

Psychological Capital: Gender Differences and its Relationship with Job Involvement

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ABSTRACT

This preliminary study explored the relationship between positive psychological capital and job involvement among 100 male and 32 female officers of armed forces. It was hypothesised that officers with higher levels of PsyCap would also exhibit higher job involvement. The study also aimed to investigate whether gender differences in psyicap had any influence on job involvement. Psychological capital questionnaire and job involvement scale were administered on the sample. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential (Pearson correlation and regression analysis) statistics. It is found there is no evidence in support of gender difference in psyicap. Psyicap has a role in maintaining the job involvement among male officers. Implications of the findings and suggestions for developing positive behaviours which will be of great value to meet future leadership challenges in light of complex and volatile military situations.

Keywords: Psychological capital; Job involvement; Leadership

1. INTRODUCTION

The tenets of positive organisational behaviour approach emphasise that understanding psychological resources to overcome obstacles and setbacks is necessary to modify behaviour of personnel. Psychological capital predicts a wide range of work-related behavioural and attitudinal outcomes.¹ The concept of job involvement is usually perceived as treating work with discretionary or voluntary effort, which is when employees have options they will act in a way that will raise their organisation interests². A person who is fully occupied and enthusiastic about his or her work is an affianced employee.

An individual's classification or commitment to his/her work and till what amount one is concerned and occupied cognitively with one's present job is job involvement³. Job interest involves internalising values about the importance of work in the worth of the individual or integrity towards work². A person who demonstrates superior association with their work have a belief that their work is a vital part of their lives, whether they feel good about themselves or not everything is closely related to how they perform in their occupation. In other words, the individual who demonstrates prominent association towards their work have good self-esteem². Having a good self-esteem might be the reason that people are significantly associated towards their job. They are apprehensive and concerned about their work⁴.

Over the past decade literature review has explored the job involvement construct and researchers have covered that job involvement has two different perspectives⁵⁻⁶. Firstly, job

involvement is thought to occur when the certain needs in jobs are possessed and the values or personal characteristics of individuals become involved in their work. Further, Rabinowitz and Hallon⁷, reported that personal qualities like age, education, gender, term, vigour, control level and values are linked with the job interest. The other viewpoint of job involvement is viewed as a response to specific work situation characteristics. Also, in other words certain work situations and job characteristics influence the individual interest in job, for example research has demonstrated that job involvement has been related to different tasks related to job such as identity, autonomy, significance and along with task also comes supervisory behaviours such as considering leaders, participative decision making and communication⁸.

Gender, age, perceiving dangers towards the job, feedback, role stress has shown statistically significant relation with job involvement⁹ in a study by Lassak and Colleagues. Further they mentioned that specific occupation related measures of job interest should be created. It was found that there is a significant positive relation between relationship involvement (facet of job involvement) and performance.

Lambert⁹, *et al.* observed that gender, age, perceived dangerousness of the job, feedback, role stress, and job involvement have statistically significant effects on correctional staff. Diefendorff¹⁰, *et al.* stated that there is a small but significant correlation between job involvement and the role-performances of the employee. Also, Rotenberry and Moberg¹¹, reported significant positive correlation between job involvement and in-role performance.

As the research suggests that the job involvement

depends on individual characteristics and are linked to the age, education, sex, tenure, need strength, level of control, internalisation of values about the goodness of work and values. Thus, if applied in military, a service which includes individual's high commitment, determination and will power it may contribute to job involvement and further leads to long term better performance.

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

Positive psychological capital is defined as the optimistic and developmental state of an individual. The constructs and empirical research from the positive psychology have drawn four psychological resources which are determined to congregate the Positive Organisational Behaviour scientific criteria i.e. hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism also known as Psychological Capital or PsyCap by Luthans and colleagues. The four components are defined as follows.

2.1 Hope

It is the conviction of one's ability to continue working towards goals and find ways to achieve them, even in difficult circumstances. The word hope is rooted from extensive theory of Snyder and has been implied to various life domains^{12,13}. The definition of hope is a positive state of motivation based on interaction between derived sense of successful that is agency or goal directed energy and pathways or planning to meet goals¹⁴. The agency or goal directed energy is referred as determination or strength or will power to pursue goals and pathways is referred to as ability to generate different or substitute pathway to accomplish goals when any hurdle occurs in the stage of fulfilling the goals.

2.2 Efficacy

The self-efficacy dimension is considered to be one of the best dimension in psycap, which means having self-confidence to perform certain tasks and fulfilling the challenges successfully. The word efficacy is defined as, 'conviction of an individual about his or her ability to gather the cognitive resources, motivation or actions needed to successfully accomplish a specific task within a decided framework'¹⁵. The term efficacy has its roots from social cognitive theory of Bandura¹⁶ and its effectiveness to performance has been established in various domains of life including the workplace.

2.3 Resilience

It is defined as individual's capacity to get back from the stressors faced from adverse situations, conflicts, failures with increased responsibility and progressing with positivity¹⁷. It helps us to adapt to negative, physical or psychological threats and in such situation how individual preserve and balance himself/herself despite of the adversities.

2.4 Optimism

It refers to illustration to positive events to personal, everlasting and persistent causes and negative events are interpreted in terms of time being, exterior and situation specific factors. In Psycap, optimism is composed of individual's expectation about the future and attribution mechanisms that

explains the reason¹⁸.

Optimism is a tendency directed at the need for positive output whereas self-efficacy is a requirement concerning efficiency. This favourable anticipation serves to start goal-directed behaviours and to renew such activities if they have been temporarily interrupted¹⁹. On the similar grounds to optimism, hope has its base on expectations and motivation. It increases confidence with a procedure that follows alternate solutions where positive events are used to accomplish the aim.

A study conducted on employees reported that both task-orientated psychological capital viz. self-confidence and bravery, optimism and hope, self-expectation and diligence, resiliency and perseverance and interpersonal-orientated psychological capital viz. toleration and forgiveness, respecting and courtesy, modesty and prudence, thanks giving and dedication have positive effects on job involvement and subjective well-being. Also, negative effect was found on silence behaviour²⁰. However, interpersonal-oriented psychological capital's negative effect on silence behaviour became insignificant when task-psychological capital was added into the regression model that demonstrates the value of task-psychological capital on silence behaviour. Therefore, there was an interaction between task-orientated psychological capital and interpersonal-oriented psychological capital on job involvement and subjective well-being.

A study also found that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and self-efficacy²¹. Britton²² and Larrabee²³, *et al.* emphasises on the relations between resiliency in a scope of psychological capital and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a factor that expresses the positive hopes and workers' attitudes about their jobs. Work satisfaction has shown significant positive relationship with proficiency performance and assertion to administration whereas negative relationship has been found with segregation and truancy or absenteeism²⁸.

Psychological capital shares a positive relationship with individual performances. Forbes found a positive relationship between self-efficacy, a component of psychological capital and entrepreneurial performance²⁴. Hmieleski and Carr²⁵ noticed an establishment of well-being defined as a support element of psychological capital, is also related to optimism with a positive relationship.

Meta-interpretive literature review on Psycap has shown considerable impact on worker pleasing approach, behaviours and presentation²⁶. Moreover, it has a negative connection with unwanted attitudes and actions or behaviour. Mostly the researches are concerned with psychological capital of workers whereas very few studies have considered the importance of "psychological capital" as it relates to unemployment. Further, in India no research has been carried out so far concerning psychological capital among the unemployed. Based on the theoretical nature of the construct, it was contended that Psycap can be a useful construct for the population of the current study (unemployed).

3. METHOD

3.1 Aim

To measure the PsyCap of male and female officers

in Indian Armed Forces and to examine the relationship of gender differences in PsyCap with job involvement.

3.2 Objectives

The study attempts to look for the possibility of the hypothesis that officers with higher levels of PsyCap would also exhibit higher job involvement. The study also aimed to investigate whether gender differences in PsyCap had any influence on job involvement.

3.3 Sample

The questionnaires were administered on n=132 which includes 100 male and 32 female from various arms and services, average rank ranged from Flg Offer to AVM and equivalent and age ranged from 21 to 60 years.

3.4 Measures

3.4.1 Psychological Capital Questionnaire

Psychological capital questionnaire (PCQ) is a twenty-four item measure with four components that is resilience, optimism, self-efficacy and optimism. The four components are measured by six items each of the questionnaire with 6 point rating from the level of most frequently to strongly agree. The PCQ is an empirically validated and reliable measure demonstrating the sound psychometric properties across multiple samples representing services like education, military, manufacturing and cross cultural.¹

3.4.2 Job Involvement Questionnaire

Job involvement questionnaire developed by Lodahl and Kejner² comprises of fifteen items with a five point likert scale with 1 rating strongly disagree till 5 corresponding to strongly agree.

4. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics and Inferential statistics viz. t-ratio, pearson correlation and multivariate regression analysis was used to analyse data for the present study.

5. RESULTS

A correlation and predictive study design comprising of 132 participants were undertaken to study the correlation between PsyCap and job involvement. The scores obtained on the scales psychological capital questionnaire and job involvement questionnaire are as shown in the following tables and figures.

Scores obtained on the psychological capital questionnaire and job involvement questionnaire are depicted in Fig. 1.

6. DISCUSSIONS

The present study was conducted with an aim to measure the PsyCap of male and female officers in Indian Armed

Table 1. Comparison of study variables according to gender

Variables	Male	Female	Significance
Self-efficacy	28.91±4.18	27.93±5.49	t=1.067; P=0.292
Hope	28.74±4.54	27.71±5.29	t=1.062; P=0.290
Resilience	26.70±3.77	26.63±5.88	t=0.085; P=0.933
Optimism	28.50±4.54	26.90±3.95	t=1.781; P=0.077+
PsyCap total score	112.61±11.82	109.19±17.68	t=1.252; P=0.213
Job Inv total score	52.25±8.65	50.12±11.38	t=1.116; P=0.266

Table 2. Pearson correlation of PsyCap score with job involvement score of the sample (n=132)

Pair	Male		Female		Total	
	p	sig	p	sig	p	sig
Self-efficacy vs Job Inv	0.416	<0.001**	0.149	0.416	0.329	<0.001**
Hope vs Job Inv	0.295	0.003**	0.137	0.456	0.250	0.004**
Resilience vs Job Inv total score	0.308	0.002**	-0.019	0.918	0.179	0.040*
Optimism vs Job Inv	-0.412	<0.001**	0.058	0.754	-0.264	0.002**
PsyCap total score vs Job Inv	0.196	0.051+	0.094	0.610	0.165	0.058+

Table 3. Multivariate regression analysis to predict the job involvement score

PsyCap variables	Male		Female		Total	
	Beta	P value	Beta	P value	Beta	P value
Self-efficacy	0.238	0.067+	0.271	0.421	0.282	0.029*
Hope	0.016	0.883	0.133	0.686	0.060	0.591
Resilience	0.208	0.052+	-0.305	0.294	0.034	0.751
Optimism	-0.407	<0.001**	-0.004	0.987	-0.293	0.001**
R ²	33.6%		6.4%		19.1%	
P value	<0.001**		0.763		<0.001**	

Forces and to examine the relationship of gender differences in PsyCap with job involvement. The objective was that officers with higher levels of PsyCap would also exhibit higher job involvement.

The findings revealed that no statistical evidence was reported in support of gender differences in PsyCap. Also, the study suggests that PsyCap has got a limited role in maintaining the job involvement among male officers.

The advantages of the findings are that there is an exponential increase in the range, intensity, and variety of the challenges faced in today's military organisation. Perhaps, contemporary global security environment is fraught with difficulties (i.e. stressors) and to deal with it an optimistic, hopeful, and resilient sense of efficacy is needed for effective performance and well-being of leaders. The responsibilities of both men and women as officers are the same. Neither sex

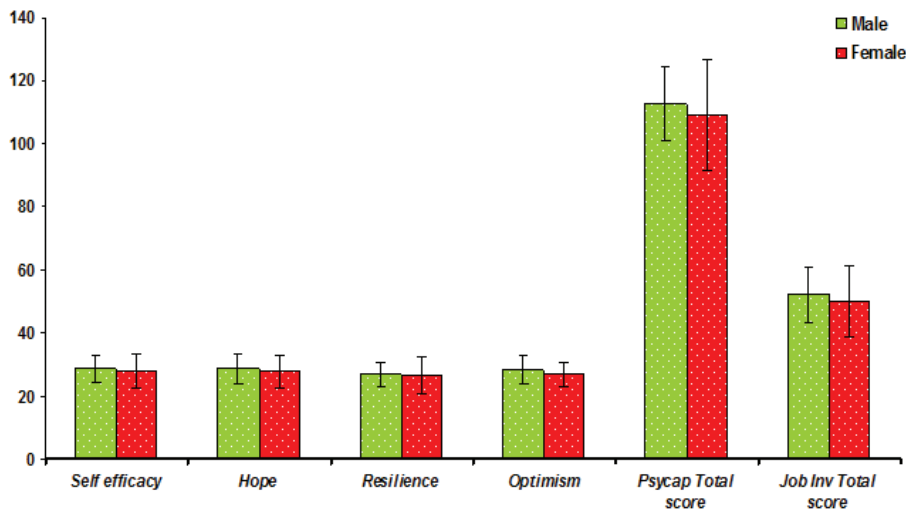


Figure 1. Showing the scores of males and females in the domains of PsyCap total scores of PsyCap and job involvement.

is predicted to be superior or inferior across the board unless the main requirement in the Armed Forces is Combatant Personality.

It was noticed that there existed a significant relationship between the hope vs. job involvement, self-efficacy and job involvement, resilience and job involvement and optimism vs. job involvement but overall it was observed that there was no significant relationship found between psychological capital and job involvement among male officers. Therefore, the present study confirms the statement by Luthans and associate i.e. “The concept of psychcap is greater than the sum of its parts”.²⁷

The earlier literature has corroborated mixed findings related to the present study. In a study by Lambert, Hogan and Cluse-Tolar, it was found that gender category and the age was perceived dangerousness towards the work, feedback to job and role stress. On the other aspect involvement in job showed significant impact towards work stress of correctional staff.⁹ Thus, it indicates that gender and job involvement together may account for job stress but may not have an independent effect on each other. The same has also been found in the current study as no significant relation was found between PsyCap and job involvement in women.

Sridevi and Srinivasan emphasised that employees who are higher in psychological capital would have more positive emotions; as a result, they are more engaged and optimistic.²⁸ Karatepe and Karadas reported that workers high on psychological capital feel active, devoted and are engaged and engrossed in their job.²⁹ The significance between the domains of PsyCap and job association is reported in the findings whereas no evidence to support that PsyCap is significantly related to Job involvement has been reported among female officers. One of the reasons for this could be the huge difference in the sample size between females and males.

Social Forces such as discrimination and social influences direct men and women to develop different skills and priorities. Genetic Differences have influence on men and women to have diverse capabilities. Henceforth, gender differences need to be addressed as it has implication on the future acceptance of

women in combat conditions.

Experiences of women socialisation have been used by social learning theorist to divulge dearth of women’s strong expectation of their personal worth in relationship and career related Behaviours limiting to their realisation of potential and achievement³⁰. Various factors like educational practices, occupational systems have influenced gender development and confirms the differences among men and women³¹. Thus, the gender role pressures to influence perceived efficacy.

As it is not possible for nation’s military organisations to decrease the job demands, one of the ways to increase one’s involvement in job can be done through enhancing the resources that may strengthen psychological characteristics or indeed sources to fuel PsyCap. Hence, carrying out this study would provide a broader stream for direction of psychological strength developing interventions.

7. CONCLUSION

The study has brought into light the role of PsyCap in job involvement, an important factor required to discharge duties in military environment effectively. The study also explored the gender differences in psychcap. The most encouraging and promising application of the current study would be that PsyCap can be developed among individuals, consequently providing opportunity for developing and improving its level to the desired standard of requirement. Future research is required to further strengthen and generalise the findings and also to find out the role of mediating variables.

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