In today's fast-paced world and modern life conditions, stress has become an inevitable part of life. Stress has been a popular topic of research for many decades, however only a little attention has been paid to the individual differences approach in understanding stress. Individual differences are quite important to be considered in the study of stress as a great amount of variation exists in response of stress and its consequences for different individuals. Researchers emphasised that individual differences approach may be applied to the phenomena of stressors, the state of stress, coping with stress and consequences of stress (e.g., Baron, 1997; Lazarus, 1999; Strelau, 2001).

Several researchers have differentiated between different kinds of stress. Selye (1976) differentiated between eustress (i.e., positive stress which works as a catalyst to our day-to-day functioning) and distress (the negative stress that adversely affects an individual's functioning). Kumar (2005) argued that stressors that people experience can be either external (adverse physical conditions such as extreme environments, natural calamities; stressful psychological environments e.g., abusive relationships or poor working conditions) or internal (physical e.g., some infections or body organ malfunction; as well as psychological i.e. certain apprehensiveness, worry or mental deadlines, striving for success). Further, stress has been distinguished in acute stress (sudden and intense stress) and chronic stress (gradually continued form of moderated stress). Research literature has shown that chronic stress is among the causes of person's depressive symptoms, anxious apprehensiveness, maladjustment and anger provocation.

When Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) recommended a shift from the “preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life” to a more
balanced perspective that includes improving understanding of how to build "positive qualities", it was hoped that a scientific focus on thriving or optimal functioning would suggest "new ways to address some of the most pressing issues facing today's societies" (Donaldson, 2011). Psychological capital emerged as positive and developmental state of an individual characterized by high self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency (Luthans & Youssef, 2004).

Positive psychology, an organized area of inquiry that emerged as an antidote to psychology’s dominant focus on pathology and problems, is a young field, having been in existence for only 17 years. In its short history, its recognition of the value of attending to the positive aspects of the human condition has inspired the imaginations of scholars across a variety of disciplines, including psychology, psychiatry, education, technology, public health, social and human services, economics, political science, neuroscience, and organizational sciences, among others (Donaldson et al., 2011). Consequently, the literature in the field, particularly in its first decade, was heavily focused on conceptualizations of positive psychology and its relevance in various sub-disciplines and topics, philosophical discussions of its value, and new theory development (Donaldson, Dollwet, & Rao, 2015). Although such conceptual work on expanding the field continues to grow, the empirical testing of theories and new construct development has increasingly outpaced the conceptual literature in the last 7 years (Donaldson et al., 2015).

Research has found that when the four psychological resources are combined, they form a higher order, core construct that is a stronger predictor of attitudes and performance than any one of the four components by itself (Luthans et al., 2007). PsyCap has been shown to add variance to desired attitudinal and behavioral outcomes beyond the demographics and well known positively oriented constructs such as core self-evaluations, personality traits and person-organization and person-job
fit (Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010). As indicated in the introductory comments, a recent meta-analysis of 51 independent samples (Avey, Reichard, et al., 2011) found PsyCap not only has a strong positive relationship with desirable attitudes, behaviors and performance, but also psychological well-being of employees (Avey et al., 2010) and negative relationships with cynicism, intentions to quit and counterproductive behaviors (Avey, Luthans, et al., 2010) and importantly stress (Avey et al., 2009). Roche, Haar and Luthans (2014) found that psychological capital mediates the effects of mindfulness on dysfunctional outcomes such as anxiety, depression. Existing evidence reveals that anger, anxiety, and depression are deeply linked (Kitamura & Hausi, 2006). Friedlander, Reid, Shupak and Cribbie (2007) suggested that decreased stress predicted improved overall adjustment.

A number of factors determine the level of stress such as person’s perception, tolerance of stress, external resources, social support and the nature of stressors. However, all the people who are expose to stressful conditions do not feel psychologically distressed to the same degree. The stressful feelings depends not only the effects of stresses but also on how the individual appraises the situation (Lopez & Snyder, 2009).

Researches demonstrated that PsyCap seems promising in the ability to have a performance impact in an organisation and in life in general (Lopez & Snyder, 2009). Education scholars have already suggested that PsyCap can be used to enhance academic performance (Pajares, 2001). A number of scholars have found that the hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resiliency have led increase in academic achievement (Masten & Reed, 2002, Seligman, 2006; Snyder, 2005). However, researchers have yet to fully consider the impact of psychological capital on performance for various professions and people from different walks of life such as health care professionals, teachers, bank employees, housewives as well as people with varied age range i.e. young adults, middle age adults.
Recently, many researchers have devoted their efforts and are continuously exploring the relationship of Psychological Capital as a major factor contributing in daily behaviour and particularly in stress and its consequences (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004; Roddenberry & Renk, 2010; Ginstafsson & Skoog, 2012).

Although there have been numerous researches on the states of stress, there is still a scarcity of researches that explore the contribution of individual specific traits in mediating or moderating the effect of stress on the individual. In response to these indications and potential importance of individual differences approach in understanding stress and different reactions to stress, the present study is an effort in this direction to examine the moderating role of PsyCap in varied reactions to stress. The negative aspect of stress, and its research evidence based reactions including depression, anxiety, adjustment and anger are the focal variables of the present study. Hence, the problem of the study may be stated as, “A study of Psychological Capital as Moderator of Reactions to Stress”.

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

1. To study the relationship of stress with depression, anxiety, adjustment and anger as reactions to stress.
2. To study the relationship of daily hassles with depression, anxiety, adjustment and anger.
3. To study the relationship of psychological capital with stress.
4. To study the relationship of psychological capital and daily hassles.
5. To explore the relationship of psychological capital with reactions to stress.
6. To study the moderating effect of psychological capital on depression.
7. To study the moderating effect of psychological capital on anxiety.
8. To study the moderating effect of psychological capital on adjustment.
9. To study the moderating effect of psychological capital on anger.

**SPECIFIC HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:**

1. There exist significant positive relationship between stress and its reactions.
2. There exists significant positive relationship between daily hassles, depression, anxiety, adjustment, anger.
3. Psychological capital is likely to correlate negatively with stress.
4. Psychological capital is likely to correlate negatively with daily hassles.
5. There exist negative relationship between psychological capital and reactions to stress.
6. Psychological capital would moderate the effect of stress on depression.
7. Psychological capital would moderate the effect of stress on anxiety.
8. Psychological capital would moderate the effect of stress on adjustment.
9. Psychological capital would moderate the effect of stress on anger.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Sample:**

The sample of the study consisted of 400 (172 males and 228 females) participants from Delhi, National Capital Region (NCR) and Haryana. Of 400, Sample comprise of 84 (51 males, 33 females) students; 94 (32 males, 62 females) Teachers; 92 (38 males, 54 females) Health Care Professionals (HCPs); 80 (51 males, 29 females) in service and 50 Housewives. The sample was drawn using random sampling from various institutions and
organisations such as Amity University Noida, Guru Jambheshwar University Hisar, Govt. P.G. College Hisar, Vaish College Bhiwani, Vaish Sr. Sec. School Bhiwani, Govt. schools of Hisar and Bhiwani, L.I.C. of India Hisar, various hospitals of Haryana and NCR. The age of the participants ranged between 18 and 65 years. The education of both male and female participants ranged from higher secondary to doctorate degree. The participants belonged to varied socio-economic backgrounds ranging from lower middle to higher classes.

Measuring Instruments:

Psychological Capital – The following four separate measures i.e. self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency were used to measure psychological capital:

1. **Hope Scale** (Snyder et. al., 1991). The Hope Scale is a 12-item measure of a respondent’s level of hope. The scale is divided into two subscales that comprise Snyder's cognitive model of hope: (1) Agency (i.e., goal-directed energy) and (2) Pathways (i.e., planning to accomplish goals). The alpha coefficient for scale is .80 for several studies and has evidenced construct and discriminant validity.

2. **General Self-efficacy Scale** (GSE, Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1981). General Self-efficacy Scale is a 10-item scale designed to assess a general sense of perceived self-efficacy and to assess optimistic self-beliefs used to cope with a variety of demands in life. Cronbach alpha ranges from 0.75 to 0.94 across a number of different language versions and has high reliability, stability, and construct validity.

3. **14-item Resilience Scale** (RS-14, Wagnild, 2009). The RS-14 is a 14-item scale intended to assess the capacity to withstand life stressors, to thrive and make meaning from challenges. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale is 0.81. The internal consistency of the RS-14 has been reported to be excellent ($\alpha = .93$) and it correlates strongly (r
= .97) with the original RS (Wagnild, 2009). The scale has content and constructs validity demonstrated by Wagnild (2009).

4. **Life Orientation Test – Revised** (LOT-R, Scheier, Carver & Bridges, 1994). The Life Orientation Test – Revised (LOT-R) scale consists of 10 items and purports to assess individual differences in generalized optimism versus pessimism. Cronbach's alpha for the entire 6 items of the scale was .78, suggesting the scale has an acceptable level of internal consistency for LOT-R for an undergraduate sample. The internal reliability coefficients for subscales were .62 (Optimism) and .78 (Pessimism). The test-retest correlations were .68, .60, .56 and .79, suggesting that the scale is stable across time.

5. **Perceived Stress Scale** (PSS, Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983). The Perceived Stress Scale consists of 10 items to measure participants' appraisal of situations in their life as stressful perceived in last one month. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .78). As far as validity is concerned, PSS correlates in a predicted way with other measure of stress such as Job Responsibilities Scale and life events scales.

6. **Daily Hassles scale** (DHS, Lazarus & Folkman, 1989). The daily hassles scale consists of 117 items. It was developed to measure the frequency and severity of a person's transactions with the environment that are considered by the person to be stressful events. Young (1987) reports a correlation of .60 between the daily hassles scale with the hassles portion of the combined hassles and uplifts scale and also reports fairly similar relationships with psychological symptoms and somatic health for the two scales.

7. **Bell Adjustment Inventory** (BAI, Bell, 1961). Bell Adjustment Inventory comprises of 160 items. It is a self-reporting questionnaire in 'yes', 'no' or '?' format to measure the total level of adjustment. The
reliability coefficients varied from .72 to .92 for various areas of adjustment determined by different methods. Cross validation of the scale with K. Kumar's (1985) adjustment inventory resulted in Pearson's r of .72, .79, .82 and .81 for home, health, social and emotional areas respectively.

8. **Beck Depression Inventory-II** (BDI-II, Beck, Steer & Brown, 1996). BDI-II is a 21-item self-report instrument. It purports to measure presence and severity of depression. The coefficient alphas for BDI-II are .92 for outpatients and .93 for the college students. This is a valid instrument and has the coefficient of correlation form .47 to .71 for different criterion measures.

9. **Beck Anxiety Inventory** (BAI, Beck & steer, 1993). The Beck Anxiety Inventory consists of 21 multiple-choice items used for measuring the severity of an individual's anxiety. The scale is psychometrically sound and its internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) ranges from .92 to .94 for adults. Concurrent validity with the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale, Revised is .51.

10. **Aggression Questionnaire** (AQ, Buss & Perry, 1992). The Aggression Questionnaire is a 29 items questionnaire which measures 4 dimensions of aggression i.e. Physical Aggression (9 items), Verbal Aggression (5 items), Anger (7 items) and Hostility (8 items). The test-retest correlations were as follows: Physical aggression, .80; Verbal Aggression, .76; Anger, .72; and Hostility, .72 (total score = .80). For scales with a relatively small number of items, these coefficients suggest adequate stability over time.

**Statistical Analyses:**

The obtained data were subjected to various statistical analyses. It was analysed for descriptive statistics, Pearsonian inter-correlations, and Moderated hierarchical regression to examine the moderating effects of
psychological capital. Moderated regression is an extended application of multiple regression analysis wherein independent and moderator variables can be entered in different equation blocks with an automatic control over the inflative effects of initially entered independent variables. It was used to assess the interactive effect between Stress and psychological capital (Hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism) and whether or not such an effect is significant in predicting reactions to stress (Depression, Anxiety, Adjustment and Anger). The first step of hierarchy (block-1) entered with stress, four constructs of Psychological Capital as predictors of reactions to stress. The second step of the hierarchy (block-2) was entered with the interactive products of stress and psychological capital domains as moderators of reactions to stress. Similar process was computed for daily hassles, the first step of hierarchy (block-1) entered with daily hassles, four constructs of Psychological Capital as predictors of reactions to stress. The second step of the hierarchy (block-2) was entered with the interactive products of daily hassles and psychological capital domains as moderators of reactions to stress.

**MAIN FINDINGS**

The main findings of this study are summarized as under:

1. Stress has found to be correlated positively with depression ($r = .33$, $p < .001$), anxiety ($r = .49$, $p < .001$), anger ($r = .21$, $p < .001$) and negatively with adjustment ($r = -.34$, $p < .001$). Thus, the hypothesis 1 is accepted.

2. Daily hassles has significant positive correlation with depression ($r = .74$, $p < .001$), anxiety ($r = .81$, $p < .001$), anger ($r = .75$, $p < .001$) and negative correlation with adjustment ($r = -.58$, $p < .001$). Hence, hypothesis 2 in the present study is accepted.

3. Stress correlates negatively significant with all the four components of PsyCap. Stress has shown negative correlation with hope, first
dimension of PsyCap, \( r = -.50, p < .001 \), self-efficacy, second dimension of PsyCap, \( r = -.68, p < .001 \), resilience, third dimension of PsyCap, \( r = -.34, p < .001 \) and optimism, fourth dimension of PsyCap, \( r = -.57, p < .001 \). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

4. Daily hassles correlates negatively significant with all the four components of PsyCap. Daily hassles has found to be negatively correlated with hope \( r = -.76, p < .001 \), self-efficacy \( r = -.73, p < .001 \), resilience \( r = -.52, p < .001 \) and optimism, \( r = -.47, p < .001 \). Thus, hypothesis 4 is accepted.

5. All dimensions of PsyCap were found to be related negatively with depression, anxiety, anger and positively with adjustment. The strength of association was found to be of substantial degree for all the dimensions. The correlation of dimensions of PsyCap with depression ranged between -.32 to -.64, \( p < .001 \). Depression correlated to an extent of -.60 \( p < .001 \) with hope, -.64 \( p < .001 \) with self-efficacy, -.49 \( p < .001 \) with resilience and -.32 \( p < .001 \) with optimism.

Similarly, anxiety found to have strong and significant negative correlation with the PsyCap dimensions. The correlation of anxiety with dimensions of PsyCap were of substantially high degree, with correlation coefficient ranging from -.55 to -.75 \( p < .001 \) for all. Anxiety correlated to an extent of -.61 \( p < .001 \) with hope, -.75 \( p < .001 \) with self-efficacy, -.59 \( p < .001 \) with resilience and -.55 \( p < .001 \) with optimism.

The correlation among PsyCap and anger also followed the similar trend. All PsyCap dimensions were found to be correlated negatively with anger. The strength of relationship was -.69 \( p < .001 \) with hope, -.45 \( p < .001 \) with self-efficacy, -.44 \( p < .001 \) with resilience and -.74 \( p < .001 \) with optimism.

Adjustment showed positive correlation with PsyCap. The significant
positive correlation was of very high degree, with correlation coefficient ranging from .42 to .74 (p < .001 for all). Adjustment correlated to an extent of .63 (p < .001) with hope, .71 (p < .001) with self-efficacy, .74 (p < .001) with resilience and .42 (p < .001) with optimism.

Thus, hypothesis 5 in the present study is accepted.

6. Self-efficacy (-), hope (-), stress (-), optimism and resilience contributed significantly to the prediction of depression by accounting 55% of the variance ($R = .74$). Entry of moderator variable with independent variable(s) (stress x PsyCap) in hierarchical analysis marked a change of .20 in $R^2$. Depression was strongly moderated by PsyCap being $R^2 = .75$ and multiple $R$ increased as .86. Hence, hypothesis 6 is accepted.

7. Self-efficacy (-), hope (-), stress (-) contributed significantly to the prediction of anxiety by accounting 59% of the variance ($R = .77$). Entry of moderator variable with independent variable(s) (stress x PsyCap) in hierarchical analysis marked a change of .15 in $R^2$. Anxiety was moderated by PsyCap being $R^2 = .74$ and multiple $R$ increased as .86. Hence, hypothesis 7 is accepted.

8. Self-efficacy (-), resilience (-), optimism, stress (-) and hope (-) contributed significantly to the prediction of adjustment by accounting 68% of the variance ($R = .82$). Entry of moderator variable with independent variable(s) (stress x PsyCap) in hierarchical analysis marked a change of .01 in $R^2$. Adjustment was moderated by PsyCap being $R^2 = .69$ and multiple $R$ increased as .83. The increase in 1% variance explained by moderators is very minimal however it signifies the change and impact of moderating variables i.e. PsyCap. Thus, hypothesis 8 is accepted.
9. Hope (-), self-efficacy (-), stress (-), optimism and resilience contributed significantly to the prediction of anger by accounting 57% of the variance (R = .75). Entry of moderator variable with independent variable (s) (stress x PsyCap) in hierarchical analysis marked a change of .13 in R². Anger was moderated by PsyCap being R² = .70 and multiple R increased as .84. Hence, hypothesis 9 is accepted.