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Innovative management practices for enhancing employees' psychological capital, guided by positive psychology

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of evolving market structures and intensifying industry competition, persistent workplace stress has led to accumulated negative emotions among employees and the widespread prevalence of occupational burnout, increasingly hindering corporate human resource efficiency and team stability. Traditional human resource management approaches primarily focus on problem-solving, emphasizing post-event responses to employee psychological issues rather than fostering positive psychological traits at their root. This limitation fails to meet modern enterprises' demands for human-centered, sustainable human resource development. Using positive psychology's PERMA theory as an analytical framework and incorporating the four core dimensions of psychological capital—namely self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism—this study examines structural deficiencies in employees' psychological capital and associated management challenges through frontline corporate data collected from a Chinese enterprise. A mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews was employed to identify key gaps in current management practices. Building upon these findings, the study proposes a positive psychological cultivation mechanism and an innovative management system tailored to contemporary business contexts. Pilot implementation results demonstrate that this model effectively improves employees' workplace mental health, enhances organizational performance, and strengthens team cohesion. The findings provide empirical evidence and practical frameworks for human-centric management development in Chinese enterprises, contributing to the growing body of literature on positive organizational behavior and employee well-being.

Keywords: positive psychology; psychological capital; innovative management; workplace well-being; humanistic management

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement and widespread integration of digital technologies across economic sectors are fundamentally reshaping corporate operational frameworks, strategic priorities, and workforce dynamics. This transformation manifests in heightened workloads, accelerated task cycles, evolving skill requirements, and intensified inter-employee performance comparisons—factors that collectively contribute to elevated occupational stress levels [1]. Sustained exposure to such demanding conditions may precipitate adverse psychological consequences, including diminished emotional resilience, attenuated motivation, declining cognitive engagement with core responsibilities, and weakened identification with organizational mission and values. These individual-level effects can accumulate into broader systemic challenges, such as reduced collaborative efficacy, increased turnover intention, and diminished capacity for adaptive innovation. Psychological capital—comprising the aggregated, developable resources of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience—functions as a critical intangible asset within organizational ecosystems. Unlike static human capital or physical infrastructure, it is dynamic, malleable through targeted interventions, and demonstrably linked to enhanced job performance, proactive behavior, and sustained well-being. Despite its strategic relevance, many enterprises in the domestic context continue to rely

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on reactive, deficit-oriented approaches to psychological management—such as crisis counseling or post-incident support—rather than implementing proactive, strengths-based systems designed to cultivate enduring psychological capabilities. Positive psychology offers a robust conceptual foundation for this paradigm shift, emphasizing evidence-informed practices that nurture individual potential, reinforce adaptive mindsets, and strengthen relational and contextual supports. Drawing upon extensive field observations, structured interviews, and longitudinal survey data collected from diverse industry settings, this study undertakes rigorous empirical investigation to identify, validate, and systematize scalable psychological capital development protocols. The objective is to generate operationally viable frameworks that simultaneously advance employee psychological vitality and reinforce organizational agility, sustainability, and long-term developmental quality.

2. Theoretical Basis and Current Research Status

2.1. Theoretical Basis of Nuclear Psychology

The PERMA model constitutes a foundational framework within the field of positive psychology, integrating five interrelated dimensions essential for human flourishing: sustained positive emotional experiences, deep and meaningful work engagement, supportive and reciprocal interpersonal relationships, a coherent sense of professional purpose and contribution, and cumulative, goal-congruent achievement experiences across developmental stages [2]. In contrast to conventional psychological approaches centered on pathology identification, symptom reduction, and deficit-based remediation, this paradigm shifts focus toward the systematic identification, activation, and longitudinal cultivation of individuals' inherent psychological strengths and adaptive capacities. Within organizational contexts, psychological capital—understood as a higher-order construct grounded in empirical research—encompasses four empirically validated, state-like yet developable resources: hope characterized by goal-directed determination and pathway thinking; self-efficacy reflecting confidence in mobilizing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral resources to meet task demands; psychological resilience denoting adaptive recovery and growth following adversity; and optimism involving generalized positive outcome expectancies. These attributes are not fixed traits but rather dynamic, learnable, and organizationally scalable assets that can be intentionally strengthened through evidence-informed practices. The theoretical alignment between positive psychology and organizational development lies in its emphasis on proactive capacity-building rather than reactive problem-solving. Management strategies informed by this orientation prioritize continuous psychological enrichment, skill scaffolding, and contextual support structures that reinforce stability, agency, and adaptive flexibility. Such approaches demonstrably enhance employees' capacity to navigate complexity, sustain motivation under pressure, maintain cognitive-emotional regulation, and contribute meaningfully to collective objectives—thereby reinforcing both individual well-being and systemic organizational vitality [3].

2.2. Current State of Domestic Research

The domestic academic community has generated a substantial body of scholarly work examining the determinants and organizational consequences of employees' psychological capital. Empirical investigations consistently indicate that higher levels of psychological capital—encompassing self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience—are associated with measurable improvements in individual job performance, stronger affective commitment to the organization, reduced voluntary turnover intentions, and lower susceptibility to occupational burnout. Advanced statistical modeling, including multilevel mediation frameworks, further clarifies that organizational support mechanisms—such as leadership development programs, structured feedback systems, and participatory decision-making processes—can foster the systematic accumulation of positive psychological resources among employees. These resources, in turn, contribute to enhanced subjective job satisfaction and serve as protective buffers against chronic

work-related stressors that otherwise precipitate emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. In-depth case analyses of Chinese small and medium-sized private enterprises reveal persistent structural limitations in current human resource practices: psychological support initiatives often lack integration across departments, exhibit significant time lags between identification of employee well-being concerns and response deployment, and rely excessively on generic, one-size-fits-all strategies rather than context-sensitive, evidence-informed approaches. Notably, no widely adopted, empirically validated framework for psychological resource cultivation currently exists that aligns with the operational scale, governance structure, and cultural dynamics characteristic of China's private enterprise sector. Preliminary survey findings from pilot implementations suggest that carefully designed, psychologically grounded initiatives—when aligned with organizational goals and employee developmental needs—can strengthen intrinsic motivation, enhance cross-functional communication and mutual accountability within teams, and yield tangible gains in process efficiency and service quality. Nevertheless, prevailing scholarship remains predominantly oriented toward theoretical construct validation and correlational analysis; rigorous, field-based evaluations of such initiatives—anchored in longitudinal data, robust measurement protocols, and contextual fidelity—remain markedly underrepresented in the literature. This persistent theory–practice disconnect constitutes the central empirical and methodological challenge addressed by the present study [4].

3. Investigation and Analysis of the Current State and Issues of Employees' Psychological Capital in Enterprises

3.1. Research Design and Sample Overview

To objectively assess the current state of psychological capital development among corporate employees and identify systemic shortcomings in enterprise-level psychological management practices, this study adopted a mixed-methods research design grounded in empirical rigor and contextual relevance. A stratified sampling strategy was implemented to select twenty small and medium-sized enterprises operating within the manufacturing and technology innovation sectors across the Yangtze River Delta region—a dynamic economic zone characterized by high operational intensity, rapid technological iteration, and evolving labor market demands. The sample deliberately encompassed four core functional roles—production frontline staff, research and development personnel, administrative support staff, and sales professionals—to capture divergent occupational stressors, task autonomy levels, interpersonal interaction patterns, and corresponding psychological resource requirements. Data collection employed complementary instruments: a standardized, psychometrically validated psychological capital assessment instrument, previously refined for application in Chinese organizational settings and calibrated to reflect domain-specific managerial realities, was administered alongside semi-structured interviews designed to elicit nuanced qualitative insights into daily coping strategies, perceived organizational support, and barriers to psychological resilience. A total of 420 self-administered questionnaires were distributed; 406 fully completed and logically consistent responses were retained for analysis, yielding an effective response rate of 96.67%, which exceeds conventional thresholds for survey-based organizational research [5, 6]. The assessment utilized a five-point Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating stronger manifestations of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism—the four empirically established dimensions of psychological capital. In addition, supplementary observational and interview-derived data on existing psychological support mechanisms—including training programs, counseling access, leadership communication practices, and peer support structures—were systematically documented to enrich the interpretive framework and ensure findings possess actionable validity for human resource development and organizational health improvement [4, 7].

3.2. Data Analysis of Overall Level of Employee Psychological Capital

This study conducted standardized statistical analysis on all valid sample data, with the mean values, standard deviations, and proportions of employees falling within the bottom two quartiles for each dimension of psychological capital presented in the table below. The results indicate that the overall mean score of psychological capital among surveyed enterprise employees is 3.12 on a five-point Likert scale, suggesting a generally low to moderate level of development. This finding reflects a broader pattern observed in contemporary organizational contexts where sustained work intensity, evolving role expectations, and rapid technological change collectively exert pressure on individual psychological resources. Accompanying this aggregate score is significant structural imbalance across the four core dimensions—self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and psychological resilience—indicating heterogeneous developmental trajectories rather than uniform deficiency. Notably, the self-efficacy dimension achieved the highest mean score, implying that respondents generally possess foundational competencies required for task execution and maintain baseline confidence in their occupational capabilities. In contrast, the psychological resilience dimension registered the lowest mean score and exhibited the largest proportion of employees scoring within the bottom two quartiles, signaling pronounced vulnerability in adaptive coping mechanisms. Such patterns suggest that employees tend to experience considerable difficulty in recovering from workplace setbacks, sustaining motivation under prolonged work pressure, or maintaining cognitive flexibility when confronted with complex or ambiguous tasks—factors that collectively impede holistic psychological capital enhancement and may constrain long-term organizational adaptability and employee well-being.

Psychological Capital Dimension	sample mean	standard error	Proportion of high scorers (≥ 4 points)	Proportion of students with low scores (≤ 2.5 points)
hope	3.15	0.62	28.32%	26.11%
self-confident	3.46	0.58	39.41%	17.24%
tenacity	2.89	0.71	19.70%	34.48%
optimistic	3.08	0.65	25.86%	29.06%
Overall Level	3.12	0.64	28.32%	26.72%

3.3. Current Status and Problem Analysis of Corporate Psychological Management

By integrating quantitative statistical data collected from structured employee and managerial questionnaires with rich, contextually grounded qualitative insights derived from in-depth field interviews across multiple industry sectors, this study systematically identifies persistent structural deficiencies in the psychological management practices of small and medium-sized private enterprises [8]. The implementation status of core psychological management modules—including psychological risk assessment, resilience-building activities, leadership capability development in emotional intelligence, peer support mechanisms, and work-life integration initiatives—is summarized in the table below. Survey findings consistently reveal that organizational priorities remain heavily skewed toward short-term operational performance metrics, while systematic attention to employee psychological well-being remains underdeveloped and inconsistently resourced. Psychological support functions are predominantly activated only following documented incidents of stress-related absenteeism or reported mental health concerns, reflecting a predominantly responsive rather than preventive orientation. Proactive, routine practices—such as regular psychological climate monitoring, skill-based emotional regulation training, and psychologically informed team development—are rarely institutionalized. Moreover, existing programs often rely on standardized, one-size-fits-all workshops or digital modules, lacking customization for functional roles, career stages, or individual developmental needs. A pronounced absence of tiered, evidence-informed frameworks—differentiating foundational awareness, targeted capacity building, and leadership-level psychological stewardship—further undermines

coherence and scalability. Without strategic alignment, dedicated accountability structures, and longitudinal evaluation protocols, psychological management efforts remain fragmented, episodic, and insufficiently embedded within broader human capital development strategies.

Manage Project	Standardize the reporting of the proportion of enterprises involved on a regular basis.	Occasionally, the proportion of enterprises involved is determined.	The proportion of companies that have never engaged in such activities
Specialized Training in Positive Psychology	15.00%	45.00%	40.00%
Positive motivation empowers employees.	30.00%	50.00%	20.00%
Hierarchical Psychological Intervention Guidance	10.00%	35.00%	55.00%
Dynamic Assessment of Psychological Capital	5.00%	25.00%	70.00%

3.4. Summary of Key Issues

By integrating the quantitative data from this survey with qualitative interview findings, the core challenges in corporate employees' psychological capital development and management practices can be systematically summarized at two interrelated levels: individual development and organizational management. At the individual level, pronounced disparities are observed across the four core dimensions of psychological capital—self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience—with psychological resilience emerging as the most critically underdeveloped component. Employees frequently interpret workplace stressors through a negative cognitive lens, leading to maladaptive coping strategies, diminished emotional regulation capacity, and elevated susceptibility to occupational burnout. Furthermore, many lack structured career planning frameworks, exhibit low intrinsic motivation for professional growth, and demonstrate limited orientation toward future-oriented goal setting. From an organizational perspective, prevailing management paradigms remain largely hierarchical and process-driven, constraining the integration of evidence-informed psychological support mechanisms. Current initiatives aimed at strengthening employee well-being often lack coherence, consistency, and longitudinal design; they tend to be episodic rather than embedded, reactive rather than anticipatory, and surface-level rather than systemic. As a result, these efforts fail to foster sustained cultivation or dynamic replenishment of psychological resources. This gap undermines enterprises' strategic objectives related to talent retention, innovation capacity, and adaptive performance—key prerequisites for achieving human-centered operational models and supporting high-quality, sustainable organizational advancement in evolving economic contexts [8, 9].

4. Development of a Management Practice Framework for Employee Psychological Capital Innovation Guided by Positive Psychology

4.1. Establishing a Four-Dimensional Hierarchical Positive Cultivation System

Building upon the structural deficiencies in employees' psychological capital identified through this study and leveraging the core principles of positive psychology—namely proactive cultivation and empowerment of strengths—the paper proposes a four-dimensional, tiered precision development framework to address specific psychological gaps and achieve comprehensive, systematic enhancement of psychological capital. To tackle prevalent issues such as weak psychological resilience and inadequate stress tolerance, organizations should regularly implement specialized psychological training programs covering stress management, cognitive restructuring of setbacks, and adversity coping strategies. These programs must be grounded in empirically validated

methodologies and delivered through diverse, interactive modalities—including case studies drawn from real organizational contexts, immersive workplace stress scenario simulations designed to mirror authentic operational challenges, and structured group counseling sessions facilitated by qualified mental health professionals. Such multifaceted interventions help employees establish evidence-based, adaptive stress response mechanisms; systematically identify and correct maladaptive cognitive patterns associated with failure or ambiguity; and progressively strengthen their psychological adaptability, emotional regulation capacity, and workplace risk resilience. For challenges like insufficient career aspirations and lack of long-term motivation, companies should collaborate closely with human resource departments to optimize career development systems by establishing diversified, transparent, and equitable pathways for promotion, lateral mobility, and skill acquisition. These pathways must incorporate role-specific competency frameworks, clearly articulated developmental milestones, and phased objectives tailored to individual career stages, functional domains, and organizational strategic priorities—thereby fostering sustained intrinsic motivation, reinforcing growth mindset orientation, and aligning personal development trajectories with institutional capability-building goals.

To address issues such as insufficient self-efficacy and lack of confidence in job performance among certain employees, companies need to fundamentally reconfigure their internal evaluation and incentive systems, moving decisively beyond narrow, output-oriented assessment models toward a robust, multi-dimensional positive incentive framework. This framework must explicitly recognize and reward not only quantitative performance outcomes but also qualitative dimensions including work attitude, initiative in problem-solving, innovative behavior, collaborative contribution, ethical conduct, and holistic job contribution across functional boundaries [10]. Implementation requires embedding regular, timely, and meaningful positive recognition practices—such as peer-nominated excellence awards, leadership-endorsed milestone acknowledgments, and personalized developmental feedback loops—alongside honor-based empowerment mechanisms like delegated decision-making authority, cross-functional project leadership opportunities, and visible representation in strategic forums. Through consistent application of these approaches, organizations can deliberately accumulate and reinforce employees' successful work experiences, thereby strengthening professional confidence, enhancing perceived competence, and consolidating self-efficacy beliefs over time. For employees experiencing accumulated negative emotions or low optimism levels, organizations should proactively enhance internal communication mechanisms by instituting structured dialogue platforms—such as monthly psychological safety check-ins, anonymous sentiment monitoring dashboards, and psychologically informed team debrief protocols—while simultaneously fostering a harmonious, inclusive, and respectful workplace atmosphere characterized by mutual trust and shared accountability. Complementing these efforts, organizations must provide accessible, confidential, and professionally supported emotional support channels—including on-site counseling services, digital mental wellness platforms, and trained peer support networks—to effectively mitigate chronic workplace stressors. Furthermore, leadership communication should consistently model objective, balanced, and future-oriented career perspectives, integrating realistic appraisal of challenges with affirming narratives of collective progress and individual potential—thus cultivating enduring positive psychological qualities including hope, gratitude, resilience, and prosocial orientation.

4.2. Establish a Dynamic Psychological Assessment and Intervention Mechanism

To address the persistent challenges of randomness, fragmentation, and absence of integrated feedback loops in conventional psychological management approaches—and to support the precise, evidence-informed, and sustainable cultivation of psychological capital—this study proposes a dynamic, data-driven assessment and support framework grounded in validated psychometric instruments. Enterprises implement standardized

quarterly assessments of core psychological capital dimensions—including self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience—across the entire workforce. Each employee receives an individualized, secure electronic psychological profile that continuously updates in response to longitudinal assessment data, enabling granular tracking of intra-individual trajectories as well as aggregated team-level patterns [11]. This profiling system facilitates role-specific and department-specific analysis, allowing HR and organizational development professionals to discern nuanced psychological demand–resource mismatches across hierarchical levels, functional domains, and occupational categories. Based on stratified assessment outcomes, differentiated support pathways are activated: individuals scoring below established normative thresholds engage in confidential, professionally facilitated counseling sessions complemented by modular, competency-aligned empowerment programs targeting identified developmental needs; conversely, employees demonstrating robust and stable psychological capital receive structured opportunities for peer mentoring, leadership shadowing, and cross-functional collaboration to amplify their constructive influence and reinforce collective psychological resilience. The framework embeds three interlocking phases—proactive monitoring, responsive support, and longitudinal reinforcement—thereby establishing a closed-loop, iterative improvement cycle that aligns with principles of continuous organizational learning and human-centered talent development. Rigorous internal validation protocols ensure measurement fidelity, while ethical governance safeguards data privacy, informed consent, and voluntary participation throughout the process.

4.3. Cultivating a Positive Organizational Management Culture

Organizational culture and workplace atmosphere constitute foundational environmental determinants of employees' psychological well-being, while a robust, supportive organizational ecosystem serves as a sustained enabler for the development and reinforcement of psychological capital [12, 13]. Enterprises are encouraged to adopt evidence-informed principles derived from positive psychology—such as strengths-based orientation, growth mindset cultivation, and appreciative inquiry—to systematically refine internal management frameworks. This entails shifting away from hierarchical, directive models toward more adaptive, trust-centered approaches that emphasize autonomy, transparency, and mutual accountability. Rigid performance evaluation systems predicated solely on error detection or deficit correction should be recalibrated to incorporate balanced feedback mechanisms that acknowledge effort, progress, contextual constraints, and developmental trajectories. Flexible management systems—characterized by iterative goal-setting, decentralized decision-making authority, and structured opportunities for reflection and recalibration—foster innovation readiness, psychological safety, and resilience in dynamic operational environments. Furthermore, purposefully designed cultural initiatives—including facilitated psychological literacy workshops, cross-functional collaborative projects, peer mentoring circles, and structured forums for professional growth narratives—strengthen relational cohesion, mitigate interpersonal isolation, and reinforce shared identity and collective efficacy. When intentionally embedded into talent development pathways, succession planning, and leadership competency models, a positive organizational culture functions not as peripheral programming but as an integrated, systemic driver that concurrently elevates individual flourishing and organizational agility, sustainability, and mission-aligned performance.

5. Analysis of Practical Outcomes

To rigorously validate the practical effectiveness and implementation value of the innovative management system developed in this study, two representative enterprises—selected based on sectoral diversity, organizational scale, and baseline psychological health metrics—participated in a six-month structured implementation program. This program integrated evidence-informed positive psychology principles into daily managerial practices, including leadership communication protocols, team-based goal-

setting frameworks, and resilience-oriented feedback mechanisms. Standardized, psychometrically validated instruments—including the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory—were administered at baseline and upon conclusion of the implementation period to enable robust pre-post comparative analysis. Results indicated a statistically significant upward shift in employees' overall psychological capital scores, rising from a mean of 3.12 to 3.86 on a 5-point Likert scale—a 23.7% relative increase [10]. Notably, the psychological resilience subscale, which registered the lowest initial score across all dimensions, improved by 26.3%, reflecting targeted gains in adaptive capacity under sustained work demands. At the organizational level, measurable improvements included a 31.5% reduction in reported burnout symptoms, an 18.2% decline in voluntary turnover among core technical and managerial staff, and consistent upward trends in behavioral indicators such as proactive task initiation, sustained concentration during complex assignments, and cross-functional collaboration efficiency. These convergent outcomes affirm that the system not only mitigates well-documented limitations of conventional psychological support models but also fosters scalable, sustainable enhancements in human capital development within contemporary enterprise environments.

6. Conclusion

Psychological capital represents a foundational, internally embedded psychological resource within organizational settings, critically influencing both individual professional development and collective organizational advancement. As a dynamic construct encompassing hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism, it functions not merely as an outcome of supportive practices but as a strategic enabler of adaptive performance, sustained engagement, and ethical decision-making across hierarchical levels. This study draws upon comprehensive field-collected quantitative data to identify two interrelated systemic constraints: first, persistent structural imbalances in the distribution and cultivation of psychological capital—evident in disparities across tenure groups, functional roles, and career stages; second, the underdevelopment of integrated psychological management infrastructures, characterized by fragmented initiatives, inconsistent measurement protocols, and limited longitudinal tracking mechanisms. In response, the research proposes a rigorously designed three-dimensional management system grounded in empirical validation. This framework unifies four-dimensional empowerment—targeting cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and relational domains—with responsive support mechanisms calibrated to evolving individual and team needs, and deeply embedded cultural reinforcement strategies that align leadership behaviors, reward systems, and communication norms with psychological well-being principles. Pilot implementation across diverse operational units confirmed statistically significant improvements in aggregate psychological capital scores, enhanced self-reported work vitality, reduced indicators of chronic strain, and measurable gains in collaborative problem-solving efficacy. Looking ahead, refinement efforts must prioritize contextual adaptability—accounting for sector-specific regulatory environments, technological adoption patterns, and occupational risk profiles—while advancing methodological rigor through multi-wave longitudinal designs, cross-cultural comparative analyses, and integration with objective performance metrics such as innovation output, retention stability, and service quality indices.

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