

Unleashing Employee Creative Performance Behavior: Direct Influence of Psychological Capital and the Mediating Role of Organizational Support in Service Sector Employees

Gangaram Biswakarma^{1, 2, ✉}, Shikha Gautam³

1. Faculty of Management, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, NPL

2. Department of Psychological Sciences, Auburn University, Auburn, USA

3. School of Business and Management, Thames International College, Kathmandu, NPL

Received: February 15, 2026 | Review began: March 04, 2026 | Review ended: July 19, 2026 | Published: September 01, 2026

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of psychological capital (PsyCap) on employee creative performance behavior (CPB) in the service sector, with perceived organizational support (POS) as a mediator. Data from 389 service sector employees were analyzed. The findings revealed that PsyCap significantly and positively influenced CPB, with POS partially mediating this relationship. Self-efficacy and resilience directly predicted CPB, while hope and optimism indirectly affected creativity through POS. The findings point out the importance of cultivating employees' psychological resources and fostering supportive work environments to enhance creativity and innovation in service organizations. The implications extend to both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, it expands the understanding of PsyCap's role in fostering creativity, particularly in non-Western, developing economies. Practically, it suggests that organizations can boost employee creativity by investing in PsyCap development programs and creating supportive work environments.

Categories: Organisational Behavior

Keywords: psychological capital (psycap), creative performance behavior, perceived organizational support, service sector, employee creativity

Introduction

In today's knowledge-driven economy, employee creativity is a central driver of organizational innovation, adaptability, and sustained performance. Creativity is not just a side effect; it actually increases productivity by making people more motivated, engaged, and able to solve problems (Watt and Piotrowski, 2025) (Zaeni et al., 2024). It also enables organizations to navigate dynamic market conditions, respond to challenges, and maintain competitiveness while generating and applying novel and valuable ideas (Turgut et al., 2025), (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009), and (Hirst et al., 2009).

Employees who feel a sense of belonging, autonomy, and shared ownership of organizational goals are more likely to produce innovative solutions that contribute to strategic growth (Ojha et al., 2025). Conversely, the absence of creativity reduces agility and responsiveness (House, 2003), whereas fostering innovation offers a sustainable path to improved performance and competitive advantage (Amabile and Khaire, 2008), (Mumford et al., 2012), and (Rego et al., 2017). Early studies linked creativity to task-specific demands; however, recent studies have highlighted its broader role in job

How to cite this article:

Biswakarma G, Gautam S (September 01, 2026) Unleashing Employee Creative Performance Behavior: Direct Influence of Psychological Capital and the Mediating Role of Organizational Support in Service Sector Employees. Cureus J Bus Econ 3 : es44404-026-00255-1. DOI <https://doi.org/10.7759/s44404-026-00255-1>

performance (Gong et al., 2009). In dynamic, complex environments, creative engagement aids in handling varied responsibilities (Shalley et al., 2009) (Gilson, 2008) and is vital for adaptability and competitiveness in uncertain market conditions (Turgut et al., 2025).

Despite the growing interest in employee creativity, several important questions remain unresolved in the existing literature. First, while psychological capital (PsyCap) is associated with positive work outcomes, its specific role in influencing employees' creative performance behavior (CPB) is still underexplored, particularly in service-sector contexts. Secondly, limited empirical attention has been given to the mediating mechanism through which PsyCap translates into creativity, especially via perceived organizational support (POS). Thirdly, most existing evidence is derived from Western or developed-economy settings, leaving developing, non-Western contexts like Nepal insufficiently examined. To address these gaps, this study investigates the direct influence of PsyCap on CPB and the mediating role of POS among service-sector employees.

In high-pressure service environments, PsyCap is a vital internal resource shaping employees' perception of organizational support (Zhang et al., 2025). With rapid technological change, economic uncertainty, and shifting expectations, organizations must enable individuals to respond creatively and proactively (Shaheen et al., 2016) (Battal, 2025). PsyCap comprises hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience, which enhances creativity, problem-solving, and innovation (Luthans, 2002) (Abbas and Raja, 2015). PsyCap promotes confidence, adaptability, and forward-thinking, which enhance creativity that makes organizations more competitive. This evidence is why developing it is a strategic priority for businesses (Azizah et al., 2025).

Empirical studies show that PsyCap, combined with psychological safety, mediates the link between high-performance work systems and creative idea generation (Agarwal and Farndale, 2017). Rooted in positive psychology, PsyCap motivates behaviors that fuel creativity and innovation, highlighting its significance in organizational behavior research (Mishra et al., 2013) (Gül, 2025). The interaction between PsyCap, creative behavior, and organizational factors further drives company success (Gao et al., 2020). PsyCap is a strategic resource that provides employees with the skills they need to stay creatively engaged (Avey et al., 2009). It also indirectly encourages creativity by building trust, cohesion, optimism, and resilience in the workplace (Ozturk and Karatepe, 2019) (Jabid et al., 2025).

Complementing PsyCap, POS fosters creativity by reinforcing employees' sense of value, recognition, and trust in leadership (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). Supportive organizational climates create psychological safety and encourage creative exploration. HR interventions and focused capacity building in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can improve both PsyCap and POS, fostering an innovative workforce (Sujatha, 2023). Creativity is essential for the success of both employees and organizations; however, research in developing economies is still scarce (Hémonnet-Goujot et al., 2022). Creativity in such contexts faces structural, cultural, and institutional barriers and is undergoing transformation (Glaveanu et al., 2019). Research on PsyCap and POS in the service sector is scarce, suggesting that practitioners require context-specific insights (Mejia et al., 2021).

To address this research gap, the present study examines the direct effect of PsyCap on employees' CPB and analyzes the mediating role of POS in this relationship within the Nepalese service industry.

Literature review

Underpinning Theories

Based on positive psychology, Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) focuses on psychological strengths like hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy that can be measured, developed, and help improve performance (Luthans et al., 2007). PsyCap, as a core construct of POB, enables employees to approach challenges with confidence, persevere in the face of obstacles, and envision multiple pathways to achieve goals. It improves job performance (Huang et al., 2021), satisfaction (Cizrelioğulları and Babayiğit, 2022), and commitment (Saumina et al., 2020), with interventions promoting well-being (Luthans et al., 2004), (Luthans et al., 2015), and (Gomes da Costa et al., 2021). These attributes are central to creativity, which requires both cognitive flexibility and motivational persistence. Individuals with elevated levels of PsyCap are more inclined to investigate unconventional concepts, maintain effort in the face of uncertainty, and engage

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in risks that enhance creative performance (Sweetman et al., 2011). Thus, POB provides a strong theoretical basis for expecting PsyCap to serve as a critical driver of creativity at work. Similarly, Conservation of Resources (COR) theory states resource loss has a stronger impact than gain, leading to depletion (Holmgren et al., 2017). Hobfoll (Hobfoll, 2002) states that individuals strive to acquire, maintain, and protect resources that are valued or that help them achieve goals. PsyCap functions as an internal psychological resource, while POS represents an external social resource. They make up a "resource caravan" which helps each other build resilience, confidence, and motivation (Layne et al., 2009). When employees perceive high organizational support, the positive effects of PsyCap are amplified because employees are less preoccupied with resource loss and more willing to invest their psychological strengths in creative activities. Conversely, in low-support environments, even high PsyCap employees may withhold effort due to fear of resource depletion or lack of recognition. COR theory shows why the combination of internal resources (PsyCap) and external resources (POS) works well to boost creative performance. Further, Organizational Support Theory (OST), Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, 2011), explains how employees form perceptions of organizational care and value for their contributions. POS enhances employees' sense of belonging and reciprocity, motivating them to engage in behaviors that exceed role expectations, including creativity. PsyCap fosters innovative thinking through optimism and hope, but without organizational support and recognition, these psychological resources may not fully translate into creative expression. High POS creates social exchange, where employees reciprocate with increased effort (Kurtessis et al., 2017). POS provides the social exchange mechanism through which employees transform their PsyCap into observable creative performance, making it a crucial mediator in this relationship.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that PsyCap equips employees with the psychological strength to think and act creatively, while POS provides the contextual assurance that such efforts will be valued and rewarded. COR theory further underscores that it is the synergy of these internal and external resources that enables sustained creative performance in organizations. Thus, this study positions POS as a critical mediator that channels the benefits of PsyCap into enhanced employee creativity.

Creative performance behavior

Creative thinking enhances problem-solving and adaptability, thereby driving organizational innovation (Khinvasara et al., 2024). It involves generating novel ideas (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009) and is crucial across sectors (Sweetman et al., 2011). Managers leverage creativity to enhance performance outcomes (Ibrahim, 2024). Organizational learning strengthens cognitive styles and creativity by boosting employees' confidence (Chughtai et al., 2024). Early problem-solving benefits from diverse ideas. However, creativity involves uncertainty and risk (Janssen, 2000). Employees with high self-efficacy embrace these challenges, using motivation to succeed (Sweetman et al., 2011) (Gong et al., 2009).

PsyCap and its relationship with CPB

Luthans et al. (Luthans et al., 2007) define PsyCap as comprising self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, resources linked to job satisfaction and retention (Dev et al., 2025) (Yam et al., 2018) while fostering emotions that enhance performance (Flinkman et al., 2023). PsyCap predicts creativity and performance, improving work behaviors and team effectiveness (Gupta and Singh, 2014), (Rego et al., 2012), and (Avey et al., 2011). It supports creativity (Sweetman et al., 2011), with dimensions influencing creative behavior (Taştan, 2016) and high-PsyCap employees are considered more creative (Abbas and Raja, 2015). Human capital, social capital, and PsyCap forms improve task performance (Xu et al., 2022), while PsyCap strengthens engagement-performance links (Mualimin et al., 2025). At the entrepreneurial level, it fosters innovation and mediates firm performance (Gao et al., 2020). PsyCap growth increases engagement (Alessandri et al., 2018) and encourages creativity by making people feel safe (Agarwal and Farndale, 2017). Leaders make people feel more secure in their jobs and encourage creativity (Probst et al., 2017), while psychological safety makes team PsyCap stronger (Gonçalves and Brandão, 2017). In hospitality, PsyCap drives innovation (Mutonyi et al., 2025), while in SMEs it supports decision-making during crises (Grözinger et al., 2025). PsyCap is critical for adaptability and performance in service contexts.

H1: PsyCap positively influences employee CPB.

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Optimism and CPB

Optimism, defined as expecting positive outcomes, shapes employees' cognitive and behavioral responses at work (Carver and Scheier, 2002). Optimistic employees approach problems creatively and adopt innovative strategies (Michael et al., 2011) (Cai et al., 2019). This outlook fosters resilience and supports goal attainment (Luthans et al., 2007) (Rego et al., 2012). It is linked to higher job satisfaction, retention intentions (Kim and Hyun, 2017), and engagement. By promoting cognitive flexibility, optimism enables creative idea generation. As Peterson and Seligman (Peterson and Seligman, 2004) note, it acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy, increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes and driving creative performance.

H1a: Optimism positively influences employee CPB.

Self-efficacy and CPB

Self-efficacy, from Bandura's social cognitive theory, is the belief in one's ability to execute tasks effectively (Bandura, 1977) (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998). It improves the ability to think flexibly and keep going (Küçükaydın, 2024) (Carmeli and Schaubroeck, 2007). High self-efficacy fosters confidence in intricate tasks and innovative solutions (Ford, 1996) (Michael et al., 2011). In dynamic contexts, it enables strategic adjustment toward creative goals (Moon, 2002) (van Knippenberg and Hirst, 2020). Supportive environments reinforce innovation and creative contributions (Tierney and Farmer, 2002) (Avey et al., 2006).

H1b: Self-efficacy positively influences employee CPB.

Hope and CPB

Hope comprises two components: agency, the goal-directed energy, and pathways, the ability to plan strategies to achieve goals (Snyder et al., 2002). In the workplace, hope influences how employees perceive their potential for growth, fostering engagement and retention (Fazal-e-Hasan et al., 2023). Hopeful individuals are intrinsically motivated to take creative risks, which enhances their ability to explore alternative perspectives and generate solutions (George and Zhou, 2001), (Snyder et al., 2002), and (Rego, 2014). They show consistent effort and adaptability in overcoming challenges, facilitating progress toward objectives (Luthans et al., 2007) (Sweetman et al., 2011). Rego et al. (Rego et al., 2012) emphasize that hope stimulates imagination and innovation, making it crucial for creative performance in organizations.

H1c: Hope positively influences employee CPB.

Resilience and CPB

Resilience, defined as the capacity to adapt and thrive amid adversity (Herrman et al., 2011) (Luthans, 2002), enables employees to manage challenges, remain focused despite setbacks, and sustain motivation through positive framing (Peterson and Chang, 2003). In organizational settings, resilience improves retention and adaptability while promoting positive emotions, supportive environments, and innovative behaviors that stimulate creativity and innovation (Rangachari and Woods, 2020), (Yang and Lee, 2023), (Abbas and Raja, 2015), and (Rego et al., 2010).

H1d: Resilience positively influences employee CPB.

PsyCap and its relationship with POS

Enhancing PsyCap is especially valuable for individuals with lower POS, as those with higher hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy are more likely to interpret organizational actions positively (Zhang et al., 2025) (Ren et al., 2024). POS enhances employees' psychological resources and well-being, while high PsyCap reinforces perceptions of being valued and supported (Ho and Chan, 2022) (Ren et al., 2024). The positive correlation between PsyCap and POS across demographics supports the view that stronger psychological strengths foster perceptions of supportive, inclusive organizations (Kaur and Bhullar, 2025).

H2: PsyCap positively influences POS.

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POS and its relationship with employee creative performance

POS mediates the beneficial impacts of leadership on creativity and organizational results (Saleh et al., 2025). It fosters creativity by making employees feel valued and enhances creative outcomes through transformational leadership (Tharushika et al., 2025). POS boosts creativity via engagement (Nengrum et al., 2025), while extrinsic rewards strengthen this effect by enhancing perceived support (Aldabbas et al., 2025). Employees who feel supported by leaders show higher creativity, improving performance (Turgut et al., 2025). Top management support promotes knowledge sharing and absorptive capacity, driving creativity (Al-Husseini, 2024).

H3: POS positively influences employee CPB.

POS and its mediating effect

Eisenberger et al. (Eisenberger et al., 1986) define POS as employees' perception of how their organization values contributions and cares about their well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2017). POS leads to enhanced performance, commitment, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Sihag, 2021). Employees who feel valued respond with higher engagement. Studies show POS strongly connects with PsyCap. Yang et al. (Yang et al., 2013) found POS combined with hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism reduces burnout, while Hui et al. (Hui et al., 2014) reported POS positively influences PsyCap dimensions. When organizations care for employees, POS and PsyCap reinforce each other (Eisenberger et al., 2011). Authentic leaders foster communication and trust, enhancing both POS and PsyCap (Clapp-Smith et al., 2009). Liu et al. (Liu et al., 2013) found POS and PsyCap jointly improve well-being among correctional officers. Liu et al. (Liu et al., 2015) demonstrated that in coal workers, PsyCap mediates the relationship between POS and mental health, alleviating depression and anxiety. These findings indicate that both supportive environments and PsyCap contribute to improved psychological well-being.

H4: POS mediates the relationship of PsyCap and employee CPB.

Based on the above literature review, the conceptual framework positions PsyCap as the exogenous variable, Organizational Support as the mediating variable, and Creative Performance Behavior as the endogenous variable. The model considered Gender and Age as control variable. The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.

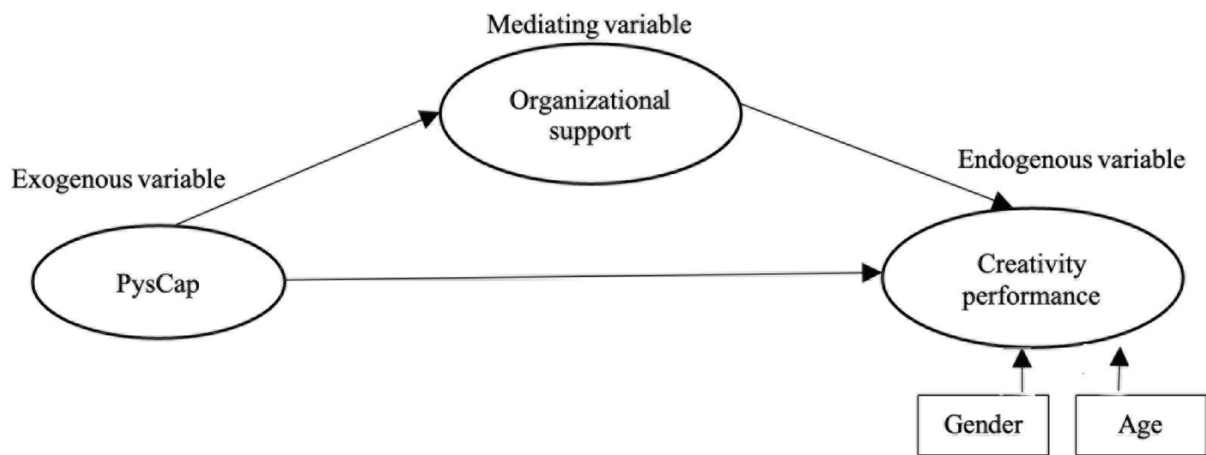


FIGURE 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Authors' own work

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Research Method

Research Design: This study used a quantitative approach with descriptive and explanatory designs to examine psychological capital's influence on employee creative performance, with POS mediating.

Population and Sampling: The target population comprised full-time service sector employees in Nepal with a minimum six-month tenure in their current organization. The service sector was targeted as a dominant and growing segment of Nepal's economy, with respondents drawn from eight sub-sectors namely business, communication, educational, financial, distribution, health-related, tourism, and travel-related services, and others. This multi-sectoral approach minimized single-sector bias and reflected the heterogeneity of Nepal's service workforce. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure only relevant and informed respondents were included. This technique was chosen because the study examines constructs of PsyCap, organizational support, and CPB that require respondents to have meaningful organizational exposure. Inclusion criteria required respondents to be full-time employees with a minimum six-month tenure, as this threshold ensures sufficient organizational socialization for newcomers to transition from organizational outsiders to insiders and meaningfully evaluate the studied constructs (Bauer et al., 2007). This criterion is consistent with prior empirical research that has adopted a minimum six-month continuous tenure as an inclusion requirement (Kaviya et al., 2025). Employees with less than six months of tenure and part-time or contractual workers were excluded, as their organizational experiences and perceptions may differ significantly. Organizations across the eight sub-sectors were identified, and HR managers or department heads were approached to help identify eligible employees. Given the undefined population size, Cochran's formula determined a minimum sample of 384, further validated through G*Power analysis (effect size = 0.05, five predictors, 95% CI), estimating a minimum of 262 respondents. The demographic profile in Table 1 reflects characteristics across gender, age, education, and tenure, supporting sample representativeness. While findings are contextual to Nepal's service sector, the theoretical mechanisms examined are grounded in universally applicable frameworks, suggesting cautious generalization to similar developing economy contexts.

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Variables	Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	151	38.8
	Female	238	61.2
Age	Below 20 years	21	5.4
	20-30 years	164	42.2
	31-40 years	128	32.9
	41-50 years	69	17.7
	Above 51 years	7	1.8
Education	Intermediate	31	8.0
	Bachelor's Degree	120	30.8
	Master's Degree	238	61.2
Job Position	Lower Level	111	28.5
	Mid Level	244	62.7
	Higher Level	34	8.7
Sector	Business services	33	8.5
	Communication services	42	10.8
	Educational services	39	10.0
	Financial services	152	39.1
	Distribution services	71	18.3
	Health related services	21	5.4
	Tourism and travel-related services	11	2.8
	Others	20	5.1

TABLE 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

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Data Collection Procedure: Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire distributed to 500 full-time service sector employees across Nepal over six months between 2023 and 2024. Formal permission was obtained from management or HR departments across eight service sub-sectors. After approval, HR managers or department heads identified eligible employees: full-time staff with at least six months' tenure. The survey was administered online and in person. The online questionnaire was created in Google Forms and shared via email and channels with a cover letter on the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality. This yielded 283 responses. For in-person distribution, researchers visited organizations, provided printed questionnaires to eligible employees, and briefed them on the study's objectives and ethical assurances. This yielded 106 responses. Three follow-up reminders were sent to non-respondents. Responses were screened for completeness and consistency; incomplete or invalid ones were excluded. Of 500 questionnaires, 389 valid responses were retained, yielding a 77.8% response rate, acceptable for survey-based research (Hair et al., 2022).

Instrumentation: A structured questionnaire was used, incorporating validated scales with a 7-point Likert scale. The PsyCap scale was adapted from Luthans et al. (Luthans et al., 2007), the creative performance scale from George and Zhou (George and Zhou, 2001), and the POS scale from Eisenberger et al. (Eisenberger et al., 1997). Prior authorization was secured for the utilization of the PsyCap instrument for research objectives. Additionally, gender was controlled because male and female employees may differ in perceptions of organizational support and creative self-efficacy, influencing creative behavior. Age was controlled because older employees tend to have greater experience, emotional stability, and resilience, which may independently influence PsyCap and creative output (Luthans et al., 2007). Controlling demographics isolated the effects of PsyCap and organizational support on CPB, enhancing validity.

Prior to full-scale data collection, a pilot test was conducted with 15 respondents from the target population to assess instrument reliability and item clarity. Cronbach's alpha values was 0.926 for all constructs, confirming acceptable internal consistency. No modifications were made to the questionnaire, as no comprehension issues were reported. A separate pretest for face or content validity was not conducted, as all measurement items were adopted from existing validated scales, ensuring content validity a priori. The questionnaire was administered in English and was not translated into the local language. This was deemed appropriate as the respondents were full-time employees in formal service sector organizations in Nepal, where English is commonly used as a medium of professional communication.

Research approval for the study was obtained from the School of Management, Tribhuvan University, and all procedures adhered to institutional academic and ethical research standards. Respondents were made aware that participation was voluntary, and their responses were kept completely private.

Data Analysis Techniques: Data were screened for completeness and missing values. Tests for normality were conducted, followed by a two-step structural equation modeling approach: measurement model and structural model assessment. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and percentages, were computed. Analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS v27 and SmartPLS 4.0.

Data Normality and Common Method Bias: Normality was assessed for 389 responses and 53 variables. Items showed non-normality based on skewness and kurtosis ($|Z| > 1.96$, $p < .05$), confirmed by Mardia's tests for multivariate skewness ($b = 636.29$, $z = 41252.78$, $p < .001$) and kurtosis ($b = 3002.60$, $z = 11.31$, $p < .001$). Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was chosen for its robustness to non-normal data. To address common method bias, participants were instructed not to discuss the survey with colleagues during data collection. A full collinearity assessment using a dummy variable was conducted, with all variance inflation factor (VIF) values falling below 3.3, indicating the absence of significant common method bias (Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2006).

Results And Discussion

Results

Measurement Model Assessment - Lower Order Construct And Higher Order Construct

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The measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity of lower-order and higher-order constructs. For lower-order constructs, indicator reliability, composite reliability, and AVE were evaluated, removing items POS6, POS7, OPT2, OPT4, OPT5, RES1, and CPB6 due to low loadings, ensuring AVE values exceeded 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022). Higher-order constructs met reliability and convergent validity benchmarks. Table 2 presents the construct validity and reliability. Discriminant validity was confirmed via Fornell-Larcker, HTMT <0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015), and cross-loadings (placed in Appendix 1), with acceptable values. These results validated construct distinctiveness, enabling analysis of PsyCap, POS, and employee CPB. Details of discriminant validity are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

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Construct		Items	Lower order construct					Higher order construct				
			Outer Loading	VIF	CA	CR	AVE	Outer Loading	VIF	CA	CR	AVE
Higher order	Lower Order											
	Optimism (OPT)	OPT1	0.774	1.242	0.606	0.792	0.56	0.788	1.741			
		OPT3	0.735	1.2								
		OPT6	0.735	1.191								
	Self-efficacy (Eff)	Eff1	0.717	1.546	0.848							
		Eff2	0.723	1.628								
		Eff3	0.772	1.76								
		Eff4	0.779	1.827		0.888	0.569	0.857	2.281			
		Eff5	0.752	1.67						0.87	0.911	0.72
		Eff6	0.781	1.801								
	Psychological Capital (PsyCap)											
	Hope (HOP)	HOP1	0.723	1.61	0.86	0.896	0.569	0.891	2.693			
		HOP2	0.776	1.804								
		HOP3	0.67	1.409								
		HOP4	0.829	2.182								
		HOP5	0.783	1.925								
		HOP6	0.819	2.168								
	Resilience (RES)	RES2	0.709	1.402	0.809	0.888	0.569	0.854	2.108			
		RES3	0.721	1.501								
		RES4	0.766	1.635								

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		RES5	0.794	1.756								
		RES6	0.772	1.586								
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	POS1	0.795	1.812	0.83	0.877	0.547	-	-	-	-	-	-
	POS2	0.818	2.077									
	POS3	0.826	2.182									
	POS4	0.742	1.734									
	POS5	0.557	1.317									
	POS8	0.66	1.36									
Creative Performance Behavior (CPB)	CPB1	0.746	1.978	0.914	0.928	0.519	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CPB10	0.706	1.955									
	CPB11	0.812	2.63									
	CPB12	0.757	2.055									
	CPB13	0.724	1.917									
	CPB2	0.721	2.081									
	CPB3	0.545	1.573				-	-	-	-	-	-
	CPB4	0.756	2.373									
	CPB5	0.744	2.003									
	CPB7	0.629	1.663									
	CPB8	0.733	1.977									
	CPB9	0.732	1.88									

TABLE 2: Construct Validity and Reliability (First-Order and Second-Order Construct)

CA, Cronbach's alpha; CR, Composite Reliability; AVE, Average Variance Extracted; VIF, Variance Inflation Factor

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Constru ct order	Variable s	CPB	Eff	HOP	OPT	POS	RES	CPB	POS	PsyCap
FoC	CPB	0.720								
	Eff	0.671	0.754							
	HOP	0.667	0.711	0.768						
	OPT	0.548	0.581	0.601	0.748					
	POS	0.687	0.495	0.604	0.521	0.739				
	RES	0.704	0.62	0.692	0.545	0.609	0.753			
SoC	CPB	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.720		
	POS	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.688	0.739	
	PsyCap	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.768	0.66	0.848

TABLE 3: Fornell–Larcker Test (First-Order and Second-Order Construct)

PsyCap, Psychological Capital; OPT, Optimism; Eff, Self-efficacy; HOP, Hope; RES, Resilience; POS, Perceived Organizational Support; CPB, Creative Performance Behavior

Construct order	Variable	CPB	Eff	HOP	OPT	POS	RES	CPB	POS	PsyCap
FoC	CPB									
	Eff	0.759 [0.661: 0.845]								
	HOP	0.747 [0.660: 0.823]	0.835 [0.746: 0.915]							
	OPT	0.726 [0.619: 0.841]	0.814 [0.685: 0.94]	0.831 [0.726: 0.941]						
	POS	0.773 [0.7: 0.837]	0.575 [0.47: 0.672]	0.707 [0.621: 0.788]	0.71 [0.587: 0.838]					
	RES	0.811 [0.749: 0.866]	0.749 [0.654: 0.836]	0.827 [0.753: 0.894]	0.774 [0.648: 0.900]	0.731 [0.635: 0.815]				
SoC	CPB	-	-	-	-	-	-			
	POS	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.773 [0.713: 0.828]		
	PsyCap	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.850 [0.805: 0.895]	0.759 [0.702: 0.813]	-

TABLE 4: Discriminant Validity (First-Order and Second-Order Construct)

PsyCap, Psychological Capital; OPT, Optimism; Eff, Self-efficacy; HOP, Hope; RES, Resilience; POS, Perceived Organizational Support; CPB, Creative Performance Behavior

Status of PsyCap, CPB, and POS

Descriptive analysis shows service sector employees hold positive attitudes. Efficacy scored highest ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 0.731$), indicating confidence in expressing ideas and solving work challenges. Hope ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 0.799$) reflects belief in multiple pathways to goals, while CPB ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 0.680$) show engagement in innovative practices. Resilience ($M = 5.42$) and Optimism ($M = 5.39$, $SD = 0.688$) suggest adaptability and positive outlook. POS ($M = 5.31$, $SD = 0.703$) indicates moderate to high feelings of being valued. Hope showed highest variability, while creative performance was most consistent. Correlation analysis reveals significant positive relationships among all latent variables ($p < 0.01$). PsyCap

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strongly correlates with CPB ($r = 0.768$), while POS moderately correlates with CPB ($r = 0.688$). PsyCap and POS are positively related ($r = 0.660$), suggesting support reinforces psychological resources. All PsyCap dimensions correlate positively with CPB, strongest for Resilience ($r = 0.704$), followed by Efficacy ($r = 0.671$), Hope ($r = 0.667$), and Optimism ($r = 0.548$). Similar patterns emerge with POS, with Resilience ($r = 0.609$) and Hope ($r = 0.604$) showing stronger links than Optimism ($r = 0.521$) and Efficacy ($r = 0.495$). These results show the mutual reinforcement of psychological strengths, support, and workplace creativity. The descriptive and correlation analysis is presented in Table 5.

Latent Variables	Mean	SD	OPT	Eff	HOP	RES	CPB	POS	PsyCap
Optimism (OPT)	5.39	0.688	1						
Efficacy (Eff)	5.73	0.731	0.581*	1					
Hope (HOP)	5.67	0.799	0.601*	0.711*	1				
Resilience (RES)	5.42	0.758	0.545*	0.620*	0.692*	1			
Creative Performance (CPB)	5.60	0.680	0.548*	0.671*	0.667*	0.704*	1		
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	5.31	0.703	0.521*	0.495*	0.604*	0.609*	0.688*	1	
PsyCap	5.53	0.641	-	-	-	-	0.768*	0.660*	1
* = sig. at 1% level									

TABLE 5: Descriptives and Correlational Analysis

PsyCap, Psychological Capital

Assessment of Structural Model - Model Predictability and Path Analysis

The structural model was evaluated using explanatory power (R^2), path significance, predictive relevance (Q^2), predictive accuracy (root mean square error (RMSE), mean absolute error (MAE)), and model fit indices (Hair et al., 2022). The model was included with the control variables namely, gender and age of the sampled respondents. CPB showed strong explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.650$, $t = 22.066$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.597, 0.713]), while POS had $R^2 = 0.435$ ($t = 10.939$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.361, 0.517]). Q^2 values for CPB (0.578) and POS (0.428) indicated strong predictive relevance (Golbraikh and Tropsha, 2002). RMSE/MAE values (CPB: 0.656/0.480; POS: 0.764/0.562) suggested low prediction errors. All VIF values

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were below 3.3, confirming no collinearity issues (Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2006) (Hair, 2021). Model fit indices were acceptable, with standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.056 (<0.08), $\chi^2 = 744.638$, and normed fit index (NFI) = 0.851, confirming a good fit. Estimates and VIFs are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Variable s	R^2	SD	t values	p value	95% CI		Q^2	RMSE	MAE	Model fit criteria
					2.50%	97.50%				
CPB	0.650	0.029	22.066	<0.001	0.597	0.713	0.578	0.656	0.480	SRMR = 0.056, χ^2 = 744.638, NFI = 0.851

TABLE 6: Model Predictive Capability (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

CPB, Creative Performance Behavior; SD, Standard Deviation; CI, Confidence Interval; RMSE, Root Mean Square Error; MAE, Mean Absolute Error; SRMR, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; NFI, Normed Fit Index

Path	VIF
POS -> CPB	1.771
PsyCap -> CPB	2.065
PsyCap -> POS	1.000
Age -> CPB12	1.310
Gender -> CPB	1.003

TABLE 7: Assessment of the Collinearity Issues

POS, Perceived Organizational Support; PsyCap, Psychological Capital; CPB, Creative Performance Behavior; VIF, Variance Inflation Factor

Path analysis using bootstrapping with 10,000 subsamples and the percentile confidence interval method revealed significant relationships. PsyCap had a strong positive effect on CPB ($\beta = 0.554$, $t = 9.901$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [0.444, 0.664]), supporting Hypothesis 1 (H1). Efficacy (H1b) and resilience (H1d) significantly affected CPB ($\beta = 0.276$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.269$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting self-confidence, task mastery, and emotional strength in driving creativity. Optimism (H1a) and

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hope (H1c) were not significant, suggesting these traits require supportive contexts to trigger creativity. PsyCap strongly predicted POS ($\beta = 0.660$, $p < 0.01$), and POS significantly enhanced CPB ($\beta = 0.321$, $p < 0.01$), confirming H2 and H3, underscoring supportive work environments' importance. The path analysis result is presented in Table 8.

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Hypothesis	Path	β	SD	T value	p value	95% CI		Result
						Lower Limit 2.5%	Upper Limit 97.5%	
H1	PsyCap -> CPB	0.554	0.056	9.901	<0.001	0.444	0.664	Supported
H1a	OPT -> CPB	0.027	0.051	0.537	>0.05	-0.068	0.129	Not Supported
H1b	Eff -> CPB	0.276	0.059	4.709	<0.001	0.163	0.393	Supported
H1c	HOP -> CPB	0.068	0.069	0.987	>0.05	-0.061	0.206	Not Supported
H1d	RES -> CPB	0.269	0.057	4.732	<0.001	0.154	0.377	Supported
H2	PsyCap -> POS	0.660	0.030	21.885	<0.001	0.601	0.719	Supported
H3	POS -> CPB	0.321	0.064	5.039	<0.001	0.196	0.445	Supported
H4	PsyCap -> POS -> CPB	0.212	0.042	5.054	<0.001	0.131	0.296	Supported
-	RES -> POS -> CPB	0.107	0.042	2.583	<0.05	0.04	0.202	-
-	Eff -> POS -> CPB	-0.003	0.023	0.114	>0.05	-0.05	0.04	-
-	HOP -> POS -> CPB	0.091	0.028	3.19	<0.001	0.037	0.149	-
-	OPT -> POS -> CPB	0.061	0.026	2.377	<0.05	0.011	0.112	-
Control Variables	Age -> CPB	-0.001	0.037	0.031	>0.05	-0.073	0.071	-
	Gender -> CPB	-0.100	0.060	1.673	>0.05	-0.216	0.019	-

TABLE 8: Path Analysis Results

PsyCap, Psychological Capital; POS, Perceived Organizational Support; CPB, Creative Performance Behavior; OPT, Optimism; Eff, Self-efficacy; HOP, Hope; RES, Resilience; β , Standardized Path Coefficient; SD, Standard Deviation; CI, Confidence Interval

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Mediation Effect of POS

Mediation analysis revealed POS complementarily partially mediated the relationship between PsyCap and CPB ($\beta = 0.212$, $t = 5.054$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.131, 0.296], Variance Accounted For = 0.27), supporting Hypothesis 4 (H4). At a more detailed level, resilience, hope, and optimism had important indirect effects on CPB through POS, with hope and optimism completely mediated because their direct effects were not significant. In contrast, efficacy's indirect effect via POS was not significant ($\beta = -0.003$, $p > 0.05$), suggesting efficacy influences creativity directly rather than through perceived support.

Discussion

This study examines the relationship between PsyCap, POS, and CPB in service employees. Among PsyCap dimensions, efficacy and resilience have effects on high levels of creative engagement. Based on the POB framework (Luthans, 2002), efficacy and resilience drive workplace creative performance. Findings show that self-efficacy and resilience predict creative performance. Confident, resilient employees generate innovative ideas for problem-solving. This aligns with Abbas and Raja (Abbas and Raja, 2015) and literature identifying self-efficacy as central to creativity (Bandura, 1977) (Tierney and Farmer, 2002), with high-efficacy employees persisting in complex environments (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998) (van Knippenberg and Hirst, 2020).

The differential effects observed across PsyCap dimensions can be theoretically explained by the nature of each dimension's motivational and cognitive mechanisms. Self-efficacy and resilience are action-oriented, performance-driving resources that operate at the behavioral execution level; they directly equip employees with the confidence to initiate creative tasks and the capacity to persist through uncertainty and setbacks (Luthans et al., 2007). These dimensions are intrinsically self-sustaining, enabling employees to independently engage in creative behavior without requiring external validation or contextual reinforcement. In contrast, hope and optimism are future-oriented, expectancy-based resources that rely on positive outcome anticipation (Snyder et al., 2002) (Carver and Scheier, 2002). Their translation into creative action is inherently contingent on environmental conditions, specifically, whether the organizational context signals that creative efforts will be recognized and rewarded. Without such structural assurance, hopeful and optimistic employees may withhold creative investment due to uncertainty about outcomes, consistent with COR theory's premise that individuals avoid resource expenditure when returns are uncertain (Hobfoll, 2002). This explains that the hope and optimism require the mediating role of POS to manifest as creative performance, whereas self-efficacy and resilience operated directly, independent of contextual support.

While self-efficacy and resilience showed strong direct effects, hope and optimism influenced creative performance through POS. This suggests positive expectancy needs supportive context to translate into creative actions. Resilience emerged as key, with resilient individuals adapting to stress and maintaining flexibility (Luthans et al., 2007) (Rego et al., 2012) in service settings. Consistent with Mutonyi et al. (Mutonyi et al., 2025) and Grözinger et al. (Grözinger et al., 2025), PsyCap enhances individual and organizational innovation. Although hope fosters goal commitment (Sweetman et al., 2011) (Fazal-e-Hasan et al., 2023), its impact requires structural support for creative behavior.

Optimism, though linked to creativity (Michael et al., 2011) (Peterson and Seligman, 2004), showed no direct effect without organizational support. It enhances resilience (Luthans et al., 2007) but needs empowering contexts. Studies (Agarwal and Farndale, 2017) (Mualimin et al., 2025) show PsyCap drives motivation while POS enables risk-taking. Efficacy and resilience drive creativity directly, whereas hope and optimism motivate in supportive environments. With moderate POS, employees showed creative engagement, suggesting self-efficacy and resilience drive creativity. This supports findings that PsyCap fosters positive behaviors (Avey et al., 2011) (Rego et al., 2012), drives idea generation (Sweetman et al., 2011), and links to creativity dimensions (Taştan, 2016).

PsyCap has a positive effect on POS, which means that employees who are hopeful, effective, optimistic, and resilient are more likely to see what the organization does as helpful (Zhang et al., 2025) (Ren et al., 2024). This synergy shows that a higher PsyCap, which fosters positive views of managerial intent. Ho and Chan (Ho and Chan, 2022) note psychological resources boost well-being and perceptions of support. Thus, PsyCap influences how employees assess their organizational environment (Kaur and Bhullar, 2025).

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Aligned with organizational support theory, employees with high PsyCap reciprocate through trust and commitment. Leaders with high PsyCap enhance psychological safety, improving support perception and creativity (Probst et al., 2017) (Gonçalves and Brandão, 2017). PsyCap builds resilience and strengthens employee-organization bonds, fostering innovation. This study confirms POS enhances CPB, underscoring its role in innovation. Supported employees engage in creative problem-solving, aligning with Saleh et al. (Saleh et al., 2025), who note POS boosts creativity and mediates leadership's impact on innovative behaviors.

POS cultivates psychological safety and belonging, encouraging idea-sharing (Tharushika et al., 2025) and strengthening engagement for creativity (Nengrum et al., 2025). It signals innovation is welcomed, motivating knowledge sharing (Aldabbas et al., 2025). Support from top management enhances knowledge acquisition, boosting absorptive capacity and creativity (Al-Husseini, 2024). In this study, POS enabled creativity where leadership trust was evident. For Nepal's service sector, where hierarchical structures and resource limits may hinder innovation, POS can drive creative performance. This study identifies POS as partially mediating the link between PsyCap and CPB. While PsyCap directly enhances creativity, part of its effect operates through POS, indicating that creativity stems from both internal resources and supportive contexts. This aligns with Liu et al. (Liu et al., 2015), who found PsyCap components mediate the POS-performance relationship in high-stress settings. Following Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 2002), this effect reflects resource accumulation, where organizational support facilitates PsyCap growth. Supportive environments enable employees to engage confidently in creative work. Hui et al. (Hui et al., 2014) found that POS affects all dimensions of PsyCap, and Long et al. (Long et al., 2025) verified managerial resilience translates into performance through time-related psychological resources and innovation.

Empowering leadership facilitates PsyCap development, preventing resource loss and supporting innovation. Authentic leadership fosters POS, trust, and safety for creative risk-taking (Clapp-Smith et al. 2009) (Liu et al., 2013). POS mediates PsyCap's effect on creativity through recognition and support. Both PsyCap and POS link to organizational citizenship behaviors, fostering team success (Sihag, 2021). Psychologically empowered employees exceed role expectations and engage in innovation. This study shows creative performance improves through PsyCap training and leadership with trust. Results across age and gender show creativity thrives with internal strengths and external support.

Theoretical implication

This study makes several meaningful contributions to the existing theoretical literature on PsyCap, CPB, and POS in the service sector context.

First, the findings extend the POB framework (Luthans, 2002) by demonstrating that not all PsyCap dimensions influence CPB equally or through the same mechanisms. Specifically, self-efficacy and resilience exerted strong direct effects on creative performance, whereas hope and optimism operated indirectly through POS. This nuanced finding advances POB theory by suggesting that the four HERO dimensions are not interchangeable in their pathways to creativity, contributing to a more differentiated understanding of how PsyCap dimensions function in creative work contexts.

Second, this study enriches the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002) by empirically demonstrating the resource caravan mechanism in the context of a developing economy. The findings confirm that internal psychological resources (PsyCap) and external social resources (POS) operate synergistically to enhance creative performance, supporting the notion that resource accumulation, rather than any single resource, drives positive organizational outcomes. This is particularly significant in Nepal's service sector, where resource constraints are prevalent, highlighting that the resource caravan concept is applicable beyond Western, resource-rich organizational contexts.

Third, the results provide empirical support for OST (Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, 2011) by confirming that POS not only directly enhances CPB but also serves as a critical mediating mechanism through which PsyCap translates into creativity in the workplace. This partial mediation finding theoretically advances OST by positioning POS as a conduit that amplifies psychological resources into observable creative behaviors, extending the theory's explanatory scope beyond traditional performance and commitment outcomes to include CPB specifically.

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Fourth, the partial mediation of POS in the PsyCap-CPB relationship contributes to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) by demonstrating that employees reciprocate organizational support not only through task performance or citizenship behaviors but also through creative engagement. This extends the reciprocity norm embedded in social exchange theory to the domain of creativity, suggesting that when employees perceive organizational investment in their well-being, they respond by investing their psychological resources in creative problem-solving and idea generation.

Fifth, this study addresses a notable contextual gap in the literature. Most empirical evidence on PsyCap and creativity is derived from Western or developed economies. By validating these theoretical relationships within Nepal's service sector, characterized by hierarchical structures, resource limitations, and cultural collectivism, the findings demonstrate the cross-cultural applicability of the POB, COR, and OST frameworks while simultaneously highlighting contextual nuances that may shape how these mechanisms operate in non-Western, developing economies.

Collectively, these theoretical contributions deepen our understanding of the psychological and organizational mechanisms underlying employee creativity, offering a more integrated and context-sensitive theoretical perspective that bridges individual-level psychological resources with organizational-level support structures in driving creative performance.

Practical implication

PsyCap is vital in the service sector for fostering creativity and competitiveness. Self-efficacy and resilience enhance creative performance, while hope and optimism influence creativity under supportive conditions. Employers should integrate PsyCap development into recruitment and training through confidence-building and resilience programs. Leaders should cultivate trust and psychological safety to help employees translate optimism into ideas. Developing PsyCap and fostering a supportive climate can unlock creative potential. Embedding PsyCap principles into workplace frameworks can enhance organizational innovation.

Limitations and further research implications

This study has few limitations; first, the cross-sectional design limits causal inferences, particularly in mediation models, and limits its generalizability. Therefore, the mediation examined in this study should be seen as a statistical test showing relationships rather than clear cause-and-effect links. Secondly, reliance on self-reported single-source data raises the possibility of common method bias and social desirability effects, despite statistical assessments conducted to address these concerns. Thirdly, the use of purposive sampling and focus on Nepal's service sector may restrict generalizability to other sectors and cultural contexts. Fourthly, the instrument was administered in English language, in assumption of the respondents possess sufficient English proficiency. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and multi-source data collection and extend the study across industries and cultural settings. Exploring moderating factors such as leadership style and organizational culture may also provide deeper insights into the boundary conditions of the PsyCap-creativity relationship.

Conclusions

This study highlights psychological capital's role - hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy - in boosting creative performance in the service sector. Self-efficacy and resilience drive idea generation and problem-solving, while hope and optimism enhance creativity when organizational support exists. Developing these traits is key to encouraging innovation and competitiveness in customer-facing roles. When employees feel valued and supported, they take initiative and engage in creative behavior. POS links PsyCap to creative performance. While individual traits are important, employees express creative potential when they feel trusted by their organization. This environment activates their psychological strengths, leading to greater creativity.

Appendices

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Section	Subscale	Item (Keywords)	
I. Psychological Capital*	A. Optimism	Uncertainty	
		Wrong	
		Bright side	
		Optimistic	
		Don't work out	
		Silver lining	
	B. Self-Efficacy	Long-term solution	
		Management presentation	
		Organizational strategy	
		Targets/goals	
		External discussion	
		Colleagues presentation	
	C. Hope	Get out of jam	
		Pursuing goals	
		Multiple solutions	
		Successful	
		Reach goals	
		Achieve goals	
	D. Resilience	Recovery	
		Manage difficult times	
		My way	
		Stressful work	
		Difficult situation experience	
		Handle many things	

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II. Creative Performance Behaviors	Suggests new ways for goals attainment.
	New ideas to improve performance.
	Search newer ideas.
	Ideas to increase quality.
	Create ideas.
	Can takes risks.
	Promote other's idea.
	Creative on the job.
	Develops plans and schedules.
	Innovative ideas.
	Create solutions of problems.
	Fresh approach to problem.
	Work tasks in new way.
III. Organizational Support	My organization cares about my opinions.
	My organization really cares about my well-being.
	My organization strongly considers my goals and values.
	Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.
	My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.
	If given the opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me.
	My organization shows very little concern for me.

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	My organization is willing to help me, if a brisk life rebalancing method is needed or utilized.	
*The questionnaire used in this study was developed by Fred Luthans, Bruce J. Avolio and James B. Avey (2007). Psychological capital questionnaire. The questionnaire is protected under copyright law and any unauthorized reproduction or distribution of the questionnaire is prohibited. Permission to use the questionnaire was obtained from the author and is acknowledged in this annexure. Any use of this questionnaire for commercial purposes or for publication in any form must be authorized by the author in writing. Therefore, the full version of the questionnaire is not annexed, only the key words are given.		

TABLE 9: Measurement Scales Adopted for the Study

	CPB	Eff	HOP	OPT	POS	RES
CPB1	0.746	0.472	0.560	0.398	0.567	0.609
CPB10	0.706	0.476	0.483	0.406	0.451	0.515
CPB11	0.812	0.471	0.519	0.376	0.543	0.549
CPB12	0.757	0.482	0.484	0.416	0.543	0.539
CPB13	0.724	0.510	0.494	0.473	0.514	0.551
CPB2	0.721	0.508	0.469	0.332	0.496	0.451
CPB3	0.545	0.327	0.272	0.112	0.299	0.335
CPB4	0.756	0.554	0.511	0.408	0.529	0.559
CPB5	0.744	0.515	0.511	0.435	0.477	0.505
CPB7	0.629	0.458	0.453	0.473	0.487	0.451
CPB8	0.733	0.494	0.479	0.437	0.482	0.505
CPB9	0.732	0.501	0.466	0.385	0.490	0.460
Eff1	0.478	0.717	0.497	0.500	0.355	0.472
Eff2	0.475	0.723	0.541	0.425	0.340	0.461
Eff3	0.543	0.772	0.522	0.418	0.376	0.446
Eff4	0.478	0.779	0.510	0.370	0.371	0.445
Eff5	0.529	0.752	0.533	0.462	0.404	0.503
Eff6	0.528	0.781	0.611	0.454	0.389	0.480
HOP1	0.476	0.545	0.723	0.510	0.445	0.525
HOP2	0.504	0.588	0.776	0.420	0.444	0.506
HOP3	0.472	0.520	0.670	0.337	0.417	0.437
HOP4	0.544	0.558	0.829	0.530	0.518	0.582
HOP5	0.531	0.535	0.783	0.455	0.458	0.553
HOP6	0.542	0.537	0.819	0.508	0.493	0.576

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OPT1	0.394	0.365	0.463	0.774	0.437	0.419
OPT3	0.418	0.477	0.471	0.735	0.359	0.365
OPT6	0.419	0.467	0.416	0.735	0.370	0.438
POS1	0.569	0.430	0.484	0.488	0.795	0.514
POS2	0.582	0.474	0.508	0.480	0.818	0.519
POS3	0.565	0.388	0.496	0.422	0.826	0.498
POS4	0.484	0.291	0.376	0.280	0.742	0.383
POS5	0.328	0.220	0.311	0.198	0.557	0.312
POS8	0.466	0.333	0.464	0.361	0.660	0.432
RES2	0.536	0.461	0.522	0.395	0.445	0.709
RES3	0.486	0.467	0.471	0.346	0.391	0.721
RES4	0.496	0.446	0.490	0.415	0.471	0.766
RES5	0.547	0.479	0.585	0.427	0.453	0.794
RES6	0.577	0.482	0.531	0.459	0.522	0.772

TABLE 10: Cross Loading (LoC)

Additional Information

Author Contributions

All authors have reviewed the final version to be published and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Concept and design: Gangaram Biswakarma, Shikha Gautam

Acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data: Gangaram Biswakarma, Shikha Gautam

Drafting of the manuscript: Gangaram Biswakarma, Shikha Gautam

Critical review of the manuscript for important intellectual content: Gangaram Biswakarma

Supervision: Gangaram Biswakarma

Disclosures

Human subjects: Consent was obtained or waived by all participants in this study. School of Management, Tribhuvan University issued approval (SOMTU/1.02.2023/10). The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the Institutional Review Committee and complied with established guidelines for research involving human participants.

How to cite this article:

Biswakarma G, Gautam S (September 01, 2026) Unleashing Employee Creative Performance Behavior: Direct Influence of Psychological Capital and the Mediating Role of Organizational Support in Service Sector Employees. Cureus J Bus Econ 3 : es44404-026-00255-1. DOI <https://doi.org/10.7759/s44404-026-00255-1>

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, and confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process. **Animal subjects:** All authors have confirmed that this study did not involve animal subjects or tissue. **Conflicts of interest:** In compliance with the ICMJE uniform disclosure form, all authors declare the following: **Payment/services info:** All authors have declared that no financial support was received from any organization for the submitted work. **Financial relationships:** All authors have declared that they have no financial relationships at present or within the previous three years with any organizations that might have an interest in the submitted work. **Other relationships:** All authors have declared that there are no other relationships or activities that could appear to have influenced the submitted work.

Data Availability Statements

The datasets (and/or code) supporting this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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How to cite this article:

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How to cite this article:

Biswakarma G, Gautam S (September 01, 2026) Unleashing Employee Creative Performance Behavior: Direct Influence of Psychological Capital and the Mediating Role of Organizational Support in Service Sector Employees. Cureus J Bus Econ 3 : es44404-026-00255-1. DOI <https://doi.org/10.7759/s44404-026-00255-1>

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How to cite this article:

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How to cite this article:

Biswakarma G, Gautam S (September 01, 2026) Unleashing Employee Creative Performance Behavior: Direct Influence of Psychological Capital and the Mediating Role of Organizational Support in Service Sector Employees. Cureus J Bus Econ 3 : es44404-026-00255-1. DOI <https://doi.org/10.7759/s44404-026-00255-1>