

CHAPTER 6: Summary and Conclusion

6.1 Major findings

The objective of the present study was to understand the impact of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on workplace behaviours and emotions. Also, an intervention was developed to develop PsyCap in the working population in India. A soft skill intervention was also applied on employees with low PsyCap as a control. After the intervention, PsyCap and OCB, CWB, WE and EL were measured to see the impact of PsyCap intervention as well as soft skills intervention.

The major findings of the study were as follows:

6.1.1 PsyCap and Workplace Behaviors

PsyCap as an individual resource has been found to explain varied behaviors starting from work performance to protecting the information systems of the organization (Burns, Posey, Roberts, & Lowry, 2017). Thus, there are recommendations to develop PsyCap in plenty in the literature. This study first looked at the explanatory power of PsyCap in different sectors in India and then studied whether PsyCap can be developed using a focused intervention and whether it will impact workplace behaviors. Since PsyCap is agentic in nature (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015) it impacts the motivational make up of an individual.

6.1.1.1 *PsyCap and Organizational Citizenship Behavior*

- Though PsyCap and OCB are correlated positively, high PsyCap employees may not be very helpful but may display civic virtues and sportsmanship behaviors.
- The regression results indicate that PsyCap explains sportsmanship and civic virtue of individuals in healthcare sector and sportsmanship in pharmaceutical research sector. This suggests that nurses when efficacious and optimistic will

tolerate minor inconveniences of their work areas and will get involved constructively to promote their organization's overall welfare. In Pharmaceutical research area too, efficacious employees will display sporting behaviour, will not complain when they are bothered by others and maintain a constructive attitude in face of challenges and do not take the refusal of their ideas personally. This has implications in research organizations particularly, for developing and nurturing PsyCap efficacy as well as culture in research organizations. If one takes negative feedback or challenges to one's ideas sportingly, it can lead to creative breakthroughs (Epstein, 2000).

- The results show that all the dimensions of OCB underwent a significant increase immediately after the intervention. Thus, the increased PsyCap efficacy and optimism led to higher levels of helping, sportsmanship and civic virtue behaviour.

6.1.1.2 PsyCap and Counterproductive Workplace Behaviors

- Higher the PsyCap, lesser are the behaviors which hurt colleagues and the organization as a whole because there is a significant negative correlation between PsyCap and CWB.
- The regression results indicate that PsyCap explains CWB I of individuals in healthcare sector and CWB O of individuals in service sector and pharmaceutical research sector.
- When nurses become pessimistic about the future and are not efficacious, may perform behaviours which are detrimental to their colleagues and patients. In Pharmaceutical research area too, less efficacious employees will display behaviour which would harm the organization.

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- In case of service sector, PsyCap hope and PsyCap resilience explain the variance in CWB significantly. Thus building hope and resilience in service sector employees can lead to reduction of organizational leakages and improve productivity of the organization.
- It is possible to reduce CWB I as well as CWB O using PsyCap development. Thus, the increased PsyCap efficacy and optimism led to lower levels of CWB I and CWB O. But effect of the intervention was not sustained in the long term. This requires further research.

6.1.2 PsyCap and Workplace Emotions

Morris and Feldman (1997) brought attention to the way employees express emotions in different work settings. Today delivering the ‘service with a smile’ and being ‘engaged with your work’ have become buzzwords. In fact, it has led to burgeoning of popular literature on emotional intelligence (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Goleman, 2004) and being present. The current study looked at how PsyCap affects the desirable emotion of work engagement and undesirable emotion of emotional labor.

6.1.2.1 PsyCap and Work Engagement

- PsyCap and its dimensions and WE and its components have been shown to be strongly correlated (See **Error! Reference source not found.**). Hence one can say that increasing PsyCap can lead to increase in WE.
- PsyCap dimensions explain WE variance well in vigor, dedication and absorption. PsyCap efficacy, and hope contribute all the WE components while resilience contributes to vigor and absorption and PsyCap optimism contributes to dedication. Thus, one can say that efficacious and hopeful employees would be vigorous, dedicated to their work and it would be easy for them to plunge themselves in their work.

- In the industrial and commercial services sector PsyCap explains almost one third of the vigor experienced by the employees. Hope and resilience are significant predictors of vigor, implying that employees who are flexible at finding different solutions for customer delight will be ambassadors of customer delight. This can be an important asset in the service sector which is an important constituent of growth for an emerging economy like India.

6.1.2.2 PsyCap and Emotional Labor

Emotional Labor (EL) is a stark reality particularly where interactions with customers, patients, students are involved. The present study has some pointers for reducing this.

- PsyCap and its dimensions have been shown to negatively affecting all components of EL except surface acting.
- PsyCap resilience has been shown to play a significant role in explaining the variance in deep acting.
- PsyCap efficacy, resilience and optimism have been shown to play a significant role in explaining the variance in emotional consonance.
- In industrial and commercial services sector, PsyCap efficacy and resilience explain the variance in emotional consonance.
- In manufacturing sector PsyCap efficacy, hope and resilience have been shown to play a significant role in explaining the variance in emotional consonance and PsyCap resilience explains the variance in deep acting.
- In healthcare sector, PsyCap resilience has been shown to play a significant role in explaining the variance in deep acting.
- In pharmaceutical and medical research sector, PsyCap efficacy has been shown to play a significant role in explaining the variance in emotional consonance.

- The focused intervention has not been able to make a reduction in the EL of employees.

6.1.3 PsyCap and Socio demographic Variables

6.1.3.1 Gender and PsyCap

- PsyCap efficacy was higher in Men as compared to women. In other PsyCap components there was no significant difference.
- In helping, sportsmanship and civic virtue men scored significantly higher than women.
- In CWB I and CWB O, women scored significantly higher than men.
- In vigor component of WE, women scored significantly higher than men. In other WE components dedication and absorption there was no significant difference between men and women.
- Women experienced higher emotional suppression, emotional consonance and performed more deep acting than men. There was no significant difference between men and women in surface acting.

6.1.3.2 Age and PsyCap

- The maturational impact of age on all dimensions of PsyCap was suggested by the data with the older employees having an upper hand as far as efficacy, resilience and maturity in handling self is concerned.

6.1.3.3 Sector and PsyCap

- Efficacy, hope and optimism are significantly higher in employees from pharmaceutical research sector as compared to other sectors. Resilience is significantly higher in healthcare sector as compared to other sectors.
- Helping, sportsmanship and civic virtue are significantly lower in employees from healthcare sector as compared to other sectors.

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- Interpersonal as well as organizational CWB are significantly higher in employees from manufacturing sector as compared to other sectors.
- Vigor is significantly lower in employees from service sector as compared to other sectors. Dedication is significantly higher in healthcare sector and pharmaceutical research sector as compared to other sectors. Absorption is significantly higher in pharmaceutical research sector as compared to other sectors.
- Surface acting, deep acting and emotional suppression are significantly higher in employees from healthcare sector as compared to other sectors.

6.1.4 Developing PsyCap

A focused intervention was tested to develop PsyCap which got mixed results.

- PsyCap efficacy was malleable to growth and development through this intervention.
- PsyCap hope, resilience and optimism require further emphasis and they changed but did not reach significance level.
- In case of OCB, helping, sportsmanship and civic virtue, all the dimensions underwent a significant change but the change did not sustain for too long.
- In case of CWB, the intervention was successful immediately after the training. But the effect could not be sustained.
- Absorption facet of WE increased significantly. But WE facets of vigor and dedication did not reach significance level.
- EL component of deep acting approached significance. But surface acting, emotional consonance and emotional suppression did not reach significant level.

One can say that outcomes of positivity are distant, vague, uncertain and underspecified (Wright & Quick, 2009). Hence to make up for this negative bias, one can intensify the frequency of positive experiences and interactions. It takes a lot of energy to raise even water from one level to another. Flowing from a higher to lower level does not take any effort. So is the case here. Some more effort, intensity and depth would have to be added to the current intervention.

6.2 Limitations of the study

It is time to cast a critical eye on the work done till now. The data was collected from organizations from different sectors. Due to the availability and accessibility issues with organizations, the study though had visualized equal number of participants from each of the sectors, the number of employees from each sector are unequal. This was due to high number of dropout rate of organizations as well as employees. Though permissions were taken by the researchers from the organizations before Phase I, out of nine organizations, three organizations dropped out between Phase I and Phase II. Out of the remaining six, the researcher could access five organizations. There was a dropout at the employee level also between Phase I and II as well as Phase II and Phase III. This was because of high attrition rate in service sector and some inevitable personal reasons.

The study uses self-report tools as the source for PsyCap, OCB, WE, CWB and EL. Statistically speaking, self-reports have been shown to have an impact on the covariations amongst different variables measured in the study (Crampton & Wagner, 1994). Though Crampton and Wagner have found percept-percept inflation as the exception rather than the rule, there is a possibility of it being present in the current study. But one has to keep in mind that there is a potential for common method bias in self-report measures (Beauregard, 2012).

Another limitation of a self-report measure is social desirability bias. A respondent to a questionnaire may “fake good” leading to a bias in the results. The motivation could also be

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due to the belief of “I must be positive” rather than only impression management. Dalal’s (2005) meta-analysis on OCB CWB relationship suggests that self report is more valid measure of CWB because many deviant behaviours may go undetected by the supervisor or colleague_ an external source of rating CWB or OCB. Also, in that meta-analysis, correlation between admissions and actual behaviour is strong. In the present study actual behaviour could not be studied because of limitation of access to participants. The social desirability bias can be countered by using a projective or semi projective tool like Implicit Psychological Capital Questionnaire or I-PCQ (Harms & Luthans, 2012).

Another limitation that has been observed is low reliability for reverse scored items. This could be due to method effect. To protect against this and social desirability factor, the researcher collected the questionnaires herself with an assurance of anonymity (and did not ask them to be handed over to HR department).

A limitation of the study was that the design of the intervention prevented the measurement of each of PsyCap dimension at the end of the relevant sub-module. In the interest of maintaining continuity of the intervention, measures of the outcome variables were taken only at the end of the two-day module. Another reason for not taking measurements at the end was the synergistic effect of PsyCap. PsyCap being a second order construct, studies have noted synergistic impact of all the dimensions ((Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007)). It is possible that some modules worked better than the others.

Another limitation was the absence of control over the period between the post training and follow up. Since the researcher was not part of the organization, there was no control for any events / interventions from the period of training and the follow up time. Both of the above limitations are the unavoidable products of balancing the reach of the researcher and the practicality of availability of the sample.

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Another limitation of the study was the design of the experimental control group comparison. Because of using a soft skills intervention, which may be indirectly related to the PsyCap variables, the significance of difference between the targeted intervention and the soft skills intervention suffered. Instead it would have been better to use the waitlist control group design. It may have reflected better results. The waitlist control group was not used mainly because of fear of further increase in dropout rate of the participants. This was an oversight on part of the researcher that soft skill intervention may have had vicarious effect.

6.3 Implications of the study

This study has practical application in for learning and development, organizational effectiveness and application of PsyCap differentially across different sectors. For learning and development specialists, the present study has identified different activities and methods to develop PsyCap in working people. The human resources of an organization are considered to be the most critical in today's challenging times. The module shows the way in which PsyCap and its components can be developed. In addition, it is a tested intervention which develops PsyCap efficacy and optimism. Thus it has applications in development and growth of employees in an organization. To take an example, increasing PsyCap efficacy can help in reducing CWBs like coming in late without permission and increased absorption in Pharmaceutical and medical research sector. Thus the synergistic impact of PsyCap as a second order construct can be taken advantage of.

Utility of PsyCap intervention has also been tested in different sectors has been tested and it has been found that the relationship between PsyCap and different outcome variables are different across sectors. It is not 'one size fits all' approach. To gain maximum value from the developmental effort, it is recommended that the module be customised as per sector, age group of employees and their work experience. To take an example, PsyCap hope has explanatory power for differences in the healthcare sector. The researchers perceive that it

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can be explained by the fulfilment of need for autonomy. If the employees in this sector can craft their jobs, have the leniency to approach patient care through different methodologies their PsyCap hope can buffer them against challenges of their environment and job role. pathways. The pathways component of PsyCap hope thus gets fulfilled. This is supported by PsyCap hope being significantly able to explain in case of service professionals and healthcare professionals.

Looking at the sector related findings, one can look at developmental efforts which will support the varied requirements in different sectors. In healthcare sector, PsyCap efficacy can be developed, it can lead to reduction in CWB. This can lead to reduction in leakage. In service sector the vigor and energy of the highly engaged employee can lead to customer delight. In healthcare sector and nursing as a profession is prone to challenges like burnout. PsyCap can act as a buffer to reduce the EL felt by the healthcare professionals. Developing PsyCap resilience appears to be the key to that.

For Organization development (OD) practitioners, the focused PsyCap intervention can be a source of increasing organizational effectiveness and building the competitive edge of the organization. If an organization wants to develop a collaborative culture, the practitioner can focus on developing PsyCap efficacy and optimism of its members. This can lead to increase of OCB as shown by the focused intervention. This in turn can help in creating a culture of collaboration. In case the organization is facing a challenge in high CWB or reduction on OCB or WE, the PsyCap intervention can be planned to enhance the strengths of employees. The same can be planned not just to manage challenges but also to help employees flourish and thrive!

For HR practitioners as well as managers the study points to a very important developmental tool. PsyCap is a personal resource and its development has many positive effects such as increased display of OCB and experiencing absorption in work. To take an

example, in the industrial and commercial services sector PsyCap explains almost one third of the vigor experienced by the employees. Hope and resilience are significant predictors of vigor, implying that in the service sector, which is a growth engine for an emerging economy like India, employees who are able set challenging goals and find alternate pathways will be great assets for the organization. Employees who persevere in face of trials, because they are internally motivated and identify with their work. Such people will be able to display behaviours which will help them delight the customer. Hopeful employees will also be able to see the big picture and therefore will be able to dedicate themselves to the cause of the organization. Resilient employees will be able to persist and thus remain absorbed in their work for long periods leading to increased organizational growth.

Also, the Phase III of the study shows that the impact of the intervention wanes and the organization must plan for not just stand-alone interventions but a long term intervention with booster tools. This will help in refreezing the change that the employees have planned or experienced. Though the present study did include action plans, the researcher did not have the authority to get them implemented.

6.4 Suggestions for future research

The present study is answering some research questions, but it is also raising some more questions which can help the field of positive Psychology to grow. OCB across different sectors is not predicted uniformly by Psycap dimensions. The sectoral differences observed in employees' response to targeted intervention, point to some cultural factors which may have led to these varied responses. To take an example, PsyCap dimensions do not explain the variance in OCB amongst service sector employees where as they explain the variance in healthcare sector. This indicates that there may be sectoral cultural characteristics which need to be investigated further. The investigation can focus on what are the factors

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which will lead to OCB in other sectors like the industrial and commercial service sector, pharmaceutical and medical research sector.

Looking at the impact of the intervention, it did not last long except for absorption. OCB dimensions signify an important aspect of organizational life. The increase in OCB after the administration of focused intervention reduced in some variable by “bouncing back” of control group employees. If this phenomenon is studied further, it would give an insight into the resilience of the human being through some natural processes. This can be done probably through a qualitative tool like a diary study. This points us towards the concept of grit presented by Angela Duckworth (Seligman, 2011).

Also, the interventions were given to all the participants from India. This prompted the researcher to ask the question whether there could be an element from the Indian cultural milieu which can impact the PsyCap of participants. The concept of Nishkam karma may be included in the intervention and that can affect the PsyCap of participants. Nishkam Karma literally means “performing an action in a selfless manner”. Doing an action without expecting the fruits of the action to benefit oneself has been propagated in the Bhagwad Gita.

Bhagwad Gita is part of the epic Mahabharata and is sung by Lord Shree Krishna. Arjun, a disciple of the Lord is in a dilemma regarding fighting the war with his kith and kin. Lord Krishna advises him to do his duty as a warrior in the nishkaam manner i.e. without attachment to the fruits of labor. In case of low PsyCap participants also if inspired to do their job in a selfless manner, without allowing the stresses and the strains of worklife affecting the individual. The researchers suggest that inclusion of nishkaam Karma concept can add to the robustness of PsyCap.

The study also points at some operational improvements like getting strong commitment from the HR department, keeping the contingencies of the sector in mind (e.g.

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during an epidemic of swine flu, the healthcare sector organization decided to drop out from the study).

In the development of personal resource like PsyCap, as a researcher one needs to look at the social and organizational factors too as they impact the employee adversely or for the better. Which are the significant organizational factors which help an employee to flourish in difficult circumstances can be an area of investigation. The Indian cultural milieu can also be sourced to this end. The researcher did attempt finding Indian philosophical resources that can support the growth and development of employees but there is scope for further research into it.

The socio demographic variables like age, gender and work experience of the employees has been found to affect the development of PsyCap. These can be investigated further, particularly in the Indian context.

6.5 Recommendations

The results of the study can be useful for learning and development managers of the healthcare sector. In healthcare sector employee burnout and attrition are highly prevalent. PsyCap interventions like the targeted intervention as well as interventions to build collective efficacy may be very useful. Some employees may require long term interventions and supportive organizational policies. Intensive programs are required which are long term with support from the organization

6.6 Conclusion

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) was visualized as a storehouse of employee's energy and potential. The present study tries to explain how it affects workplace behaviours and emotions. It was found that it does explain the variance in OCB, a desirable workplace behaviour, but there are sectoral differences. The focused PsyCap intervention was modestly successful in raising the OCB scores.

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The study demonstrated that one can use PsyCap development to reduce undesirable workplace behaviour like CWB. But the behaviours either relapse or the control group employees bounce back to reach the levels attained by the focused intervention group.

Workplace emotions like work engagement and emotional labor are predicted by PsyCap. The sectoral differences point us to see the role of cultural context in utilization of one's personal resources.

Essentially, the study helped the researcher recognize that PsyCap is moving from the actual self (human, social and psychological capital) to the possible self. This is a journey with its ups and downs. They may not be easy. But the journey would be meaningful and fulfilling for a human being.