

Theoretical Orientations and Practical Applications of Psychological Ownership

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Leoni van der Vaart
Editors

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 Springer

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ISBN 978-3-319-70246-9 ISBN 978-3-319-70247-6 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70247-6>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017957197

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Foreword

The pursuit of performance has no greater ally than an employee who feels ownership. Scientific management arose as the pursuit of efficiency often at the expense of the worker but in its trail came humanistic theories of performance and strategies to re-engage the employee's heart and mind with the work. Simply put, feeling ownership ignites a passion in the worker. What was sucked from the worker with scientific management is now being replaced by meaning—PO is meaning-making.

There may be no more important insight as what is emerging from the new line of research into people's sense of possession and feelings of ownership in organisations. It underlies and makes sense of positive and negative phenomena and is easily understandable and relatable to the employees. It makes sense!

This book and its contents offer real advice and practical insight to engage the modern-day worker and win with people not with machines. The chapters all build on the seminal work by Pierce and his colleagues, who can now claim a following of researchers who understand the promise of allowing and encouraging people to connect deeply with their work. In this compendium, we see this work on psychological ownership extended beyond the typical organisation to include many different types of work and a variety of cultures. While the collection may actually generate more questions than answers, the stimulation of ideas and insights is impressive and offers both practitioners and researchers tools and questions for advancing the cause of engaging employees in their work and careers and to both their organisations and broader communities.

The collection of work presented in this book succeeds in providing steps for organisations and managers to take to improve ownership in organisations and complements the growing body of research that shows the benefits of doing so. In particular, the value of this collection is in its breadth as it looks at psychological ownership from multiple disciplines and in doing so weaves together a powerful message of the importance of psychological ownership and the need to commit even more effort to understanding its effects. The breadth of contexts ranges from traditional organisations to evolving ones from schools to military settings and from HR to marketing. The collection even speaks of how to make teachers more

effective—a great practical contribution beyond typical organisational studies and thus this collection speaks to many audiences.

The range of topics is impressive but the common message is that psychological ownership is important. What is exciting but at the same time daunting is the wide range of ways to influence psychological ownership including, as discussed herein, the importance of leaders on the development of psychological ownership. I would be remiss, however, not to acknowledge territoriality as this plays an important role in the dynamic and benefit of psychological ownership—a point addressed in several of the chapters. It is this dynamic that excites me about the importance of research into psychological ownership. The benefits are clear but life is rarely so straightforward and the emerging work, some of my own included, is now showing that there can be drawbacks from having too much ownership. Again, several of the chapters in this book highlight this dynamic and, if nothing else, create a clear call for more research on both the positive and negative aspects of ownership and the need to be clear in how we define and measure psychological ownership.

I approached this book as a researcher but I believe that both researchers and practitioners will find useful insight into the construct of psychological ownership through the work presented. However, in turn, this book will likely generate even more questions among the readers and stimulate additional research that will further inform, revise, and certainly challenge some of the findings discussed in here. In short, this compendium is needed and timely and I look forward to its stimulation of better practises and new lines of research.

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Preface

Psychological ownership has emerged as a positive psychological resource that can be measured and developed and that can affect the performance of individuals, teams and organisations. If a sense of psychological ownership for the organisation can be created among employees it could lead organisations to become enhanced workplaces ensuring sustainable performance. The improvement of psychological ownership can positively assist organisations in retaining talent and influence the intentions of skilled employees to remain with their organisations. Psychological ownership is narrowly defined as a state in which individuals feel as though the target of ownership or a piece of it is “theirs” (i.e. “It is *mine!*”). This book will share the theoretical advancements that have been made since the construct has been developed and will share the practical applications of the construct.

The book focuses on the theoretical advancements and specifically the practical applications of psychological ownership within multi-cultural and cross-cultural environments since limited research and practice guidelines exist for multi-cultural environments. The book is positioned as a specialist book for Human resource practitioners and industrial and organisational psychologists who want to not only enhance the performance of their organisations, but who also would like to increase the commitment of their employees and influence the intentions of skilled employees to remain with their organisations. The book aims to provide psychologists with a balance between theory and the practical applications of psychological ownership within a multi-cultural environment. Furthermore, the book aims to provide practical tools of how the psychological ownership of employees could be enhanced in the workplace.

This book attempts to address both the needs of academics, researchers and specialists working within the field of psychological ownership. This book synthesises empirical-research-based and theoretical perspectives on psychological ownership in order to provide a comprehensible perspective on contemporary research and practice which is accessible to researchers and practicing psychology professionals globally.

Those aspects discussed in the various chapters will provide not only context and practice guidelines to enhance psychological ownership but will elaborate upon its

complexity within multi-cultural contexts. It will aim to provide researchers and practitioners with guidelines on how to enhance the psychological ownership of employees within multi-cultural environments. This will be done in two sections.

Part I: Theoretical Perspectives on Psychological Ownership. The purpose of this section is to provide an outlet for theoretical research and new perspectives on psychological ownership within multi-cultural contexts. This section is comprised out of eight chapters. Chapter “[Linking Psychological Ownership with Subjective Career Success and Positive Work-Related Outcomes](#)” (**Olckers & Koekemoer**) explores the role that psychological ownership can play in the career success of individuals and specifically whether psychological ownership can foster subjective career success, which could result in increased positive work-related outcomes. Chapter “[Psychological Ownership in Corporate South Africa: An Ubuntu and Social Identity Perspective](#)” (**Nel**) explores how Ubuntu and employees’ social identities could facilitate psychological ownership in corporate South Africa. Chapter “[A Review of the Relationship between Positive Leadership Styles and Psychological Ownership](#)” (**Stander**) discusses the role of positive leadership on employees’ levels of psychological ownership that could lead to potential personal and organisational outcomes of psychological ownership. Chapter “[Measuring Psychological Ownership: A Critical Review](#)” (**Olckers Van Zyl**) critically review the validity and reliability of the various instruments that were developed to measure psychological ownership. Chapter “[Integrating Psychological Contracts and Psychological Ownership: The Role of Employee Ideologies, Organisational Culture and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.](#)” (**Griep**) introduces a conceptual model that explains how individual differences in employees’ social exchange and creditor ideologies and differences in organisational cultural values influence the development of transactional and relational psychological contracts. Chapter “[The Dark Side of Psychological Ownership in a Multi-cultural Work Context](#)” (**Botha**) focuses on the dark side of psychological ownership. Chapter “[Positive Psychological Interventions Aimed at Enhancing Psychological Ownership](#)” (**Van Zyl**) proposes evidence-based intervention strategies centred on the development of self-identity, belongingness, self-efficacy, and accountability as well as the management of territorial behaviours within multi-cultural contexts from a positive psychology perspective. Chapter “[When Good Fences Make Good Customers: Exploring Psychological Ownership and Territoriality in Marketing](#)” (**Kirk**) focuses on the unique contribution of psychological ownership in marketing management. In this chapter, Kirk poses an interesting question: ‘When does good fences make good customers’? In Chapter “[Toward A Marketing Perspective on How ‘Active Employees’ Create Valuable Human Resource Management Outcomes: The Role of HRM Consumption and Psychological Ownership](#)” (**Meijerink Bos-Nehles**) employees’ HRM consumption as a form of employee agency that explains employees’ level of psychological ownership is explored.

Part II: Empirical Applications. The final section of this book is focused on presenting practical applications of psychological ownership within a multi-cultural environment. This section consisted out of 7 chapters. Chapter “[The Role of Leadership and Related Mediators in the Development of Psychological Ownership](#)”

in Organisations” (**Bernhard**) explores the role of transformational leadership and high-quality leader-member-exchange (LMX) as potential antecedents of psychological ownership. Chapter “Exploring Psychological Ownership Towards the Group and Its Routes in the French Military Sector” (**Essig**) empirically measure the degree of psychological ownership towards a group within the French military training context. Chapter “Enhancing Primary School Student Teachers’ Psychological Ownership in Teaching Music” (**Hietanen**) provides insight into how music courses in primary school teacher education could be developed to improve the student teachers’ abilities to achieve higher psychological insight into music teaching during their compulsory music studies. Chapter “Work Engagement, Psychological Ownership and Happiness in a Professional Services Industry Company” (**Olckers George**) determines the extent to which work engagement indirectly affected the relationship between psychological ownership and happiness within the professional services industry. Chapter “Climate Change? Exploring the Role of Organisational Climate for Psychological Ownership” (**Steinheider**) This chapter reviews organisational climate as an antecedent to psychological ownership and explores the mediating role of psychological ownership on the relationship between organisational climate and positive workplace behaviours. Chapter “Recognising Opportunities: A Case Study on Fostering a Culture of Innovation Through Individual and Collective Ownership” (**Van Vuuren**) designs a team intervention which was aimed at fostering a culture of opportunity recognition and active promotion of individual and collective ownership. The final chapter of this book, Chapter “Future Perspectives on Psychological Ownership in Multi-cultural Contexts” focuses on determining the future direction of psychological ownership within multi-cultural contexts for not only the discipline (research) but for the profession (practice) as well against the backdrop of the preceding chapters.

These chapters presented an overview of current theoretical advancements and specifically the practical applications of psychological ownership within multi-cultural and cross-cultural environments. We hope that this book will not only provide a more clear understanding of psychological ownership but provide practical tools of how the psychological ownership of employees could be enhanced in the workplace and specifically within multi-cultural contexts.

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 June 2017

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Acknowledgements

As the editors of this manuscript, we would like to acknowledge the extent towards which each author and reviewer have contributed to the advancement of psychological ownership within multi-cultural contexts through their respective works. Each chapter makes a unique contribution to the discipline of positive organisational behaviour through professional, scientific and theoretical research in the field of psychological ownership. We are truly grateful to all those whom have shared both the direction of this book as well as contributed to future understanding relating to psychological ownership within multi-cultural contexts.

The editors of this book would like to extend our appreciation to Springer, the authors and the peer-reviewers who contributed to the quality of this book. Each of the 16 chapters was subjected to an independent, double-blind peer-reviewed process. Each chapter was initially examined by the editorial staff and two independent, expert reviewers were assigned to evaluate each manuscript based on the focus and scope of the chapter. This book and the quality of its contents would not have been possible if not for the selfless investment of both the time and expertise of the reviewers. We would like to thank all the reviewers for their contribution to the quality of this manuscript.

Finally, the editors would like to extend a special word of thanks to Molandri Moller, a dedicated master student of the North-West University (Vanderbijlpark, South Africa) and emerging psychologist, for her valuable contributions to the technical editing of this manuscript. Her dedication, diligence and professionalism are qualities which were welcomed in the finalisation of this project.

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About the Editors

Chantal Olickers is a registered psychologist (Category: Industrial) with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. She has completed a Doctorate degree in the field of Human Resource Management, specialising in psychological ownership. She also holds a Master of Commerce, an Honours and a Bachelor's degree in Personnel Management, which were obtained from the University of Pretoria. Chantal is a respected researcher, with contributions to several peer-reviewed journals, two chapters in international peer-reviewed books, and has presented several research papers at both national and international conferences. She is employed at the University of Pretoria as an Associate Professor in the Department of Human Resource Management. Chantal is involved with the South African Journal of Human Resource Management as well as the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology as a Section Editor. She has extensive experience within the tertiary educational environment (as a lecturer and researcher), as well as within the private sector (as a consultant). Chantal has a passion for positive organisational behaviour and specifically psychological ownership.

Llewellyn van Zyl is currently an assistant professor of psychology, health and technology at the University of Twente in the Netherlands. He also holds an associate professorship in Industrial Psychology with the North-West University in South Africa (VTC) where he leads the Optimizing Performance Sub-Programme of the Optentia Research Focus Area. He also acts as past president for the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa. Academically, he has completed a Doctorate degree in the field of Industrial Psychology, specialising in the development and evaluation of Positive Psychological Interventions aimed happiness under the supervision of Prof. Sebastiaan Rothmann. He also holds a Master of Commerce, an Honours and a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Psychology, which were obtained from the North-West University (cum laude) at the top of his class. These qualifications provided him with a means to register with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as a psychologist (cat: industrial). Professionally, Llewellyn is a respected researcher and published author of various scientific articles and specialist books. Within the scientific community, he is known for his academic work as Associate Editor of the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology as well as his work on the editorial board of the Journal of Leadership and Organizational studies. Llewellyn has extensive experience within the tertiary educational environment (as a lecturer and researcher), as well as within the private and public sectors (as a consultant). Llewellyn has a passion for Online Positive Psychological

Interventions aimed at talent development. Specifically, strengths-based people development, strengths-based coaching psychology, happiness at work, e-Health interventions and social media. As of 1 January 2017, Llewellyn holds the ranking as a C2 rated researcher with the National Research Foundation within South Africa.

Leoni van der Vaart completed her Master's degrees in Human Resource Management and Industrial/Organisational Psychology and is currently a Ph.D. student in the field of Industrial/Organisational Psychology with KU Leuven (Belgium) and the North-West University (South Africa). She is a lecturer and researcher at the North-West University and has a passion for understanding employee attitudes and behaviour from both a motivational and psychological contract perspective. Leoni is an active researcher with publications in peer-reviewed journals and presentations at international conferences and has experience in the tertiary education environment, both as lecturer and researcher. She is a registered psychological counsellor (category: independent practitioner) with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), and human resource professional (category: learning and development) with the South African Board of People Practices (SABPP). She also serves on the higher education committee of the SABPP.

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