

Psychological Capital and Work Alienation among Managerial (Administrative) and Managerial (Technical) Employees of IT Sector from Metro and Non-Metro city

Dhiraj Kumar¹, Prof. Manisha Agarwal², Dr. Vandana Gupta³

¹Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

Email ID: dk.dhiraj16@gmail.com

²Professor and Head, Department of Psychology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

Email ID: Manisha12529@gmail.com

³Assistant Professor, Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

Email ID: Vandana.gupta1@bhu.ac.in

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the relationship between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Work Alienation (WA) of employees from metro and non-metro cities in the IT sector. A total of 125 managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) employees of RailTel organization at Delhi (Metro City) and different location of Uttar Pradesh (Non-Metro city) participated in this study. Data were collected using standardized self-report measures. Result of the t-test indicated that there is difference between managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) level employees from metro city in perception of psychological capital across the dimensions self-efficacy, optimism and resilience. Correlation and regression analysis showed that significant negative relationship between optimism and work alienation of managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) level employees from non-metro city and significantly positive relationship between resilience and work alienation of managerial (technical) level employees from metro city. These results highlight how psychological capital dimensions influence work alienation differently across city types and job roles in the IT sector.

Keywords: Psychological Capital, Work Alienation

1. INTRODUCTION

Work characteristics and their nature are rapidly evolving. Conventional organisations assume that businesses with greater financial resources (equipment, plant data, patents, etc.) either outperform their competitors or provide an advantage to their own. The emphasis of organisational competitive advantage shifted with time to human capital. For an organisation, human capital is defined as the information, experience, abilities, education, ideas, and other things that employees possess. These are the things that provide the organisation a competitive advantage. The recent shift in organizational resources is positive psychological capital. This concept is applied in the field of positive organisational behaviour. According to Luthans (2002), Positive Organizational behaviour are those kinds of capabilities that can be measured, are flexible, and can be managed for optimal performance. The term "positive psychological capital" describes a person's positive developmental state, which is marked by strong levels of self-efficacy, resilience, optimism, and hope.

Psychological Capital:

Psychological capital refers to personal resources and it help employees to personal growth and development. Adequate level of psychological capital help employees to find solution to their problems and it also found to enhance health and wellbeing of employees (Tang, 2020). A study by (Mingmei & Pek, 2024) found that higher the level of psychological capital in school teacher in China have higher the level of job satisfaction.

Psychological capital work as a buffer against negative employees related outcomes and stressors at workplace. A study by (Zhang et al., 2024) found that the nurses who have low psychological capital experience more stress and burnout. Psychological capital significantly and negatively associated with social alienation of COVID-19 patients (Wu et al., 2023). Psychological Capital and work-alienation are different concept in nature. Psychological capital is positive organismic concept and work alienation is negative behavior related concept.

Work Alienation:

It is important to study about work alienation because it is related to work engagement, frustration, burnout etc. Work alienation is feeling of disconnection from work. It has a negative effect on employee's performance and well-being at work. Work alienation arise when employees not achieve their goals at work. Employees' work in an organization not only for earning their livelihood or money but there is some psychological satisfaction they get from their work. According to Lepisto & Pratt, (2017) in modern age employees' find a specific identity, meaning, belongingness and self-realization through work. Numerous researchers point employees find lack of interest, autonomy, meaning and control in their work so they are psychologically separated themselves from the work and this situation is called work alienation (Hirschfeld et al., 2000). Numerous researchers shown work alienation can cause negative outcome such as reduce job satisfaction and performance (Amarat et al., 2019; Conway et al., 2020), impaired well-being (Shantz et al., 2014), increased turnover intention and unsafe behavior (Gozukara et al., 2017; Jiang et al., 2019). According to conservation of resource theory employees who feels they have lack of resources to tackle this demanding situation then it also creates separation from the work. Guo et al. (2021) found work alienation promotes knowledge hiding behavior and emotional exhaustion mediate this relationship. According to the study by Vanderstucken & Caniëls (2021), subordinates with low psychological capital have a stronger negative relationship between autonomy and work alienation than do those with high psychological capital. Encouraging environment at workplace improve employees experience of empowerment. Perceived organizational support reduce work alienation of employees (Bhatnagar & Aggarwal, 2020).

Employees at the managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) levels perceive psychological capital differently because each group has distinct needs, expectations, and duties to fulfil within the organization. While managerial (technical) level employees require personal resources for intrinsic motivation and job happiness, managers (administrative) require enough personal resources to handle the challenges of leadership in a dynamic environment. According to a study by Rabenu & Tziner (2020), managers with strong psychological capital are better able to handle psychological pressure and unfavourable outcomes; hence, psychological capital helps managers cope with difficult situations. According to a study on bank workers in Sri Lanka by Kappagoda et al. (2014), non-managerial employees' psychological capital and job happiness are positively correlated. According to the study's findings, managers can boost employee satisfaction by using psychological capital as an intrinsic motivator.

The present study conducted on employees of RailTel organization to examine the perceived differences and nature of relationship between psychological capital and work alienation of managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) level employees from metro and non-metro city.

Objectives of the Present Study:

Based on review of relevant literature, the present study was conducted with the following objectives.

1. To examine the differences in employees' perceptions of psychological capital and work alienation at the managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) level of IT sector from metro and non-metro cities.
2. To examine the nature of the relationship between psychological capital and work alienation of managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) employees of IT sector working in metro and non-metro cities.

Hypotheses: It was hypothesized that

Hypothesis 1 (a): There will be significant difference between managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) employees from metro and non-metro city in perception of psychological capital in the IT sector.

Hypothesis 1 (b): There will be significant difference in the level work alienation among managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) employees from metro and non-metro city of IT sector.

Hypothesis 2: psychological capital will be negatively related with work alienation of managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) employees from metro and non-metro city of IT sector.

2. METHOD

Sample: The present study was conducted on a sample of 125 employees of managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) category of employees from metro and non-metro city in the IT sector. HR Department of the public sector organization namely RailTel, mini Ratana PSU under the ministry of Railway was approached for permission to conduct the study. For the present study participants were selected using convenience sampling. Selected participants were taken from the IT core managerial (technical) level and managerial (administrative) level in the organization. Among the 125 employees, 62 participants were from metro city [30 participants were managerial (technical) level and 32 were managerial (administrative) level] and 63 participants were from non-metro city [27 participants were managerial (technical) level and 36 participants were from managerial (administrative) level] in the RailTel.

Measures: The following scales were used to measure the response of participants.

Psychological Capital: Psychological Capital were measured using a 24-item scale developed by Luthans et al. (2007). There were four dimensions each composed with 6 items. Responses to all items were measured on 6-point Likert type scale. The responses ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree). The Cronbach Alpha of this 24 items scale for present study was 0.901.

Work Alienation: Work alienation was measured using a scale developed by Nair and Vohra (2009) to measure the degree of alienation employees feel at work. The scale consists of 8 items arranged on 5-point Likert type scale. The responses ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The Cronbach Alpha for this scale in the present study was 0.930.

3. RESULTS

The total number of data (N=125) including managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) level of employees from metro and non-metro city in IT sector were statistically analysed using the appropriate statistics. Computation of t-test, correlation and stepwise regression analysis was conducted for examining the hypothesized relationships between the variables under study. Further Stepwise multiple regression analysis was done to examine the pattern of relationship between psychological capital and work alienation of IT sector employees at the managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) levels. The results obtained are reported as following.

Table: 1 Differences between managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) employees from metro city in perceptions of the variables (N=62).

Variables	Managerial (Technical) Employees (N=30)		Managerial (Administrative) Employees (N=32)		t	Sig
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Self-Efficacy	27.03	3.36	29.63	3.32	3.05**	0.00
Hope	26.43	4.07	27.34	4.18	0.87	0.39
Resilience	24.33	3.88	26.97	3.86	2.68**	0.01
Optimism	23.73	3.96	26.63	3.60	3.00**	0.00
Work-Alienation	18.70	7.98	19.13	7.87	0.21	0.83

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Data was statistically analysed to examine the hypothesized differences between the variables used in study. (Table 1) of the result shows the mean, standard deviation (SD) and t-test among different variables between managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) employees from metro city. Among them the dimensions of Psychological Capital self-efficacy ($t = -3.05$ $p < .00$), resilience ($t = -2.68$ $p < .01$), and optimism ($t = -3.60$ $p < .00$) were significantly different at the managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) employees. The dimensions 'hope' of Psychological Capital and Work Alienation were not significantly different by managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) levels employees.

Table: 2 Differences between managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) employees' non-metro city in perceptions of the variables (N=63).

Variables	Managerial (Technical) Employees (N=30)		Managerial (Administrative) Employees (N=32)		t	Sig
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Self-Efficacy	26.11	6.92	28.81	5.57	1.66	0.10
Hope	25.48	6.94	28.36	5.82	1.75	0.09
Resilience	25.30	5.34	25.47	4.85	0.13	0.89
Optimism	24.30	4.42	25.86	5.05	1.31	0.20
Work-Alienation	20.78	8.76	16.33	7.42	2.12*	0.04

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Data was statistically analysed to examine the hypothesized differences between the variables used in study. Table 2 shows

the mean, standard deviation (SD) and t-test among different variables between managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) employees from non-metro city. Result showed that Work Alienation was reported to be significantly different ($t=2.12$, $p<.05$) by managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) levels employees. The dimensions of Psychological Capital were not found to be significantly different by managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) employees in the non-metro city sample.

Table: 3 Correlation analysis of Psychological Capital and Work Alienation of managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) employees of IT sector (N=125).

Variables	Metro city		Non-Metro city	
	Managerial (Technical)	Managerial (Administrative)	Managerial (Technical)	Managerial (Administrative)
PsyCap	WA	WA	WA	WA
	(N=30)	(N=32)	(N=27)	(N=36)
Self-Efficacy	0.23	-0.19	-0.15	-0.13
Hope	0.25	-0.32	-0.33	-0.31
Resilience	.39*	0.22	-0.36	0.03
Optimism	0.09	-0.29	-.51**	-.33*

** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$

Bivariate Correlational analysis was used to assess the correlation between different dimensions of Psychological Capital and Work Alienation of managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) employees from metro city and from non-metro city, findings reported in Table 3. As table 3 indicated there were significant and positive correlation between resilience and work alienation ($r=.39$ $p<.05$) for managerial (technical) employees from metro city. Also, a significant and negative correlation was found between optimism and work alienation for managerial (technical; $r=-.51$ $p<.00$) and for managerial (administrative) employees ($r=-.33$ $p<.05$) from non-metro city. Further some insignificant correlations were found such as, insignificant but positive correlation were found between other dimensions of Psychological Capital and Work Alienation of managerial (technical) employees from metro city and insignificant but negative correlation were found between other dimensions of Psychological Capital and Work Alienation of managerial (administrative) employees from metro city.

Table: 4 Multiple Regression of managerial (technical) Employees from Metro city

Variable	R ²	Adj R ²	R ² Change	% Variance	β	t	Sig.
Resilience	0.15	0.12	0.15	15	0.39	2.23*	0.03

** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$

Result of stepwise multiple regression analysis for managerial (technical) level employees from metro city (Table 4) shows resilience positively predicted the work alienation by 15% variance and beta value of .39 ($p<.05$), of managerial (technical) employee, indicating a moderate positive relationship with the work alienation. These results suggest that resilience is a significant predictor of work alienation, with higher levels of resilience being associated with higher rates of work alienation.

Table: 5 Multiple Regression of managerial (technical) Employees from non-metro city

Variable	R ²	Adj R ²	R ² Change	% Variance	β	t	Sig.
Optimism	0.26	0.23	0.26	26	-0.51	2.94**	0.01

** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$

Result of stepwise multiple regression analysis for managerial (technical) level employees from non-metro city (Table 5) shows optimism negatively predicted the work alienation by 26% variance and beta value of -.51 ($p<.01$), of managerial (technical) employees indicating a negative relationship with the work alienation. These results suggest that optimism is a significant predictor of work alienation, with higher levels of optimism being associated with lower rates of work alienation.

Table: 6 Multiple Regression of managerial (administrative) Employees from non-metro city

Variable	R ²	Adj R ²	R ² Change	% Variance	β	t	Sig.
Optimism	0.11	0.09	0.11	11	-0.33	2.98*	0.05
Resilience	0.21	0.17	0.10	10	0.41	2.06*	0.05

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Result of stepwise multiple regression analysis for managerial (administrative) level employees from non-metro city (Table 6) shows optimism negatively predicted the work alienation by 11% variance and beta value of $-.33$ ($p < .05$), and resilience positively predicted the work alienation by 10% variance and beta value of $.41$ of managerial (administrative) employees

4. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study provide valuable insights into the differences in psychological capital between managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) employees in a metro city setting. The differences are found to be significant in some dimensions of Psychological Capital (e.g., self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism) across the two groups i.e., managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical). This result is consistent with the previous study done by Korman et al. (2021), they found a negative correlation between psychological capital and employee related negative outcome. The overall self-efficacy difference means that managerial (administrative) staff may tend to have higher confidence in their ability to cope with tasks and challenges as compare to the staff of managerial (technical). This is probably because managerial (administrative) positions usually require increased decision-making, leadership and problem-solving skills in comparison to managerial (technical) positions. Similarly, the significant difference in resilience suggests that managerial (administrative) employees are better prepared to cope with adversity and maintain a positive outlook during challenging circumstances. The difference in optimism is consistent with the general expectation that managerial (administrative) employees are more optimistic about both work and future performance outcomes. Optimism is one of many traits associated with strong leadership, managers with a more optimistic disposition are better able to inspire their employees (Rabenu & Tziner, 2020).

The results of the study provide valuable insights into the differences in psychological capital between managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) employees in a non-metro city setting. The result indicates that there was no significant difference found between different dimensions of psychological capital among managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) level employees from non-metro city. This result revealed that both levels have similar level of psychological resources such as hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy. It may suggest that Psychological Capital is more dependent on individual traits and location of organization rather than job designation or hierarchical position in the organization. Results revealed that there was significant difference in work alienation between managerial (technical) and managerial (administrative) level employees from non-metro city. This suggest that managerial (administrative) level employees have lower alienation as compare to managerial (technical) level due to differences in job roles, responsibilities, or the autonomy associated with managerial positions (Wojtczuk-Turek, 2020).

Further correlational analysis of the data provided important relationship between different dimensions of psychological capital and work alienation across different employee's groups and locations. For metro city it revealed that resilience, the dimension of psychological capital positively and significantly associated with work alienation for managerial (technical) employees. Resilience is associated with flexibility and the capacity to bounce back from adversity. Since this result deviates from expectations, it will be suggested that the IT sector in metro areas combine it with other supportive workplace practices to help employees feel less alienated.

The significant and negative correlation between optimism and work alienation for both managerial (technical) employees and managerial (administrative) employees in non-metro cities highlights the protective role of optimism in reducing feelings of alienation. Employees with a positive viewpoint may be better prepared to reduce challenges and maintain engagement (Tang, 2020; Wu et al., 2023). The stronger correlation for managerial (technical) employees suggests that optimism may be particularly crucial for those in field work positions who may have less control over their work conditions. This finding underlines the importance of developing optimism through organizational culture and employee development programs, especially in non-metro settings.

The insignificant correlations between other dimensions of psychological capital and work alienation across groups points to the complexity of these relationships. The positive yet insignificant correlations for managerial (technical) employees in metro cities suggest that factors like self-efficacy and hope might play a secondary role compared to resilience in influencing alienation. Conversely, the negative but insignificant correlations for managerial (administrative) employees in metro cities and for employees in non-metro cities indicate that these psychological capital dimensions may buffer against alienation but are not strong enough to show a significant impact independently.

The stepwise multiple regression analysis provides significant insights into the predictors of work alienation among managerial (administrative) and managerial (technical) employees from metro and non-metro cities. The result of resilience for metro city of managerial (technical) level employees, work alienation is positively predicted by 15% of the variance. In previous studies resilience is seen as protective factor for negative outcome but in present study this finding is deviate from the links suggest that managerial (technical) employees in metro cities, resilience may interact with workplace stressors and demands in unique ways (Plimmer et al., 2023; Dorrance-Hall & Gettings, 2023). In high-pressure urban work environments, resilient individuals may continue to face challenging situations without adequate organizational support, which could unintentionally heighten their feelings alienation.

Further result provides optimism is a significant negative predictor of work alienation among managerial (technical) employees in non-metro cities, accounting for 26% of the variance. This result highlights the considerable role of optimism in reducing feelings of alienation in the workplace for this group. Optimism is seen in numerous studies to reduce negative outcomes (Mirković, 2024; Li et al., 2019). Stepwise multiple regression analysis for managerial (administrative) employees from non-metro city reveals that optimism and resilience both are predictor of work alienation. Optimism accounting negatively 11% of the variance and resilience account positively 10% of the variance in work alienation for this group. Optimism emerges as a protective factor against work alienation among managerial employees in non-metro cities. Managers (administrative) with an optimistic outlook are more likely to perceive challenges as opportunities and maintain a hopeful perspective, which can help them stay engaged and connected to their roles. While resilience typically aids individuals in coping with adversity, this finding suggests that resilient managers in non-metro cities may experience heightened feelings of alienation.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings emphasize the relationships between psychological capital and work alienation. Organizations should prioritize promotion of optimism and providing targeted support to enhance psychological resources, particularly for managerial (technical) employees in high-pressure roles performed in field. By addressing these factors, organizations can create more supportive and engaging workplaces, reducing feelings of alienation and improving overall employee well-being and productivity.

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