DISCUSSION

The main aim of the study was to validate the construct of psychological preparedness as per proposed model (Figure 2.2) to test the role of moderators of psychological preparedness for task outcomes and also, to establish the predictive validity of test scores of psychological preparedness. The state-trait model of personality was employed. Psychological preparedness as a trait of a person is one of the stable characteristic, whereas when a person faces a specific circumstance it is the state of temporary behaviors or feelings, which are the result of the situation and person’s motives at a particular time. Though the states can be situational, but the effects are guided by the traits in a direct or indirect way.

The construct of psychological preparedness has been studied as a state or specific to situation in previous researches: e.g., preparedness for care-giving (Kneeshaw, Considine & Jennings, 1999; Gront et al., 2002; Stern et al., 2008; Ostwald, Bernal, Cron & Godviin, 2009; Carter et al., 2010; King, Hartke & Houle, 2010; Hudson et al., 2013), preparedness for earthquake (Joes et al., 2008; Polusny et al., 2009; Osinubi et al., 2012), prepare for a career in nursing (Happell, 2008a, b; Happell, Robins & Gough, 2008a, b), preparedness for hospital living (Petrie et al., 2002), preparing for therapy (Balfour et al., 2006), preparedness for disease (Houldin, & Lewis, 2006), preparedness for hospital re-entry (Stanto, et al., 2005; Jones, 2010), preparedness for hazards (Ronam, Johnston, Daly, & Fairly, 2001; Johnston et al., 2005; Broussard & Myers, 2010; Mashiach, & Dekel, 2011; Mishra, Suar, & Paton, 2011a, b), preparedness for deployment (Joes et al., 2008; Polusny et al., 2009; Osinubi et al., 2012), preparedness for torture (Basogluet al., 1997; Yermentayeva et al., 2013), preparedness for terrorism (Steven et al., 2012), preparedness for career management (Vuori, Tanner & Mutanen, 2012), preparedness for parenting (Lanzi, Ramey & Bert, 2012), preparedness for financial management/retirement (Hershey & Mowen, 2000; Mariappanadar, 2013; Noone, O’Loughlin & Kending, 2013), preparedness for wife’s death (Hauksdottir, Valdimarsdottir, Furst, Onelov & Steineck, 2009; Hauksdottir, Steineck, Furst & Valdimarsdottir, 2010), preparedness for job change (Chiabburu, Baker & Pitaria, 2006; Schyns, Torka & Gossling, 2007), preparedness for education (Fowler & Richard, 1978). The bulk of evidences across situations suggest the underlying generality of the concept of psychological preparedness. Therefore, the model presumes it as a trait. Albeit the interactionist view takes the position that one who is high on trait-preparedness shall easily
transact to a state of preparedness on the demand of the situation that involves a directed set of activities to pursue and achieve something.

APS (2007), Resear & Morrissey (2009) and Mashiach & Dekel (2012) construed psychological preparedness as a process or a multifaceted construct. Despite the importance of the construct established, as varied as from critical life situations, e.g. death of wife, to general life situations, e.g. education, in the last three decades, yet there is no standardized tool of psychological preparedness. It was seen in the reported studies (in Chapter-II) that more than 50%, researchers have used the self-made tool or a few items to measure the situation related preparedness. Gupta & Malik (2011) tried to refine the construct of psychological preparedness and constructed a tool of multifaceted psychological preparedness for general life situation. Later, Gupta, Malik & Singh (2014) revealed its general nature without facets. Therefore, one more attempt was made in the present work.

Some refinement and more empirical evidence were required. The first objective of the study focuses on the construct of psychological preparedness as a tool of 30-items. Psychological Preparedness Scale was tried on 263 respondents. Factor analysis based construct validity revealed a general factor to explain 20% of the total variance. A total of 26 items loaded significantly on this factor. The scale covered a wide range of general life situations such as examinations, interview, meeting, holiday, financial matter, family or personal matter, lifelong decision immediate daily routine decision etc. Loading to the spread of variance into other components. Available tools of psychological preparedness such as, Archbold (1980), Wynaden (2000), Basoglu (1994), Mulilis (1990) are also without any facets. Gupta, Malik & Singh (2014) used IRT analysis to establish the psychometric properties of psychological preparedness and found that full test was highly reliable with internal consistency as 0.75, but in case of various domains (facets) there was a low level of internal consistency. Therefore, it was recommended that the whole test be used for psychological preparedness.

Psychological preparedness can be critical in coping (Resear & Morrissey, 2009), helps in limiting post-event distress (APS, n.d), is the most significant predictor of psychopathology/PTSD symptoms in trauma (Basoglu, Mineka, Paker, Aker, Livanou, & Gok, 1997). Greater preparedness of caregiver significantly reduces depressions, emotional problems and improves social functioning (Gront, et al., 2002; Balfour, et al., 2006), helps in career and lowers the level of anxiety (Happell, 2008b). Psychological preparedness was the
most powerful predictor of stress in caregivers (Ostwald, Bernal, Cron & Godviin, 2009). High preparedness was associated with greater social and physical activities, high life satisfaction (Noone, O’Loughlin & Kending, 2013). Previously reported research evidently depicts positive role of psychological preparedness in varied life situations. Research also supports the moderating role of psychological preparedness for task outcomes. Chiaburu, Baker & Pitariu (2006) found that proactive personality and job mobility preparedness behavior was mediated by career resilience. Preparedness shall have to act even in future adversities and make people resilient in the event of tragedy, trauma, disaster etc. Though they shall have no control on the occurrence of the faint but well prepared shall suffer less and reduce the loss. Better-prepared soldiers optimize their resilience and reduce deployment-related exposure concerns (Osinubi, et al., 2012). A social cognitive model of preparedness (Paton, 2003) comprising problem focused coping, self-efficacy and sense of community predicted preparedness and resilience (Bishop et al., 2000; Paton et al., 2001a, b).

A relationship of the predictor with criterion happens to be purely correlational, notwithstanding the description used of independent and dependent variables, respectively. In any case, it does not connote cause and effect relationship. With this logical understanding two discriminant function analyses were planned and done accordingly- classifying preparedness and establishing a variety of it, classifying academic achievement: (% marks obtain in board examination) and establishing a variate for it. A variate is the linear combination that represents the weighted sum of two or more independent variables that comprise the discriminant function. Essentially, it is one of the multivariate methods to establish predictive validity of a criterion (that is preparedness) or its predictive role in the outcome variable. It was hypothesized that if preparedness happens to be a major contributor to the variate for the academic achievement the main aim of the thesis fulfills. On the other hand, if the hypothesized correlates (personality and temperamental variables) contribute to the discriminant function for preparedness, their presence in the model empirically justified. Finding the Univariate F-ratio in case of psychological preparedness for four independent variables- Mobility, Lability, Resilience and Future orientation as significant; emerging with mobility and future perspective as significant standardized canonical function, however finally turned with mobility and lability as a major contributor to the variate (Table-4.8). Therefore, it was named as Temperamental discriminant function. Strelau (1977) & Mangan (1978) found that Mobile persons are more flexible. Psychological flexibility defines as a “contacting the present moment fully as a conscious human being, and based on what
the situation affords, changing or persisting in behavior in the service of choosing values” (Kashdan, & Rottenberg, 2010). Previous research has shown that trait anxiety is positively associated with experienced stress in an emergency situation and inversely related to physical preparedness (e.g., De Man & Simpson-Housley, 1987, Dooley et al., 1992). Personality variables, like: trait anxiety, coping style and prior cyclone experience, were found to significantly influence physical preparedness and psychological preparedness (Morrissey & Reser, 2003). The loadings on function are consistent with Chiaburu, Baker, & Pitariu’s (2006) study on job mobility preparedness and proactive personality as positively correlated. Future orientation has a direct impact on individual’s retirement preparedness as well (Hershey & Mowen, 2000).

The discriminant function-I utilizing moderators was able to correctly classify 83.7% of the participant’s psychological preparedness as “high” or “low”, indicating that these independent variables may have value as potential measures of psychological preparedness for the future task outcome.

Finding of discriminant function for the classification of high and low achieving in board examination revealed that psychological preparedness was not a contributor to the variate. It was evident even at the 1st stage of the analysis when the mean difference in psychological preparedness did not exist. The support to the contention that psychological preparedness leads to better performance or better outcomes could be derived from the factor analysis. In factor analysis, psychological preparedness and resilience loaded on the same factor and resilience was one of the important contributors to the variate of outcomes. It seems that all it may happen due to a poor scatter of variability in the performance outcome with 69.57% as mean and Standard Error of 0.96. All these subjects were students of final 12th board examination and from an urban background with parental support, therefore, the majority of them were well prepared.

Direct relation between psychological preparedness and performance (JEE, AIPMT, Semester/board exam marks %, Self performance appraisal) was found to be non-significant in the study. It means moderators play an important role between predictor (psychological preparedness) and criterion (performance). Previous studies show that preparedness effects performance (Kneeshaw, Considine & Jennings, 1999; Sussman, 2001; Sorensen, Webster & Roggman, 2002) on task but the outcome was not studied. In the present study, the outcome of performance (Competition/Semester/Board exam marks % and self-performance appraisal)
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was studied. In previous research impact of other variables on preparedness have been studied, but the impact of psychological preparedness on performance on a particular task have not been studied (Hershey & Mowen, 2000; Ronam, Johnston, Daly & Fairly, 2001; Sorensen, Webster & Roggman, 2002; Schumm, Gade & Bell, 2003b; Hohnston, et al. 2005; Karanci, Aksit & Dirik, 2005; Chiabburu, Baker & Pitaria, 2006; Houldin & Lewis, 2006, Schyns, Torka & Gossling, 2007; Happell, 2008; Stern, et.al, 2008; Hauksdottir, Valdimarsdottir, Furst, Onelov & Steineck, 2009; Broussard & Myers, 2010; Mishra, Suar & Paton, 2011). Although researches show that preparedness has an impact on performance along with other variables, like: resilience (Osinubi et al., 2012), self-efficacy (Jones, 2010), and optimism (Noone, O’Loughlin & Kending, 2013).

The findings of Factor Analysis show that psychological preparedness, mobility, lability, resilience and self-efficacy are highly related to each other, leading to the emergence of the factor of “prepared personality” which explained 29 % of the total variance. Paton’s (2001a, b) social-cognitive model of preparedness supposes significant relation between psychological preparedness and self-efficacy. Personality & preparedness are related to each other (Hershey & Mowen, 2000; Chiabburu, Baker & Pitaria, 2006). Future orientation and unrealistic optimism imply future perspective. Semester's end performance (Semester/board exam mark %) is also related or loaded with future orientation. Self-efficacy and unrealistic optimism jointly reduce the performance. Paton (n.d) also found that unrealistic optimism leads to the underestimation of risk and denial to reduce anxiety. Unrealistic optimism may play a role in dealing with chronic natural disaster threats and their potential role in physical preparedness (Esperanza, et. al., 2008)

Limitations:

1. A standardized tool for the measurement of psychological preparedness for general life situations was not available. Hence, tool design and try out required enough resources.
2. Limited empirical studies were available, so trends and gaps were sketchy.
3. The dropout rate was more than 50% at the time of the feedback that reduced data to fulfill the objective in three different circumstances equally well. An episode of school semester/year leading to terminal board examination could be tested with sufficient data.
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4. The end variable was operationalized as single outcome, some more performance measures could be taken so that the process could be studied.

Delimitations:

1. Advanced (IRT/path analysis) analysis is not used (software is not available).
2. Focused only on specific groups of examination and job preparedness due to availability, other stages would have more extended phases, such as retirement, child rearing or marital adjustment.
3. The only urban sample was used in the study. There seems to be appeal for the study of farmers for crop preparation or cattle rearing preparation etc.

Suggestions: considering above limitations, it is suggested that

1. Advance technology based analysis may be used like IRT to save time, effort, to control distractor and visualize the process.
2. Qualitative techniques like interview, storytelling, and behavioral observation may be used in future study to assess preparedness as well the performance/outcome.
3. Other general life situations should also be studied like: marriage, interview, retirement, first time parenting, becoming hosteller, conducting meetings, journey, performing to attend camps/workshop/training program, career shift etc.
4. More outcome or performance indicator can be included such as anxiety, stress, performance appraisal, the process of achieving goal, achievement motivation etc.
5. To reduce the dropout rate of feedback some incentives should be given.
6. The rural sample may also be included in future research.
7. The proposed path model may be verified by using standard equation modeling (Figure-5.1).

Implication/Outcome

1. A standardized tool of psychological preparedness can be useful for the identification of low or high-prepared person.
2. Psychological preparedness can be used in organizational settings for screening, deployment, sorting for special operation etc. Including military context.
3. Psychological preparedness may be used as an important tool for career and work, counseling, recruitment, transfer, assignment of new project in the organization.
4. Psychological preparedness is useful in a hospital setup for caregivers, staff and patient to know their preparedness, i.e., Can be a variable in health psychology.

5. Personality development program can also focus on preparedness with cautions of unrealistic optimism and linked self-efficacy. Unrealistic optimism tends to enhance future orientation, stable and inert temperamental persons tend to be less prepared with lesser feelings of self-efficacy and resilience. Thus, they need to be attended more for training in psychological preparedness.

A path model (Figure-5.1), in the end, can be hypothesized for further studies.

**Figure-5.1 A Proposed Path Model**

It is expected that there shall be mutual relationships among psychological preparedness, self-efficacy, mobility, resilience and lability as these loaded on one component in factor analyses implying interrelationship. Though self-efficacy and unrealistic optimism are positively related, but self-efficacy and performance or task outcome are negatively related. Unrealistic optimism and performance or task outcome were also negatively related. These three represent one separate component. Unrealistic optimism and future orientation were mutually positively related with the factor.