CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to understand the impact of employees’ positive psychological capital (efficacy, hope, resilience, optimism) on their workplace outcomes such as work performance behaviors (both the in-role/task and the extra-role/OCB), intrinsic motivation, and goal commitment. Along with this the moderating effects of organizational justice and job characteristics on the linkage between PsyCap— and a) intrinsic motivation, and b) goal commitment were also examined. Another purpose of the study was to depict the impact of psychological capital on the work performance behaviors (in-role/task and extra-role/OCB) in the presence of the confounding effect of co-worker’s undermining behaviors. The relationship between intrinsic motivation and goal commitment with the work performance behaviors (in-role/task and extra-role/OCB) were also examined along with the main purpose of the study. The results of the present study provided several pertinent conclusions which extend the research on psychological capital. Further, the results provided support for the positive impact of PsyCap on workplace outcomes in the Indian context.

The findings from path analysis in SEM confirmed that PsyCap has a significant and positive association with the two kinds of work performance behaviors (in-role/task performance, H1-a; and extra-role OCB behaviors, H1b), intrinsic motivation (H2), and goal-commitment (H3). The direct effects of intrinsic motivation on the work performance behaviors—in-role/task performance (H4) and OCB-O (H5) were also found significant. Similarly, the direct effects of goal-commitment on in-role/task performance (H6) and on extra-role/OCB (H7) were also found significant. The moderating effect of organizational justice on the relationship of PsyCap with intrinsic motivation (H8-a) was also found significant. The data
do not provide sufficient evidence to support the three hypotheses—i) H8-a where organizational justice was proposed as moderating the relationship of PsyCap and goal-commitment; ii) H9-a where the moderating effect of job characteristics on the relationship of PsyCap with intrinsic motivation was proposed; and iii) H9-b where the moderating effect of job characteristics on the relationship of PsyCap with goal-commitment was proposed.

In hypothesis H1-a it was expected that PsyCap will have a positive impact on the task performance of the employees. The result supported this hypothesis and PsyCap has a positive impact on task performance of the employees. This result is inconsistent with the findings of the previous studies where a positive impact of PsyCap on work performance was suggested (Luthans et al., 2007b; Avey et al., 2011). But in the previous studies, work performance has been measured either objectively or in the form of supervisor’s ratings (Avey et al., 2011). Contrary to this work performance in the present study is measured through in-role performance behavior. In PsyCap literature limited studies, to date, have measured work performance through the performance behaviors. In-role behaviors are suggested as the best indicators of work performance, as it helps in understanding various task related prescribed duties which aid in completion of the work (Williams & Anderson, 1991). In the objective measure of work performance an assumption is made that employee must be involved in the daily operational work activities, but employees might be are performing tasks only when the deadline of the target is nearby. For instance, in sales job, employee works harder at the end of the quarter to achieve their targets compared to the other working days. Similarly, in supervisor’s rating of work performance employees who are not in in-group relationship with their supervisor may have evaluation only on the basis of their personal judgments of the supervisors.
In the present context of IT/ITes industry employees work on different projects and have less interaction with the supervisors. Employees are assigned to separate vendors and they work on the vendor’s site and visit their company’s office occasionally. In such type of work context interaction between employees and supervisors could be very less. Thus, measuring performance from in-role behaviors is a better option in such contexts. The findings of the present study also validate the propositions of positive organizational behaviors (POB) which suggests that positive resource capacities such as PsyCap will have a positive impact on work performance (Luthans et al., 2007b). Further, the result also augments the propositions of Sweetman and Luthans (2010) that high PsyCap employees are immersed and absorbed in their daily work activities (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010).

In the post-hoc analysis, the influence of PsyCap on task performance was examined after controlling the effects of co-worker’s undermining behaviors. Coworker’s undermining behaviors are intentional behaviors such as intentional delay of the work, salient treatments, or misleading information that are aimed at reducing the motivation and performance of the targeted employees (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002; Harschovis, 2011). Past studies have seen uncourteous behaviors at the workplace, which have significant negative impact on the employees’ perception and motivation (Duffy et al., 2002; Harschovis, 2011; Roberts, Scherer, & Bowyer, 2011). The presence of undermining behaviors are common at the workplace (Harschovis, 2011), but to date, limited studies have tried to examine the impact of PsyCap on work performance in the presence of co-worker’s undermining behaviors.

As such, in the present study, it was expected that undermining behaviors of the fellow workers will affect the determination and persistence of high PsyCap employees also. But, the result suggested that coworker’s undermining behaviors are not confounding with the effect of
PsyCap. High PsyCap employees even in presence of undermining behaviors are able to perform well and are indulging in helping and beyond the job behaviors. In one of the cross-sectional study, Roberts et al. (2011) found rude and discourteous behaviors called workplace “incivility” has a significant relationship with psychological capital. They had examined the direct impact of PsyCap on the “incivil” behaviors and found that employees with higher level of PsyCap were not engaging in “incivil” behaviors which are aimed at individuals to reduce their moral. But, in the present study co-worker’s undermining behvaiors are taken into consideration as these behaviors are impacting the work performance of the employees (Duffy et al., 2012). As such, one of the objectives of the present study was to examine the impact of PsyCap on work performance after controlling the confounding effect of co-worker’s undermining behaviors. The result provided support for this and PsyCap was found enhancing work performance even in the presence of co-worker’s undermining behaviors. The results augment the findings of Robert et al. (2011) and goes one step ahead by confirming that the performance of the high PsyCap employees are not affected by the con-worker’s undermining and demeaning behaviors. Thus, based on the findings of Robert et al. (2011) and present study, it can be concluded that high PsyCap employees neither engage in uncourteous behaviors nor their performance gets affected by the uncourteous behaviors from the others.

In hypothesis H1-b it was expected that high PsyCap employees will display extra-role/OCB behaviors towards their co-worker and organization. The resulted suggested a positive and significant relationship between PsyCap and OCB and provided support for hypothesis H1-b. The results validate and augment the propositions of broad-and build theory of positive emotions, which suggest that employees’ personal resource such as self-efficacy and optimism
will broaden the thought-action repository of the individuals and as a result, they will participate in more positive behaviors (Fredrickson, 2009).

PsyCap is a second order construct of such personal resource of an employee that broadens the thought-action repository of employees, as a result employees who are high on PsyCap are found participating in positive behaviors such as OCB. The finding also supports the arguments of Avey et al. (2008b) that PsyCap generates positivity among employees, which in turn strengthens the motivation of employees to get involved in more positive behaviors like OCB. But, Avey et al. (2008b) have examined the impact of PsyCap only on one dimension of OCB, i.e., OCB-I. But, OCB has been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct (Organ & Ryan, 1995; Williams & Anderson, 1991). As such, in the present study OCB is examined as a global construct which includes both the dimensions of OCB, viz., OCB-I and OCB-O. In another study by Avey (Avey, Luthans, & Youssef 2010) study, the impact of Psycap did have a significant association with OCB-I. But, in this study, PsyCap was found explaining significant variance in both the dimensions of OCB (OCB-I and OCB-O).

In hypothesis H2, it was expected that PsyCap will have a positive impact on the intrinsic motivation of the employees. As expected the results supported this hypothesis and PsyCap was found impacting positively the intrinsic motivation of the employees. The result was inconsistent with the Siu, Bakker, and Jiang (2014) findings where the authors found intrinsic motivation mediating the relationship of student’s PsyCap with the student engagement. The finding of the present study has validated the result of Siu et al. (2014) with a sample from the workplace in the Indian context. Further, in Siu et al. (2014) study, intrinsic motivation is considered as a mediator between PsyCap and student engagement, but in the present study, it was found that PsyCap leads to intrinsic motivation which, in turn, makes employees motivated to perform in-
role and extra-role behaviors. Thus, in the present study intrinsic motivation is studied in association with both PsyCap and work performance behaviors. Similarly, the result validates the proposition of Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) model of Bakker and Demerouti (2008). In JD-R model the authors suggested PsyCap as one of the personal resources of employees that can generate motivation among employees to remain immersed and involved in their work, irrespective of workplace demands and pressures. The results of the hypothesis H2 suggest that PsyCap is the personal resource of employees which can keep employees intrinsically motivated towards their work performance.

In hypothesis H3, it was expected that PsyCap will have a positive impact on goal-commitment of the employees. The results support this hypothesis and PsyCap was found having a positive and significant impact on the goal-commitment level of the employees. Goal-commitment is the psychological level binding force which keeps employees dedicated towards their work (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Though PsyCap is conceptualized to have a positive impact on work performance and goal-commitment is one of the important precursor of work performance (Locke & Latham, 1988), the relationship between PsyCap and goal-commitment has not been empirically examined previously. Present study is one of the studies where the relationship between PsyCap and goal-commitment is examined empirically. The result confirmed a direct and significant relationship between PsyCap and goal-commitment. The result validates the proposition of positive organizational behavior (POB) that high PsyCap employees are dedicated to their work goals as they are efficacious, hopeful, and resilient (Luthans et al., 2007a). They are more persistent and determined to reach their work goals as they have positive attribution towards the task and they work with several contingency plans to handle the uncertainties.
In hypothesis H4, it was expected that intrinsically motivated employees will be task performers. As expected, the results support this hypothesis and intrinsic motivation was found having a direct positive relationship with in-role or task performance. Intrinsically motivated employees are internally motivated to perform their tasks as for them task itself is interesting and attractive (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The result of this study confirms the findings of Piccolo and Colquitt (2006), where the authors suggested that intrinsically motivated employees will perform in-role duties and will be task performers. The result also validates the proposition of self-determination theory of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), that intrinsically motivated employees are self-motivated and for them task itself is rewarding.

In hypothesis H5, it was expected that intrinsically motivated employees will engage in extra-role beyond the job behaviors called organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB). The results provided partial support for this hypothesis. Intrinsically motivated employees are found indulging only in extra-role behaviors directed towards organization (OCB-O). Intrinsically motivated employees are self-motivated towards their work and the task itself is rewarding for them (Ryan & Deci, 2000, Siu et al., 2014), as such it was expected that they will display extra-role beyond the job behaviors at the workplace. The result confirms the same. Similar to Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) study present study also found intrinsically motivated employees are displaying more conscientious, civic virtue, and sportsmanship behaviors towards their organization. They adhere to the rules, regulations, and procedures of the organization without any complaining attitude. They show deep concern and interest in the life of the organization. The result validates the findings of Piccolo and Colquitt (2006), where transactional leaders keep their followers intrinsically motivated and in turn, they display beneficial work behavior such as OCB.
But, in this study, impact of intrinsic motivation on OCB-I (extra-role behaviors directed towards colleagues) was not found to be significant. Present study is conducted in IT/ITes sector of India, which is highly dynamic due to its dependence on different countries for its work. Employees compete aggressively with each other to excel and survive in this dynamic work environment. Alok, Raveendran, and Shaheen (2014) in their suggested that conflict prevail among the employees of IT/ITes in India due to high competition and survival in the volatile international market. They explored conflict resolution styles of these employees. Further, employees’ performance in this sector is appraised relative to the performance of their colleagues (Muralidhara & Shaheen, 2016). Employees are categorized as average or high performer on the basis of the jobs accomplished by them. Thus, possibility could be that due to these reasons employees working in IT/ITes sector of India are not display helping or altruistic behaviors towards their fellow workers. They are competing with others to survive and sustain.

Other than Piccolo and Colquitt’s study (2006), present study is among the few studies that have empirically examined the direct impact of intrinsic motivation on OCB/extra-role behaviors of the employees. The findings of the present study where intrinsic motivation has a significant impact on OCB-O, but not on OCB-I is quite different from the findings of Piccolo and Colquitt (2006). They had examined OCB as a global construct and had not explored its dimensions. Whereas, in the present study OCB is examined as a two-factor model (OCB-I and OCB-O). The impact of intrinsic motivated is tested on both the facets of OCB. This finding is quite unique as, it provide more in-depth analysis of Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) findings, by suggesting intrinsic motivation is influencing only OCB-O and not OCB-I. In today’s volatile and dynamic work environment this study holds meaning as due to heightened competition employees may not be having time and interest to help or aid their colleagues. Future studies are further needed to
validate this findings and analysis with different samples, contexts, and groups. Situation may vary in a team, as completion of work in a team is contingent on co-operation and co-ordination between all the members (Campion, Medsker & Higgs, 1993).

In hypothesis H6, it was expected that goal-commitment will have a positive impact on in-role behavior/ task performance. As expected, the result provides support for the direct influence of goal-commitment on task performance. Goal-committed employees are found accomplishing their in-role behaviors and thus completing their task. The finding is in congruence with the findings of Piccolo and Colquitt (2006). It confirms that employees who are committed to their goal are the task performers. The finding of this study also validates the propositions of task-goal theory. The task-goal theory suggests that high performance is possible only when the employees are committed to their goal (Locke & Latham, 1988). The finding also justifies the vital role of goal-commitment for task performance. To achieve a goal, an individual should first internalize the goal and accept it (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Internalization and acceptance is a kind of commitment towards goal.

Hypothesis H7 proposed that goal-commitment employees will display extra-role behaviors. The result supported the hypothesis where goal-commitment was found having a significant and positive impact on extra-role/OCB behaviors. The result differs from the findings of Piccolo & Colquitt (2006). The authors found goal-committed employees were not displaying extra-role behaviors (OCB), as they consider these behaviors diversion from their tasks. OCB is neither recognized nor rewarded by the organization (Organ & Ryan, 1995; Williams & Anderson, 1991). In today's flat and boundaryless world, employees work in groups (Friedman, 2005). Each member is responsible for completing their part of the group work. IT/ITes sector of India is one such sector where employees work in groups on different projects, and these members are spread
across the world (Bhatnagar, 2007). To accomplish the group goal irrespective of the interest level members have to work in close coordination, co-operation, and collaboration with each other (Alok et al., 2014). Working in close coordination and collaboration requires helping and supportive behaviors among the members of the group (Alok et al., 2014). The result of the present study supports this argument and in the present study and suggest that employees who are goal-committed are displaying supportive and helping behaviors. Though the role of extra-role behaviors (OCB) are crucial in today’s volatile and competitive environment, limited studies to date have tried to explore the relationship between goal-commitment and OCB. Present study is among the first few studies where the impact of goal-commitment on OCB is empirically examined and validated.

In hypothesis H8-a and H8-b, based on the foundation of equity theory (Adams, 1965) it is proposed that organizational justice will moderate the relationship between PsyCap and— i) intrinsic motivation and ii) goal-commitment. The results provided support for the H8-a hypothesis where, organizational justice is found moderating the influence of PsyCap with the intrinsic motivation. Equity theory suggests that employees compare their input/output ratios with the input/output ratios of their fellow workers, and when they found any discrepancies in this ratio, they feel that their organization is not just and fair to them. In a meta-analysis on the antecedents and consequences of organizational justice, it was found that the employees’ justice perception influences employees’ attitudes and behaviors (Cohen-Charash et al., 2001; Totawar et al., 2014; Totawar, 2016). When employees perceive that their efforts are acknowledged and rewarded in a similar manner to their colleague then they feel motivated towards their goals. The results provide empirical support to this argument. The findings of the present study are unique in the sense that, though the vital role of employees’ justice perception on the workplace
outcomes has been delineated (Cohen-Charash et al., 2001; Totawar et al., 2014), to date scant studies are available where organizational justice is examined as a moderator between the influence of PsyCap with the intrinsic motivation. This study is among the few such studies where organizational justice has been found positively impacting the relationship of employees’ PsyCap with the intrinsic motivation. The moderating effects of organizational justice when plotted on a graph, as high and low, suggests that when both organizational justice and PsyCap are high employees are more intrinsically motivated towards their goals, whereas when both organizational justice and PsyCap are low, employees are less intrinsically motivated. This result suggests that organizational justice has a direct proportional relationship with the influence of PsyCap on the intrinsic motivation. Thus, based on the findings, it can be concluded that organizational justice strengthens the influence of PsyCap on intrinsic motivation.

But, the result does not provide support for the hypothesis H8-b where organizational justice is not having a significant effect on the relationship of PsyCap with goal-commitment. The result suggests that commitment level of the high PsyCap employees toward their goal is not dependent or influenced by the external factors such as presence or absence of organizational justice. PsyCap is composed of four first order factors such as self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. These factors provide support and energy to the employees even in adverse and challenging situations (Luthans et al., 2007a; Totawar et al., 2014; Peterson et al., 2011). Optimism keeps them positive about their external events, hope provides willpower and contingency plans to reach the goal and keep them focused towards goal, and resilience restores energy and capability to bounce back towards goal. Thus, all the first order factors of PsyCap make employees committed towards goal. The effects of these factors are not contingent on the external factors (Walumba et al., 2005; Avey et al., 2011). Hence, even if employees perceive
low fairness and justice at the workplace their commitment and persistent level towards the goal is not affected. This finding can also be justified from the results of hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 where high PsyCap employees are performing their work and are found intrinsically motivated and committed to their goals. Intrinsically motivated employees find their task itself rewarding and interesting. Contextual factors do not reduce the perseverance and persistent level of the employees with higher level of PsyCap, as they are intrinsically motivated, dedicated and focused towards their task or goal.

In hypotheses H9-a and H9-b based on the propositions of job characteristics theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), it was proposed that core job characteristics will moderate the relationship between PsyCap and— i) intrinsic motivation and ii) goal-commitment. The results do not provide sufficient evidence to support the two hypotheses. Job characteristics are not found moderating the influence of PsyCap with the i) intrinsic motivation and ii) goal-commitment. Proponents of PsyCap have posited that PsyCap keeps employees positive, motivated, and persistent towards their work even in adverse and complex situations. High PsyCap employees are drawing energy and willpower from their inner psychological resources, strengths or capacities such as efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Avey et al., 2008b, 2011; Luthans et al., 2007c; Peterson et al., 2011; Totatwar et al., 2014). These inner resources broaden the thought process of the employees which in turn leads to positive attitudes and behaviors at the workplace. PsyCap act as a repository of these positive resources and which become the source of energy for positive actions at the workplace. Thus, employees with higher level of PsyCap are not affected by the changes in their job or workplace and remain motivated and committed.
But, past studies have suggested that various attributes of the job have a differential effect on employees’ perception (Hackman & Oldham, 1974; Hulin, 1971; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). As such in the post-hoc analysis the direct relationship between job characteristics and PsyCap was explored. The results suggest that job characteristics have a positive influence on PsyCap. Job characteristics explain significant variance in PsyCap. Scholars have suggested that PsyCap and its resources are developable in nature and can be developed through certain strategies such as self-efficacy. This can be developed through positive feedback and mastery of the work, optimism can be developed through having realistic perspectives, hope can be developed through preparedness for the goal, and resiliency can be enhanced through risk-focus strategies (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Youssef & Luthans, 2007, 2012). In the present study, the result of the post-hoc analysis confirms that job characteristics enhance the PsyCap level of the employees. Opportunity to use a variety of skills at the workplace leads to the mastery of the work and boosts confidence among employees. Autonomy at the task provides freedom in decision making and it allows making goals more realistic, which increases the optimism level of the employees. Autonomy also helps in breaking the tough goals into small goals and hence increases hope to accomplish the goal. Similarly, feedback from the job leads to an understanding of discrepancies and makes one more prepared, with varied contingency plans, for the subsequent goal. Thus, job characteristics develop the positive strengths and resources of PsyCap. This result is in congruence with the Avey’s (2014) findings, where the author found task complexity (one of the characteristics of a job) has a significant impact on the level of PsyCap of employees of an aerospace organization in the Northwestern United States. The result supports the proposition of Avey (2014) that job characteristics can increase or lower the PsyCap level of the employees. But, findings of the present study differs from Avey (2014) findings that
all the five dimensions (task variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) provided by Hackman and Oldham (1976) were taken into consideration in the present study, whereas Avey (2014) has taken only task complexity as one of the characteristics of job. Future studies can examine the differential impact of all the five dimensions of core job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) on the PsyCap level of the employees. The results of the present study extend the literature of PsyCap and provides probable antecedents of PsyCap by which PsyCap can be enhanced.