, 2011), Portugal (Santos and de Waal, 2019), South-Africa (de Waal, 2012a), Surinam (de Waal, 2012a), Thailand (de Waal, Goedegebuure and Akaraborworn, 2014), UAE (de Waal, Mroueh and Schiavo, 2017; Mroueh and de Waal, 2017), Uganda (Bagorogoza, de Waal, van den Herik and van de Walle, 2013), Vietnam (de Waal, Duong and Ton, 2009), and Zambia (de Waal, Goedegebuure and Mulimbika, 2014; de Waal and Mulimbika, 2017).

People in the HPO develop a model of the business that links overall goals to specific items the organisation needs to control and to measure critical success factors and key performance indicators. Then, they rigorously measure progress on the critical success factors. By doing this, they also consequently monitor goal fulfilment – openly confronting and analysing the reasons why goals were not reached. In spite of the wide utilisation of the HPO framework as a strategic human resource tool that is self-administered to determine performance levels of an organisation.

The public service especially in developing countries behaviour has not improved. Employees' today lack positive service behaviour such as ethics, courtesy, empathy, and timeliness hence customers have continued to complain about services. Even though research into HPO framework is well-established, with wide-ranging debates persisting in the realm of organisational-level performance (de Waal, 2020), there are relatively few investigations have examined the effects of HPO framework on employee psychology-related outcomes (Kim *et al.*, 2018). In recent years the PsyCap has been identified as enhancing the service behaviour in most service organisations however, the relationship between the HPO framework, psychological capital and service behaviour has not yet been examined. Hence the need to examine this relationship.

The purpose of the study is to establish the relationship between the high-performance organisation framework, psychological capital and service behaviour in Public Universities in Uganda. The study expounded on the following objectives;

- i. To establish the service behaviour in the Public Universities in Uganda.
- ii. To establish the relationship between the HPO framework and service behaviour Public Universities in Uganda.
- iii. To establish the relationship between the HPO framework and psychological capital Public Universities in Uganda.
- iv. To establish the relationship between the HPO framework, psychological capital and service behaviour Public Universities in Uganda.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. In the next section the theoretical foundations and the empirical literature review are presented. This is followed by the methodology and the analysis of these results, followed by the discussion and implications and conclusions. The article ends with, limitations of the research and opportunities for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

A multi-theoretical approach which may provide a clear framework in the study of service behaviour was utilised to explain a successful living practice as suggested by (Shepherd & Suddaby, 2017). The study was guided three theories the human capital theory proposed by Becker (1964), resource –based view (RBV) (Barney, 1991) and the dynamic capabilities theory(DCT) (Teece, Pisan, & Shuen, 1997). Most research on the relationship between the HPO framework and service quality is rooted in these three theories. The human capital theory (HCT) posits that human beings can increase their productive capacity through greater education and skills training. Human capital is composed of knowledge, skills, and cognitive abilities endowed by a person and they are foundations for raising the productive competencies of workers (Peers, 2015).

This includes factors like education, training, intelligence, skills, health, and other things employers value, such as loyalty and punctuality. Critics of the theory argue that it is flawed, overly simplistic, and confounds labour with capital. The use of more than one theory or a multi-theoretical approach is believed to leverage the weaknesses of one theory with the strength of another. The dynamic capabilities theory (DCT) Teece *et al.*, (1997), which puts emphasis on resources development and renewal, can be seen as a tentative alternative theory to explain superior performance in service delivery. The theory (DCT) enables firms to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments (Teece *et al.*, 1997). Resource based theory by Penrose (1959) popularized by Barney (1991) with Value, Rare, impossible to imitate and non-substitute (VRIN) model has been widely applied many in disciplines to explain competitiveness. The concept of resource may mean the strategic factor, capability, competence, and skills but without clear and homogeneous definition. Messo & Smith (2000) posit that sustained service quality is attributable to strategic assets, which Barney (1991), the brain behind the resource-based view, regards as the assets that are internally controlled and strategic to the firm.

According to the resource-based view, sustained service quality is influenced by resources that are valuable, rare, nonsubstitutable, and hard to imitate and that reside within an organisation (Barney, 1991; Stiles & Kulvisaechna, 2004). Accordingly, the discrepancies in size distribution and competitiveness of firms occur from their distinctive capabilities (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993). It becomes imperative that management monitors such internal resources to ensure the firms' sustainable competitive advantage to provide superior service.

From a different perspective, the fact that firms are faced with an uncertain, competitive, and dynamic business environment means there is a need to provide a coherent framework to integrate existing conceptual and empirical knowledge to match environmental volatility. In this case, the dynamic capabilities theory (DCT) Teece *et al.*, (1997), which puts emphasis on resources development and renewal, can be seen as a tentative alternative theory to explain superior performance in service delivery. The theory (DCT) enables firms to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments (Teece *et al.*, 1997). All these theories provide a detailed account of firm performance using available resources despite the limitations in their application.

Empirical literature

The High Performance Framework

A high-performance organisation framework (HPO) framework is a set of factors interconnected HPO practices. It aims to continuously improve and renew, openness and action orientation, management and workforce quality, enhances a long term orientation (Do and Mai, 2020).

That the HPO framework is valid for many countries is shown implicitly through the case studies of successful HPO transformations in various countries such as Nepal, the Netherlands, Philippine, Tanzania, South-Africa, UK, USA and Zambia. Explicitly we have researched this for the following countries: China (de Waal and Wang, 2017), Ecuador (de Waal, 2012a), Egypt (de Waal, Habil and Goedegebuure 2016), Palestine (de Waal, 2012a; Sultan, de Waal and Goedegebuure, 2017), Peru (de Waal and Orcotoma Escalante, 2011), Portugal (Santos and de

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2.2 The HPO framework and Service Behaviour

High performance factors and models will promote sustainable performance of organisations which will benefit employees, organisations and society overall (Kalimullah *et al.*, 2024). According to the social exchange perspective, when employees sense that their contributions to the company are noticed, they may feel obligated to help the organisation to achieve the company goals (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Driven by this sense of obligation, employees are more likely to perform not only prescribed-role but also extra-role service behaviors (Organ, 1988; Peng, 2007). Scott *et al* (1994) stated that empowered employees exhibit extra customer-oriented behaviors, because they become more flexible and adaptive in the face of changing customer needs.

Researchers have been interested in understanding service behavior to customers since Mayo's (1933) studies at Western Electric. These studies found that workers' behaviors are highly influenced by their surroundings. Bisconti and Solomon (2003) report that a favorable service climate that allows a high degree of autonomy and nurtures relationships among peers, supervisors and subordinates results in more positive extra-role employee service behavior. According to Yan *et al.* (2004) extra-role service behaviors are voluntary, so employees are less likely to be strongly motivated to conduct it hence need to build a positive service climate.

Service encounters involve interaction between customers and service providers (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997), and customers' perceptions of service quality would be almost completely based upon the behavior of employees (Bitner *et al.*, 1990). Employee behaviors represent the service delivery process, while customers' assessments of service quality represent an evaluation of the service delivery process (Gronroos, 1988). That is, service providers' behaviors would influence customer evaluation of service encounters. So, the employees' service behaviors will have an important role to play in influencing customers' perceptions of service encounters. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996) argued that service quality suffers when employees are unwilling or unable to perform service at the level required by customers.

Bowen and Schneider (1985) indicated that the attitudes and behaviors of contact employees could significantly influence customers' perception of service, because the attitudinal and behavioral responses of employees are the primary determinants of customers' perceptions of performance. Bitner *et al.* (1990) showed through qualitative studies that customers are more satisfied with the service encounter when employees possess the ability, willingness, and competence to solve their problems. Hartline and Jones (1996) investigated the relationships among service quality, service value, and word-of-mouth for a hotel, and the results indicated that front desk, housekeeping, and parking employee performance had significant effects on perceived service quality of customers.

Williams (1999) explored the relationship between employee service behaviour and service quality by taking the samples of employees and customers in hotels, and the findings indicated that employee service behaviour would have a significant effect on customer perceived service quality. A study on tourist hotels in Taiwan showed that service behaviour reported by employees was positively related to service quality reported by customers (Tsaur & Lin, 2004).

In addition a number of other studies have indicated the importance of friendly type behaviours like; friendliness, familiarity, caring, politeness, responsiveness, trustworthiness, helpfulness, and understanding, of service staff to improved service outcomes and long term relationships (Sparks, 1994). Lemmink and Mattson (1998) demonstrated that the degree of personal warmth displayed by service employees toward customers was related significantly and positively to service quality perceptions and customer satisfaction. (Hansen *et al.*, 2003) stated that customer's commitment towards a service company significantly relies on customer's commitment to the customer-contact employee. Thus it was agreed that customer's intention to remain with a particular service company is heavily determined by customer-contact employee's behaviour.

An experimental study by Brown *et al.* (1996) investigated the effect of respectful employees' behaviour on service encounter quality and satisfaction. Their research found that positive employees' behaviour increased customer service quality. In another research within Hospitality industry, it was concluded that employees' behaviours have great effect on overall customer assessment of quality and satisfaction regardless of customers' gender, nationality, and purpose of visit, number of visits and length of stay (Hanan *et al.*, 2008). Consumers tend to rate the quality of services through evaluating the process of service delivery (Schneider & Bowen, 1992). Therefore, behaviours of the contact employees affect the quality of the services delivered to customers in a certain degree (Schneider, 1990).

Therefore, several researchers have concluded that the quality of interaction between customer and contact employees significantly influences the formers' perceptions of performance (Bitner *et al.*, 1994; Schneider and Bowen, 1985). More so, if a customer is satisfied with the tangible product itself, customers often look to other cues, such as aspects of the interaction, in assessing quality in service delivery (Gremier, 2000).

H1: There is a relationship between the HPO framework and service behaviour in PU in Uganda

2.3 HPO framework and Psychological capital

According to Do and Mai's (2020) HPO framework emphasizes that a high-performance organisation (HPO) is one that continuously integrates best practices to enhance efficiency, meet market demands, outperform competitors, and remain competitive over the long term. The framework, drawing on the work of de Waal (2012a, b), identifies key factors and characteristics that contribute to HPO status these include the management quality, workforce quality, openness and action orientation, long-term-orientation and continuous improvement. Psychological capital is mainly defined as positive psychological states of individual development, consisting of four components, namely hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience (Luthans *et al.*, 2007).

Hope refers to a cognitive process driven by a sense of success in fulfilling individual goals (Snyder, 1995). Self-efficacy denotes confidence linked to one's own conviction about having the abilities to effectively execute a task (Bandura, 1997). Resilience refers to positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity (Bonnano, 2004; Masten & Reed, 2002). Lastly, optimism denotes a positive expectation that individuals' goals can be achieved in future (Peterson, 2000; Scheier & Carver, 1992). The definition of psychological capital has been modified and expanded by various scholars to suit various contexts as follows; hope refers to persisting towards goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed.

Optimism means making a positive attribution about succeeding in both the present and future. Self-efficacy refers to having confidence to take on and put in enough effort to succeed at challenging tasks. Resilience is the ability to recover from setbacks, adapt well to change and keep going in the face of adversity, in order to manage difficulty at work and overcome stress (Costantini, 2017).

Organisations creates work environment and offers support for effective use of PsyCap at the individual and teams level mitigating burnout and perceived stress that affects employees' performance (Wang *et al.*, 2024). PsyCap can have a significant impact on the way employees do their work it enhances individual confidence in establishing social networks (Liu *et al.*, 2024).

There is a positive correlation between PsyCap with various activities like human resources, finance behaviour and job performance (Kidron & Peretz, 2024). The PsyCap help in improving performance of organisation s through quality supervisor behaviours, work place social capital and employee well-being that help in identifying targets organisations gaps (Forester *et al.*, 2024). Hope has a positive impact on organisation commitment, job satisfaction and job performance encourages resilience and self-efficacy at work (Broad & Luthans *et al.*, 2024).

H₂: There is a relationship between the HPO framework and psychological capital in PU in Uganda.

Psychological Capital and Service Behaviour

Psychological capital is a positive state of mind that individuals can cultivate, and it includes four key aspects: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). In a dynamic challenging environment psychological capital is key to better performance (Luthans & Youssef Morgan, 2020). Improvements in PsyCap reshape service behaviour in the workplaces and it is inevitable that PsyCap should be enabled to get the desired outcomes from employees (Durdu, 2013; Wang, 2015). As well as these means, new kinds of capitals have risen such as human, social and PsyCap (Luthans and Youssef, 2004). In this respect, Aktas (2016) emphasizes that PsyCap is one of the most influential means in attaining the desired employee behaviours.

PsyCap is identified as personal traits contributing to individual productivity by psychologists (Gohel, 2012). Luthans *et al.* (2007) described psychological capital as “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace. Psychological capital consists of four dimensions namely; self efficacy, hope, resiliency and optimism (Luthans *et al.*, 2008).

Sridevi and Srinivasan (2012) asserted that employees who are higher in psychological capital would have more positive emotions; as a result they are more engaged and optimistic, which in turn exhibit more positive service behaviour. This assertion was made based on the findings from Avey *et al.* (2010) study who suggested that positive emotions may mediate the relationship between psychological capital and the attitudes of service employees and between PsyCap and the citizenship and positive deviant behaviours. The study carried out by Aljaghthani and Amir (2016) among Saudi Arabia female teachers revealed that psychological capital has great influence on work engagement behaviours despite the cultural background.

Earlier studies have investigated the individual level outcomes of PsyCap such as: employee attitude, behaviour, and performance (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010). However, in recent years psychologists have started exploring the influence of PsyCap at team and organisational levels (Sahoo & Sia, 2015). For example, West, Patera, and Carsten (2009) conducted a study among college students to understand team-level behaviour and outcomes. A reference shift version of PsyCap questionnaire (Luthans, Avolio *et al.*, 2007) was used, wherein the target item was focused on team rather than the individual behaviour and outcomes. The study has found that PsyCap was significantly related to team measures like cooperative behaviour, understanding, coordination, and achievements.

Dawkins, Martin, Scott and Sanderson (2011) have tried to explore the role of PsyCap at team level and have found the interpersonal dynamics are a leading goal-directed behaviour. Another study carried out by Peterson (2000) among 67 senior management teams found out that collective PsyCap in the form of mutual help and support is a distinct measure for achieving positive employee behaviour and business performance.

Luthans, Kyle, Jensen, and Susan (2005) studied the relationships between PsyCap and work related behaviours among nurses; the results found that PsyCap has a significant relationship in fostering extra-role service behaviour, job commitment, and intention to stay. Their studies revealed that employees who are higher in PsyCap are likely to have more positive emotions and subsequently positive service behaviour.

Wang (2015) studied the relationship between employee PsyCap and change supportive behaviour and the finding revealed that PsyCap was positively related to change supportive behaviour. Employees with high degree of PsyCap are able to handle their professional in – role service requirements at ease (Pradhan & Jena, 2016). Abraham (2003) in his study with service industries found that employees with positive PsyCap are likely to engage in extra-role behaviours resulting in better customer service. Psychological capital supports the relationship among intra-personal attitude and one's interpersonal approach (Abraham; 2003).

Fredrickson (2001) proposed broaden and built theory suggesting that positive emotional orientation builds resilience, kindness, hope, and focuses one's pattern of thinking for having a faith to be in a connecting world which demonstrates extra – role behaviour. In a study carried out by Plessis and Barkhuizen (2011) said that contemporary organisations are considering PsyCap as a prerequisite for creating a caring environment towards fostering better productivity behaviour and employee efficiency. On the basis of the existing related research summarized, PsyCap is perceived to nurture in -role and extra – role service behaviour.

H3: There is a relationship between psychological capital and service behaviour in PU in Uganda

The relationships between HPO Framework, Psychological Capital and Service Behaviour

With current saturated market and highly competitive economy, companies are exploring new ways of operations with capacity to enhance quality organisation, hence a need for a more holistic improvement model such as HPO framework (Andre & David, 2016). A research done by Zhungwei Li (2019) indicates that, as organisations struggle to become high performers, they should recognise the role of positive PsyCap which eventually transforms into a positive employee behaviour such as creativity, innovation, and effectiveness.

Many scholars have explored how to drive employee service behaviour better (Ghosh, 2015) however the experience of European multinational companies that embraced transformational initiative such as HPO improved employee mental engagement and service behaviour tremendously (Andre & David, 2016). In a study conducted by Castillo and Lopez-Zafra (2022), it was discovered that psychological capital acted as a mediator in 74 of the 99 samples of research literature. In a separate longitudinal study conducted in the American context by Carter and Youssef-Morgan (2019), it was found that psychological capital fully mediates the influence of mentoring on employee performance. According to Kidron & Vinarski-Peretz, (2024) managing employees' personal, psychological, and social capital is now considered key to sustained public sector organisational success.

Psychological capital is a core construct generated by HPO framework, which has direct impact on employee attitudes, behaviour and performance (Hodges & Timothy, 2010). A study done on 199 working adults from a cross-sectional organisation in United States of America concluded on how HPO framework attracted positive PsyCap and organisational identity and as a result positive deviance behaviour from their employees. Employees were found to wanting to identify themselves more with companies that adopted the HPO framework (Steven, 2010).

A study on the Thai organisations concluded a need to adopt relevant techniques that is able to improve the PsyCap of the employees which transforms into a quality service behaviour of employees (de Waal, 2013). In addition, the study in an Indian banking sector predicted the importance of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) as a mediator to promote Service Behaviour (SB) among banking employees toward the viability of business in the long run. (Sathymoorthi *et al.*,2024). Moreover, in the New Public Management (NPM) reforms context, along with the emergence of the Covid 19 epidemic, leading to large budget deficits of countries, these have affected the ability of public organisation s to provide public services (Mitchell *et al.*, 2021). To deal with these challenges, some authors argue that the HPO framework is important because of its benefit for performance (de Waal., 2020).

H4: There is a relationship between the HPO framework, PsyCap and service behaviour in PU in Uganda

Based on the presented literature including hypotheses, figure 1 presents the conceptual model.

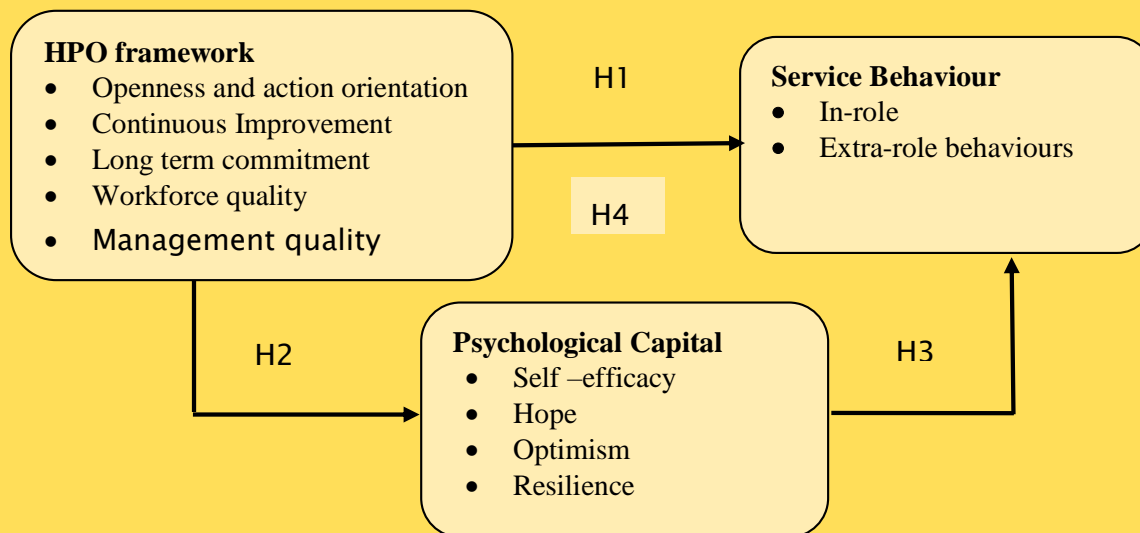


Figure 1. The Conceptual Model

Source Literature review: (de Waal, 2012; Luthans and Youssef , 2007; Tsaur & Lin, 2004; Hobfolls, 2002)

The research model demonstrates the relationship between the HPO framework, psychological capital are the three variables that may predict employee service behavior in the PU in Uganda. Evidence from the literature shows that the HPO framework and psychological capital have an association with employee performance. The model indicates that the influence of the HPO framework (openness and action orientation, continuous improvement and renewal, long term commitment, workforce quality, and management quality) and psychological capital (self – efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience) may improve employee service behavior (in-role and extra-role behaviors).

3. METHODOLOGY

Research design

Explanatory sequential research design which is cross sectional in nature (Creswell, 2014) was used for the study. The study used a cross sectional research design which involves analysis of data collected from the sample at a specific point in time (Lisa, 2016). This research design was selected because it allows the researcher to give an opinion on a cross section of a population about a subject in a more efficient way.

Target population and sample procedure

The target population were employee of public university in Kampala. The participants were selected from the public universities in Uganda because they are largely involved in serving the public. Using Krejcie & Morgan (1970)'s sampling table, a sample size of 486 employees of the Universities was selected from 900 employees of PU in Uganda. The unit of analysis and inquiry were the employees of the Universities.

The study sample was established using multiple sampling techniques, stratified random sampling for the institutions and purposeful random sampling for employees, the population was involving all the 7 public universities in Uganda. A simple random sampling method was used to select the sample size of employees in each PU. Simple random sampling is where each and every element of the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample (Alvi, 2016).

This strategy was used because there is no possibility of sampling bias and the sample is presumed to be a good representation of the population. Purposive sampling on the other hand was used to select respondents. According to (Creswell & Clark, 2017) purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling where the sample selected depends on the objective of the study and characteristics of the population. Purposive sampling technique is also referred to as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. Therefore, the employees were purposively selected from each PU since they have the knowledge and expertise in the area of study.

Operationalisation of study variables

Measures for some of the constructs are already available in the literature. So, they are adapted to suit the current context of Uganda's FIs.

The HPO framework measurement scale developed by Waal (2008) was adopted. This scale has 35 items: (1) eleven items refer to quality management, (2) four items refer to quality workforce, (3) six items refer to long-term orientation, (4) eight items refer to continuous improvement and renewal, and (5) six items refer to openness and action orientation (See appendix 1).

The psychological capital a measurement scale developed by Luthans *et al.* (2008) was adopted. This PsyCap scale consists of four dimensions namely; self-efficacy, hope, resiliency and optimism, it has twelve items.

Service behaviour was measured using 10-items of service behaviour scale developed by Bettencourt and Brown (1997) based on two dimensions of in-role and extra-role behaviours. The operationalization of service behaviour is based on prior research developing and validating measures for the two types of behaviour (Bettencourt, Brown, and MacKenzie, 2005). Ten (10) items are to be used to measure service delivery behaviour; five (5) on in – role behaviour (e.g. I meet all the formal performance requirements when serving customers.) and five (5) on extra-role behaviour (e.g. I do help customers with problems beyond what is expected or required).

Control Variables

Guided by empirical studies (Kampelmann *et al.* 2018), we controlled for workstation, organisational level, qualifications, gender and age to evaluate whether they can explain variations in knowledge worker productivity.

Data collection methods and procedure

Data was collected through administering a questionnaire as suggested by (Albuquerque, Ramos, de Lucena, & Alencar, 2014). A questionnaire was used since it is easy to administer, facilitates collection of data from a large sample at a relatively low cost (Li, Zhang, Tsai, & Puls, 2014). Therefore, the questionnaire contained structured questions relating to each study variable in question. The questions relating to individual the HPO framework, psychological capital and the service behavior of employees was be constructed on an interval scale that was be followed by respondents in providing feedback to the research. Respondents feedback was be guided as strongly agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Not sure (NS) = 3, Disagree (D) =2, Strongly Disagree (SD) =1. In addition, the questionnaire also contain both closed ended questions (Mitchel and Jolley, 2004). In total, the questionnaire had five sections including the background information of the respondents, firm characteristics, the HPO framework, PsyCap and employee service behaviour. Public Universities in the central districts of Kampala were surveyed to gain a greater variation of responses over the large number of questions. Using the introduction letter, the researcher was distribute the questionnaires to the target respondents.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was subjected to content validity index test (CVI) in order to ensure that it is actually measuring what it was intended to measure. Related to the above is reliability, which is the degree to which a research tool produces stable and consistent results (Phelan & Wren, 2005). A research tool is considered reliable if it allows a group of respondents answer the same questionnaire many times with consistency. The tool was subjected to a Cronbach alpha test and a result of above 0.7 Cronbach alpha was render it reliable.

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure (Souza, Alexandre, & Guirardello, 2017). This was achieved through developing the scales with the help of the experts and using items that were used in the previous studies. In addition, the researcher used the expert judgment to verify the validity of the data collection instrument. In this way, the supervisors will be contacted to evaluate the relevance of each item in the data collection instrument to the research objectives. Validity will be determined using content Validity Index (CVI). $CVI = \frac{\text{Number of items rated relevant}}{\text{Total number of items}} \times 100\%$

As recommended by (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009), for the instrument to be valid, the CVI should be at least 0.7

Reliability was achieved through administering the questionnaires and carrying out a pre-test of the questions to experts and pre-testing of pilot samples from owner-managers of small businesses who give the researcher feedback in order to improve on the questionnaire. In addition, test-retest reliability was used to measure the extent to which the questionnaire can produce consistent results when the same group of respondents are used under similar conditions (Amin, 2005). Pretest results was used to modify the questionnaire. To measure reliability of the quantitative data, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was performed and the recommended cut-off points of 0.7 was considered. From the results of the pilot study we were able to establish the Cronbach's alpha estimate of reliability for the scale.

Data Processing and Analysis

Primary data was gathered directly from the respondents. This is the data which is collected fresh and for the first time and still in its original form. This was done through administering a structured questionnaire and respondents was be guided through the questionnaires to ensure high level of accuracy in the data collection process. Data was compiled, sorted, edited and coded to ensure quality, accuracy and completeness.

Data was be analyzed using the statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) version 25 in order to summarize the data and make quick interpretation of results (Verma, 2012). Specifically, quantitative data generated from the questionnaire was analysed to get descriptive statistics that involve determining frequencies, percentages, mean variance and standard deviation in order to get general response to the question in the Likert scale (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014). Data was analysed quantitatively using inferential statistics Creswell & Clark, (2017), where the Pearson's correlation coefficient was performed to establish the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable (service behaviour of employees). Regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of the independent variable to the predictor variable (Bastro & Pereira, 2012).

4.0 Findings

The findings of the study are presented basing on descriptive statistics using frequency, mean score, standard deviation and coefficient of variation; then correlations and regression results.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics using frequency mean scores and coefficient of variation were computed for all the study. The pertinent results of the summary of the study variables are in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the sample's demographic variables, including frequency, percentage and cumulated percentage

Variable	Category	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Gender	Male	153	56.7	56.7
	Female	117	43.3	100.0
Qualifications	Diploma	22	8.1	8.1
	Bachelors	104	38.5	46.7
	Masters	87	32.2	78.9
	PhD	19	7.0	85.9
	Others	38	14.1	94.4
	Total	270	100	100
Organisational level	Dean	1	.4	.4
	Director	2	.7	1.1
	Head of Department	19	7.0	8.1
	Manager	40	14.8	23.0
	Supervisor	34	12.6	35.6
	Team Leader	59	21.9	57.4
	Employee	99	36.7	94.1
	Other	16	5.9	100.0
	Total	270	100.0	
Work Station	Worked from Home	82	30.4	30.4
	Worked from office	61	22.6	53.0
	Stopped Work	32	11.9	64.8
	Worked from both home and office	95	35.2	100.0
	Total	270	100.0	

Source: Primary data

We present the frequency distributions of the following sample characteristics of the respondents: (1) Gender of the respondents (2) employee's qualifications, (3) organisational level, (4) work station. The results are shown in Table1. In relation to the qualification, most of the respondents are highly qualified with a masters degree (32.2%); Bachelor's degree (38.5%); PhD and others at (7%). The results reveal uneven distribution of the gender of employees in the various public universities with 56.7% male and 43.3% female. Majority of the respondents

were employees (36.7%), team leaders (21.9%), manager (14.8%), supervisor (12.6%). The largest number of respondents worked from both home and office(35.2%), 30% worked from home, 22.6% worked from office and 11.9% had stopped working.

Table 2- Pearson correlation results of the Variables

Variable	Mea n	Std D	CIR	OA O	LTO	MQ	WQ	HPOF	Hop e	SE	Res	Opt	Psy C	IR	ER	S B
CIR	22.8 8	4.62	1													
OA	14.3 2	3.74	.544 **	1												
LTO	15.8 2	2.56	.629 **	.426 **	1											
MQualit y	17.7 9	3.68	.457 **	.400 **	.481 **	1										
WQualit y	12.1 6	2.4	.700 **	.394 **	.617 **	.433 **	1									
HPOF	82.9 7	13.2 9	.875 **	.735 **	.776 **	.720 **	.774 **	1								
Hope	12.1 3	2.95	.157 **	.115 *	.214 **	.207 **	.149 **	.212**	1							
Self- Effic	16.0 5	2.45	.363 **	.259 **	.509 **	.415 **	.372 **	.479**	.412* *	1						
Resili	12.0 2	2.94	.214 **	.136 *	.259 **	.240 **	.198 **	.265**	.201* *	.479 **	1					
Optimis m	11.9 7	3.6	0.05 5	.117 *	.128 *	.146 **	0.1	.136* *	-0.02	0.08	.148 **	1				
PsyCap	52.1 7	7.54	.289 **	.238 **	.411 **	.379 **	.305 **	.407**	.595* *	.712 **	.695 **	.555 **	1			
In-role	18.3 6	3.4	.447 **	.413 **	.518 **	.509 **	.363 **	.578**	.188* *	.413 **	.230 **	.277 **	.430 **	1		
Extra- role	18.4 3	4.08	.257 **	.594 **	.385 **	.374 **	.165 **	.464**	.112* *	.308 **	.279 **	.247 **	.371 **	.655 **	1	
ServBeh	36.7 9	6.81	.377 **	.562 **	.489 **	.478 **	.280 **	.567**	.161* *	.391 **	.282 **	.286 **	.437 **	.892 **	.926 **	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 2 indicate that the high performance organisation framework (HPOF) aspects are positively associated with employee service behaviour ($r = .567^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). This means that changes in HPO framework may be related to changes that may happen in the employee's service behaviour. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was accepted.

This shows that positive changes in the HPO framework usage is associated with positive changes in service behaviour; meaning that the utilisation of the HPO framework, and improving service delivery in public universities can be a catalyst in reforming operational, relational and in role and extra role service behaviour.

The results further indicate that HPO framework is significantly and positively related to PsyCap ($r = .407^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This means that variations in the HPO framework factors are related to variations that may result out of the PsyCap. Thus, hypothesis 2 was accepted. This indicates that positive changes in the HPO framework is associated with positive changes in PsyCap. This also suggests that public Universities entities which promote openness and action orientation, continuous improvement and renewal and long term orientation are likely to have value addition, customer satisfaction and quality services. It further implies that the HPO framework promotes improved SB in the public Universities.

Further, results show that PsyCap are significant and positively related to the service behaviour(SB) in the public Universities in Uganda ($r = .437^{**}$, $p < 0.05$). PsyCap are significant and positively correlated to service behaviour. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was accepted. This proposes that changes in the PsyCap can be related to changes that may take place in the employees' service behaviour. This indicates that positive changes in PsyCap is associated with positive changes in service behaviour. In other words, positive changes in PsyCap are associated with positive changes in in-role and extra role service behaviour operational, relational and service practices. PsyCap is likely to strengthen service behaviour.

4.3 The Regression

To establish the mediation effect of the psychological capital in the relationship between, the HPO framework and employee service behaviour a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. We distinguish the HPO framework as the independent variable, PsyCap as the mediating and employee service behaviour as the dependent variable to run the three models. The regression coefficients were used as pointers of the reflection of whether or not the impact of each variable is significant.

Table 3. Hierarchical regression of the HPO framework, psychological capital on service behaviour

Model	1	2	3	Collinearity Statistics			
	Beta	Beta	Beta	t	Sig	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	5.759			1.927	.055		
Organisational level	-.053	-.051	.021	.460	.646	.971	1.030
Workstation	-.079	-.089	-.082	-1.822	.069	.998	1.002
Psychological Capital		.438**	.248	5.029	.000	.831	1.204
HPO Framework			.469**	9.412	.000	.811	1.233
R: .616 ; R ² : .379 ; Adj R: .371 ; ΔR ² change: .179 ; ΔF change: .88.583 ; Sig F Change : .000 F: 47.052 ; Sig: .000 ; Durbin Watson = 1.786							

**Significant at the 0.01 level (p < .01); *Significant at the 0.05 level (p < .05)

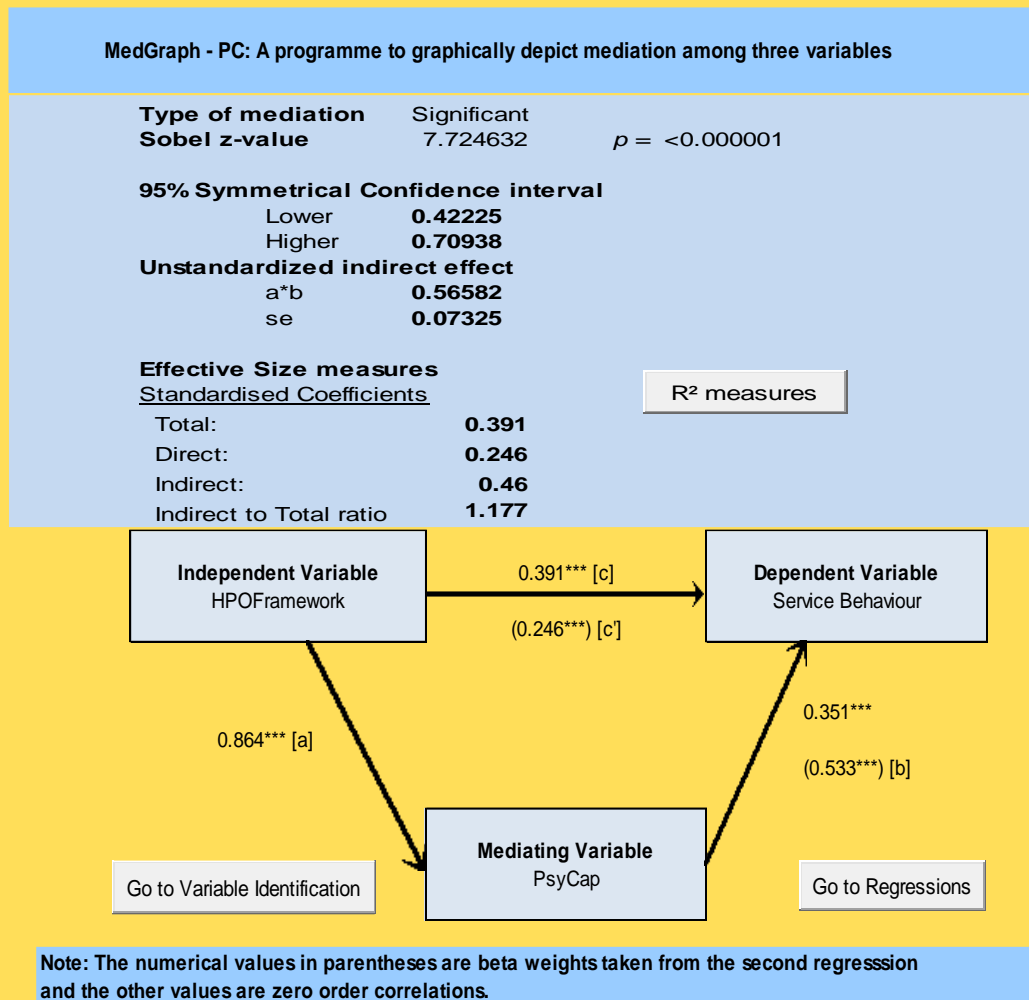
Source: *Primary data*

We controlled for two demographic factors work station and organisational level but they didn't have a significant effect on our model. The Model shows that the control variables the workstation ($\beta = -.079, p < .001$), organisational level ($\beta = -.053$). The results indicate that HPO framework explain significantly the variance in service behaviour ($\beta = .469, p < .001$). Model 2 shows that HPO framework has an effect on PsyCap ($\beta = .438, p < .001$). The results indicate that the PsyCap explains significantly service behaviour. In Model 3; Overall the percentage of the variance explained by HPO framework and service behaviour is 41% ($R^2 = .379$; ΔF change $88.583 = p < 0.000$) with the HPO framework explaining ($\beta = .469$).

The significant p-value confirmed the hypothesis that there is a mediating role on PsyCap in the correlation between HPO framework and service behaviour. The HPO framework explaining ($\beta = .469, p < .001$) of employee service behaviour at (Sig. $< .000$). Finally, the study sought to determine the joint effect of the HPO framework, PsyCap, service behaviour. Hypothesis four which was formulated as follow; *Hypothesis 4: PsyCap mediates the relationship between HPO framework and employee service behaviour.*

Overall, the regression results support the conditions for mediation to be realised. Therefore, according to Baron and Kenny (1986) and Kenny et al. (1998), PsyCap mediates the relationship between the HPO framework and service behaviour, which leads to the acceptance of hypothesis 4. However, the significance of the mediation effect is not yet tested because we cannot rely on Baron and Kenny's (1986) regression equations to prove a meditation claim which may require other tests like the Sobel' z test. Related to the above results, the significance of the mediation effect and the nature or type of mediation was also tested by calculating the Sobel z-value and ratio index using the Med Graph programme¹. The Sobel test is testing the magnitude of the mediation.

The results are given in Figure 2.



*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Figure 2 Sobel test results (the HPO framework, PsyCap and service behaviour)

From Figure 2, it is evident that a Sobel z- value of 7. 724 ($p > 0.000$) and the beta weight for the basic relationship between the HPO framework and service behaviour ($r = .391^{**}$, $p < .001$) have been registered. These results imply the following.

(i) Since the Sobel z-value is large and significant, it signifies that PsyCap mediates the relationship between the HPO framework and service behaviour. In practice, it implies that the association between the HPO framework and service behaviour has significantly reduced (from .391 to .246 beta values) after including PsyCap in the third regression model (cf. Jose, 2008).

(ii) Since the correlation between the independent variable and dependent variable has not been reduced to zero after introducing PsyCap, it implies that there is no mediation in the relationship between the variables in question (cf. Jose, 2008).

(iii) The ratio index is $(.246/.391 \times 100)$ which in this case means that 55.4% of the effect of the HPO framework on service behaviour goes through PsyCap (mediating variable), and 30.2% of the effect is direct see Figure 2, Model HPO2. So, with sufficient evidence we may state that the PsyCap increases the strength of the relationship between the HPO framework and service behaviour in public Universities.

According to Jose (2008), an index ratio of above 50% normally indicates full mediation although we should actually look at the change in coefficients arising from the third regression equation, and then note whether the change is significant or not. If the change is significant like it is in our case, then there is null mediation probably because the mediator PsyCap does not take over the effect of the HPO framework on service behaviour, since the HPO framework carry an effect of ($\beta = .469$ $p < .01$) to the criterion variable (cf. Baron and Kenny, 1986; Jose, 2008).

Despite the fact that the Medgraph indicates whether the mediation is full or partial, Jose does not explain the balance of the percentage of the index ratio. The Sobel test results indicate that PsyCap mediates the relationship between HPO framework and service behaviour in the public Universities.

Thus, hypothesis 4 which states that there is a significant mediation effect of PsyCap in the relationship between the HPO framework and service behaviour is partially supported in the public Universities. All in all, we have established a partial mediation for PsyCap in the relation between HPO framework and service behaviour.

5. Discussion

This research aimed to test HPO framework validity and its direct effect on service behaviour. From the research findings, the discussion of the study was presented based on the hypotheses of the study based on the relationship between HPO framework and employee service behaviour; psychological capital and employee service behaviour; HPO framework and PsyCap and the mediating effect of the HPO framework, PsyCap and employee service behaviour in the public universities. The study found empirical support of four hypotheses and the results are found consistent with prior studies. The first hypothesis (H_1) was supported which means the HPO framework has a positive and significant effect on service behaviour. A positive change in the HPO framework usage is associated with positive changes in service behaviour; meaning that the utilisation of the HPO framework may improve service delivery in public universities and can be a catalyst in reforming operational, relational and in role and extra role service behaviour. This was in agreement with Kalimullah *et al.*, (2024), they studied HPO framework and organisation performance: lens of dynamic capability theory in public sector of Pakistan. They established that the results show that the HPO framework is valid for public service organisations. However, this study found weak predictive relevance and small effect size of HPO framework in public organisations.

The integration of DCT in the public University of Uganda can facilitate adaptability and responsiveness to the country's evolving higher education environment. Public organisations need to be able to sense changes in the external environment and proactively respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. This is in line with the observations of (Kalimullah *et al.*, 2024). In order to bridge this gap, scholars have Using the RBV theory (Barney 1996) and the dynamic capabilities theory (Teece *et al.*, 1997), the aim of this study was to highlight the effect of the HPO framework on in-role and extra-role service through the mediating roles of PsyCap and the HPO framework and service behaviour. The resource-based perspective of the company contends that employees are a critical resource for organisational innovation (Wernerfelt, 1995). In the context of Uganda, the results of this study also reflect the issues of power distance the rigid and inflexible approach of managing public organisations in developing countries in general and Uganda in particular turn into organization culture where quality service delivery to public becomes less critical.

The first hypothesis (H₂) was supported which indicates that a positive change in the HPO framework is associated with positive changes in PsyCap. This was in agreement with Do and Mai (2020) who suggested that the key aspects of the HPO framework continuous improvement focuses on improving processes, innovating products and services, and responding to market developments. The employee quality HPO are characterised by attracting, developing and retaining a diverse, skills and resilient workforce This was in agreement with (Yadav & de Waal, 2020). The management quality HPO framework suggests that managers who are trustworthy, committed and focused on action-oriented decision-making. While openness and action orientation HPO foster an open culture where employees' opinions are valued, and making mistakes is seen as an opportunity for learning. The long term orientation the HPO builds partnerships with stakeholders and focus on long-term sustainability and growth.

Hypothesis (H₃) was supported which implies that this indicates that positive changes in PsyCap is associated with positive changes in service behaviour. We overall, PsyCap improves employee well-being, happiness, creativity, and facilitates building physical, cognitive and social resources (Avey *et al.*, 2011). Our study reveals that both PsyCap and service behaviour are closely intertwined in a reciprocal relationship, reinforcing each other. On one hand, positive perception about the future improves personal PsyCap. Future-oriented persons with a positive feeling about life encourages better work attitudes, well-being, happiness, greater self-efficacy and persistence in coping with hardship at work and elsewhere; it confirms the key tenet that service has a positive effect on psychological and work-related outcomes. (Rudolph *et al.*, 2018; Zhengwei Li, *et al.*, 2019).

An employee equipped with more hope, self-efficacy, optimism, and persistence is more likely to anticipate positive outcomes and to have more confidence and motivation in building positive future expectations, this confirming the belief that PsyCap is a personal resource (Luthans, & Youssef Morgan, 2020). The main implication of this reciprocal effect between PsyCap and service behaviour is that employees constantly update and refresh their psychological orientation (i.e., PsyCap and service based on past experience).

Hypothesis 4: PsyCap mediates the relationship between HPO framework and employee service behaviour.

This was in agreement with observations of a separate longitudinal study conducted in the American context by Carter and Youssef-Morgan (2019), it was found that psychological capital fully mediates the influence of mentoring on employee performance.

Our study sought to understand the link that exists between the HPO framework and employee service behaviour in the public universities. The study advances knowledge through the establishment of the mediating role of PsyCap in the relationship between HPO framework and employee service behaviour.

Theoretical implications

This study contributes to theoretical aspects by producing empirical evidence to support the DCT, RBV and human capital theory to predict service behaviour. In addition, integrating the three theories provides a better understanding of the mediating effect of the PsyCap in the relationship between HPO framework and the employee service behaviour in the education sector. Furthermore, public organisations in Uganda can benefit from leveraging the HPO framework to enhance their dynamic capabilities.

Practical Implications

The study offers specific recommendations for practice intended to improve employee service behaviour. Managers need to align the HPO framework factors to service behaviour of employees to the university context, empowering them with in role and extra-role skills. Additionally, managers need to consider the PsyCap exploitation of new ideas as a primary role for employee service behaviour, which should be supported financially. Furthermore, managers need to foster a culture of tolerance for failure while implementing new ideas such as the HPO framework. This paper empirically offers important practical implications in terms of the HPO framework and employee service behaviour perspective through psychological capital.

Policy Implications

Policy makers such as the Ministry of Education; the regulatory bodies in the education sector should develop policies in relation to the HPO framework, PsyCap and the employee service behaviour. The leaders need to take advantage of the research findings to explore the PsyCap in organisation to encourage employee service behaviour. The application of HPO framework within public universities in Uganda, coupled with a commitment to PsyCap, carries profound implications. This approach promises to enhance overall organisational performance by establishing in role and extra-role service behaviour clear objectives, monitoring progress, and refining processes, thereby optimising the efficiency and effectiveness of public Universities service delivery.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between the HPO framework, PsyCap and employee service behaviour. Study findings indicated that the relationship between the HPO framework and employee service behaviour is significantly and positively related. The lesson we draw from this study is that although we commonly use the terms “hope,” “efficacy,” “resilience,” and “optimism” in day-to-day conversation, they have specific meanings when it comes to the science underlying PsyCap (Castillo, & Lopez-Zafra, 2022). To build PsyCap, you cannot pick just one of the four components to work on. The components are interdependent and synergistic. Combined, the four components amount to a whole that is greater than the sum of their parts. This finding is in agreement with (Luthans, & Youssef Morgan, 2020). Based on dynamic capability theory, this study examined the direct impact of five factors of the HPO framework on public service behaviour organisation’ performance. the results from the measurement model indicate that the HPO framework is applicable to public service organisations behaviour in public Universities in Uganda.

Limitations and future research

Despite the results obtained in this study, some considerations should be made concerning several disadvantages inherent in the research carried out. These self-report scales may generate common-method bias. This study offers across-sectional design, so more work needs to be done with longitudinal designs in order to provide more valid evidence of the causal impact of HPO framework and PsyCap and employee service behaviour. We note that the small sample used in the research is not representative of all the public Universities operating in Uganda. More data is required to gain a better understanding of the HPO framework and its positive outcomes such as employee service behaviour. Moreover, the study was also limited by its quantitative approach, so adding qualitative elements would be a way for future studies to expand on what we have established. The study provides further basis for further research in the education sector and other sectors.

Secondly, all the study variable including high-performance organisation framework (HPOF), psychological capital, and service behaviour were measured through self-reported constructs. Future studies should measure these variables through supervisor rated version of each measure.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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