



Psychological Capital and Happiness among Government and Private Bank Employees- A Comparative Investigation

KEYWORDS

Psychological Capital, Happiness, Government & Private Bank Employees

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ABSTRACT

Happiness at work is a mindset which allows you to maximize performance and achieve your potential. You do this by being mindful of the highs and lows when working alone or with others. Maximizing an individual's psychological capital will lead to more success in the work environment and, with that, in life. The present study is an attempt to investigate the difference on psychological capital and happiness among private and government bank employees. For this purpose, 100 bank employees (50 government & 50 private bank employees) were selected randomly from the tri-city (Chandigarh, Mohali & Panchkula). Psychological Capital Scale and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire were administered individually. Results of the present investigation indicate that a significant difference was found on psychological capital and happiness among government and private bank employees, where private sector bank employees were found to be higher than their government sector counterparts on both the dimensions of psychological capital and happiness. As psychological capital is considered pre requisite for optimum performance in an organization, some significant strategies have been enlisted to boost the same.

INTRODUCTION

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is specified as a higher-level, core construct that underlies the four dimensions of hope, resilience, optimism, and efficacy. The higher-order core construct of Psy Cap represents the commonality among the four component dimensions and as noted has both conceptual (Luthans et al., 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans et al., 2007) and empirical (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007) support. The model of Psychological Capital, i.e. PsyCap, is quite new. Tools for measuring Psychological Capital do exist; and in this regard the work achieved by Fred Luthans needs to be mentioned. He is the father of this concept, which is the result of applying the basic principles of what is called Positive Psychology to the world of work and organizations.

PsyCap can be viewed as "who you are" and "what you can become in terms of positive development" (Avolio & Luthans, 2006) and is differentiated from human capital ("what you know"), social capital ("who you know"), and financial capital ("what you have") (Luthans et al., 2004). PsyCap has been specifically defined as "an individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success" (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007, p. 3). Psychological capital is presented here as an emerging higher order, core construct that organizations can invest in and develop in their workforce to achieve veritable, sustained growth and performance.

Although the term "psychological capital" has been mentioned briefly in various works on economics, investment, and sociology, we draw on the emerging positive psychology movement for our definition. Very briefly, positive psychology got its start just a few years ago when research psychologist Martin Seligman challenged the field to change from a preoccupation with what is wrong and dysfunctional with people to what is right and good about them. Specifically, it focuses on strengths rather than weaknesses, health and vitality rather than illness and pathology. In his recent book on Authentic Happiness, Seligman (2002) first asked the question of whether there is psychological capital, and if so,

what it is and how we get it. He answered the question by suggesting that "when we are engaged (absorbed in flow), perhaps we are investing, building psychological capital for our future."

The term happiness captures a huge variety of positive emotional responses, including such things as cheerfulness, serenity, optimism, and joy. Throughout history, philosophers, religious writers and poets have pondered on the meaning of happiness and how it might be achieved. Psychologist Martin Seligman became president of the American Psychological Association in 1998. During his term, he drew together the existing knowledge about the positive side of life and ignited the profession's interest in finding out more. In his 2002 book, *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, Seligman draws on the research and outlines three ways to increase happiness; get more pleasure out of life, become more engaged in what you do and find ways of making your life feel more meaningful. Waterman (1993) says there are two aspects to happiness. One is "personal expression" and the other is "hedonic enjoyment." Personal expression is self-actualization, i.e. using your talents, taking on meaningful and challenging projects, working hard and guided by your values, and feeling confident and satisfied. Hedonic enjoyment is having fun, i.e. satisfying your needs, feeling relaxed, excited, happy, content, etc., and being able to forget your personal problems. What is very surprising and perhaps quite important was Waterman's finding that the two types of happiness are highly correlated, i.e. happy people tend to achieve and have fun while unhappy people get neither. Vigorous, productive self-actualizing doesn't eliminate fun, it seems to enhance it.

Following the definition of happiness at work quoted above, Pryce-Jones argues that psychological capital is as important in the success of an organization as the more familiar financial, human, and social capital. Psychological capital is defined as "...the mental resources that you build when things go well and draw on when things go badly. These resources include resilience, motivation, hope, optimism, self-belief, confidence, self-worth, and energy. All of which are key elements of happiness in a working context." And, this is one of Pryce-Jones' key points, organizations perform better when employees are maximizing performance because they are at their happiness mindset points. She then argues that happiness is distinct from job satisfaction and engagement

because the focus is on the individual, happiness is strongly connected to productivity, and happiness is a more general concept than job satisfaction and engagement. Research shows that these four components (self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency) of PsyCap have positive relationships with performance, happiness, well-being, and satisfaction of workers. For example, self-efficacy has been found to have a positive impact on performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Legal & Meyer, 2009). Employees' optimism is related to their performance, satisfaction, and happiness (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Hope is related to employees' performance, satisfaction, happiness, and retention (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Resiliency has a positive relationship with employee performance and happiness and satisfaction (Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

The present study focuses on the role of psychological capital and happiness among government and private bank employees. The least researched aspect of human ability namely psychological capital reflects the potential of productivity and a healthy psychological work environment of a professional in his current institution. Psychological capital is supposed to be the indicator of quality of life which leads to happiness and enjoying their work and duties as well. Keeping the modern trend in banking Sector the respective sample is selected for this study.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the difference between government and private bank employees on psychological capital.
2. To study the difference between government and private bank employees on happiness.

HYPOTHESES

1. Private bank employees will be higher on psychological capital than government bank employees.
2. Private bank employees will be higher on happiness than government bank employees.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample consists of 100 bank employees (50 government and 50 private bank employees) age ranging from 30-45 years randomly selected from government and private banks of the tricity.

TOOLS:

1. Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans et al., 2007): psychological capital questionnaire is a 24-item measure of psychological capital draws from widely recognized published standardized measures for each of the positive constructs that make up PsyCap as follows: (1) Hope (Snyder et al., 2002); (2) Resiliency (Wagnild & Young, 1993); (3) Optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985); and (4) Self-Efficacy (Parker, 1998) including (6 items for each subscale of hope, resilience, optimism, and efficacy) has responses put into a 6-point Likert-type scale. The overall reliability of measure is .91 and the Cronbach alphas were all over .77 for the four individual constructs.
2. Oxford happiness inventory (Argyle, et al., 1989): The Oxford Happiness Inventory is a 29-item multiple choice instrument. Each item contains four options, constructed to reflect incremental steps defined as: unhappy or mildly depressed, a low level of happiness, a high level of happiness, and mania. The respondents were asked to "pick out the one statement in each group which best describes the way you have been feeling over the past week, including today." The concurrent validity is .73 and internal reliability of the inventory using Cronbach's alpha is .92

Research Design and Statistical Analysis

The present study is quantitative framework to study psychological capital and happiness among government and private bank employees. Appropriate experimental control was done and rapport was build up with participants. After clarifying the instructions of the concerned tests Psychological Capital Questionnaire and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire were administered on selected sample in groups and tests were given one by one. Psychological capital questionnaire was used as a measure of all over psychological capital and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was used as a measure of happiness among the sample. T-test was computed to find out differences on the dimensions of psychological capital and level of happiness for both government and private bank employees respectively.

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RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The present study attempted to assess the difference on Psychological Capital and Happiness among Government and Private sector bank employees (50 from each bank) randomly selected from the Tri-city (Chandigarh, Mohali & Panchkula). The t- test was applied for the purpose of statistical interpretation to test the significance of difference between the two means. Results & discussion of the present study are as follows:

Table 1 showing difference between Private and Government bank employees on Psychological Capital

	Banking Sector	N	Mean	S.D	T- value
Psychological Capital	Private	50	5.24	0.76	8.39*
	Government	50	4.58	0.41	

Note: t-value is significant* at 0.01 level

Results obtained in Table No 1 indicate the difference on psychological capital among Government and Private Bank employees. The mean value for Government bank employees was 4.58 and the mean value for private bank employees was 5.24. The t- value on the dimension of psychological capital was 8.39, which was found to be significant at .01 level which indicates that a significant difference exists between private sector bank employee on their level of psychological capital than the Government sector bank employees. Furthermore, the above stated mean value (5.24) further indicates that private sector bank employees were found to be higher on psychological capital than the Government sector bank employees (4.58). Therefore, our first hypothesis that private sector bank employee will be higher on psychological capital than government sector bank employees stands proved.

Table 2 Showing difference between Private and Government bank employees on Happiness

	Banking Sector	N	Mean	S.D	T- value
Happiness	Private	50	116.11	19.55	6.96*
	Government	50	107.56	12.56	

Note: t-value is significant* at 0.01 level

Results depicted in Table 2 indicate the difference on level of happiness among Private and Government Bank employees. The t- value on the dimension of happiness was 6.96, which was found to be significant at .01 level which indicates that a significant difference exists between Private sector bank employees on their level of happiness than the Government sector bank employees. Furthermore, the above stated mean value (116.11) further indicates that private sector bank employees were found to be higher than the Government sector bank employees (107.56) on the level of happiness. Therefore our second hypothesis that private sector bank employee will be higher on happiness than government sector bank employees stands proved.

On the basis of above results we can identify a trend that psychological capital is a significant predictor of happiness as psychological capital enhance the confidence and leisure attitude while employees are working in an organization because they use their potency and performance metaphor to give their best. Ultimately completion leads to satisfaction which flourishes inner happiness in the form of work satisfaction and achieving their own level of heights. As psychologi-

cal capital engraves so many positive dimensions like hope, resilience, optimism and self-efficacy it leads to happiness. The present study also revealed that private bank employees are enriched with high level of psychological capital; for which many reasons such as a positive and productive work environment, incentives, leadership effect, organizational policies, work training, motivation, attitude and professional communications and relationships in the organization may have contributed to their worthwhile performance in the present study in comparison to the government sector bank employees. However, further research over diverse populations is needed to comprehend the same especially in the Indian set-up.

STRATEGIES TO BOOST PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL:

There are many organizations and small businesses out there that recognize the value of multiple bottom lines beyond simply profit. Building an inspiring work culture and investing in the health and development of their people is an additional priority for long-term business success. Research supports that certain positive psychological outcomes relate to greater organizational outcomes. Positive emotions and related processes can lead to greater motivation, fulfillment with work, and the ability to cope with stress and uncertainty. The following strategies can be incorporated in the organizations to boost psychological capital among employees.

1. Strengths, virtues, and self-determination

Research has shown that employees who are fully engaged in the work they do, and who have a sense of intrinsic motivation, are likely to perform better and have better work outcomes.

Taking an approach of self-determination offers freedom and autonomy for workers to flourish and become absorbed in the work they do best. This involves employees uncovering their signature strengths and having the freedom to use them.

These traits also lead people to experience flow, where they are fully engaged in a productive challenge. This is a state where time seems to fly by, and we feel like we're "in the zone."

2. Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the capacity to identify and regulate emotions in ourselves and others, and has implications for both internal and external customer relationships. Emotional intelligence allows us to recognize our own personality tendencies, and to better understand the personality traits of others so we can most effectively interact with them.

More specifically, EI is the ability to manage counterproductive emotions, such as stress and anger, and ultimately begin to harness more positive feelings such as optimism, hope, and creativity, so we can stay motivated and perform up to our potential.

3. Psychological capital and positive organizational behavior

Study of Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) has examined how to apply human strengths, resources, and psychological capacities to improve performance in the workplace.

Four basic capacities typically explored related to job satisfaction and performance includes: self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency.

With higher levels of these states, people are more confident, better able to manage stress and adversity, have a higher level of motivation and drive, and likely to pursue growth and development. They also build upon each other to increase Positive Psychological Capital or the maintenance of these positive capacities.

4. Level of innovation and change

A major factor in a healthy organizational culture is the fit between an organization's values and the disposition and values of the employees. A specific value to examine is where on the continuum your organization falls between change and stability. Some organizations are prone to change where others are much more stable and stagnant.

How employees respond to change and innovation is important to consider in order to have a good fit with personal and organizational culture. Having a good fit will help employees be energized, have a positive attitude, and feel safe and secure in their role.

5. The virtuous organization

According to the article, "Virtuous organizations infuse an ethical perspective into their cultures, have multiple bottom lines, promote self-determining, emotionally intelligent, and team-oriented behavior patterns and develop supportive leaders that enable others to succeed, all of which can lead to productive and creative outcomes (Froman, 2010)."

During times of economic stress and uncertainty, an organization can benefit from developing a culture of integrity, trust, and respect. An environment of negativity, cynicism, and mistrust are not as productive or satisfying as those of positivity, confidence, optimism, hope, and resilience.

Organizations can learn to coach employees to set challenging, measurable, personally valuable goals, as well as realistic pathways and approach strategies to accomplish these goals and overcome obstacles. Through using strengths and achieving growth, Positive Psychological Capital can enhance job-satisfaction and performance.

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