

Psychological Need Satisfaction and Proactive Work Behaviour Among White Collar Employees

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between Psychological need satisfaction and Proactive work behaviour among white collar employees. **Method:** It is a correlational study. Data from 164 white collar employees were collected through digitized form from all over India. Basic psychological need satisfaction at work scale (BPNS-W) and Scale on proactive work behaviour were used to collect data. **Results:** The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between the Psychological need satisfaction and Proactive work behaviour among white collar employees. However, no significant differences between males and females regarding proactive work behaviour was observed. **Conclusion:** According to the results, it can be concluded that the basic psychological needs satisfaction and proactive work behaviour can be beneficial at work place. The need for relatedness is essential for fostering proactive work behaviours in employees.

Keywords: Psychological Need Satisfaction, Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness, Proactive Work Behaviour

Self Determination Theory (SDT) suggests that people have three innate and universal basic psychological needs: Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness. Autonomy is when people need to feel in control of their own behaviours and goals, while Competence is when they need to gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills. Relatedness is when people feel appreciated, cared for, and part of an inclusive atmosphere (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Parker and Collins (2008) discovered a higher order structure of proactive behaviour and classified it into taking-charge behaviour (Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Beck et al., 2014), expressing voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Thomas et al., 2010), individual innovation (Scott & Bruce, 1994), and problem prevention (Frese & Fay, 2001). Taking charge involves positive attempts to affect organizationally-functional change, while voice is collecting knowledge about issues that influence one's workplace and speaking up about them. Individual innovation is the process of developing and putting ideas into action, while problem prevention addresses how to avoid obstacles and problems from cropping up again.

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Self-determination theory (SDT) has been linked to a range of well-being outcomes, such as vitality, life satisfaction, behavioral outcomes, perseverance, performance, and relational outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste, et al., 2010). Psychological need satisfaction is important to satisfy the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness at work since they have a favourable impact on workers' wellbeing and efficiency, work climate, work motivation (Hooff & De pater, 2019; Terblanche, 2017). Findings of all these studies demonstrate why psychological need satisfaction of employees is crucial in organisational settings.

While, Organizations are becoming more decentralised and unpredictable, requiring individuals to take charge of their own careers (Mirvis & Hall, 1994; Campbell, 2000). Proactivity has been a wide interest in the field of organizational behaviour (tendency of an individual to take an active role in promoting others and/or the environment). (Frese & Fay, 2001; Crant, 2000). Studies have shown that employees with high psychological need satisfaction are more likely to engage in proactive work behaviour due to increased senses of autonomy, competence, relatedness and intrinsic motivation (Kawasaki, 2019; Chi et al., 2023; Cheung et al., 2021). Studies have also shown that Proactive work behaviour is driven by three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy and competence and relatedness. Autonomy is a key factor in determining proactive behaviour such as personal initiative, voice, and promoting improvements (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Axtell et al., 2000; Frese et al., 2000). A lack of autonomy could restrict how employees see their jobs and make it harder for them to define them in a flexible way (Parker, 2000). Competence and proactive behaviour are both influenced by individual characteristics such as cognitive ability, personality, attitude, and job complexity (Parker, 1998). Positive relationships exist between proactive work behaviour and competence satisfaction, suggesting that competence directly and indirectly influences proactive behaviour, and proactive behaviour can in turn give employees a sense of competence (Strauss & Parker, 2014). Social characteristics give employees a sense of relatedness at the workplace. Social characteristics such as leadership, supportive supervision, social support, task interdependence, perceived organisational support, and supportive organisational climate influence proactive work behaviour (Parker et al., 2006; Grant & Parker, 2009; Shin & Kim, 2015; Wu & Parker, 2013; Luo & Zheng, 2018).

Proactive behaviour is more effective for older men than for younger men motivated by achievement, and for younger women than for older women motivated by achievement (Bohlmann & Zacher, 2020). Proactivity in socialisation of newcomers varies by occupation and work experience (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Meuller, 2000). Gender role in proactive behaviour can vary depending on role expectations and factors such as age, gender, and motives, but Shirandula and Sepula (2017) found that proactive work behaviour between male and female employees was not different.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The study aims to find the relationship between Psychological need satisfaction and Proactive work behaviour among white collar employees.

Sample

The sample consists of 164 white collar employees, males (N=91) and females (N=73) whose age was between 21 to 55, who were currently working in a particular organisation

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and their job includes professional, desk, managerial or administrative work. Data was collected through digitized form from all over India.

Objectives

- To study the relationship between Psychological need satisfaction and Proactive work behaviour among white collar employees.
- To study which among the three components of Psychological need satisfaction has a greater relationship with Proactive work behaviour.
- To study the differences in Proactive work behaviour among male and female employees.

Hypothesis

- H01: There is no significant relationship between Psychological need satisfaction and Proactive work behaviour among employees.
- H02: There is no significant difference in correlation of autonomy, competence and relatedness with proactive work behaviour.
- H03: There is no significant difference in Proactive work behaviour with respect to gender.

Tools used

Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction at Work Scale (BPNS-W)- The Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction at Work Scale (Deci et al., 2001; Ilardi et al., 1993; Kasser, Davey, & Ryan, 1992) consists of 21 items graded on a 7-point Likert scale. It is divided into three subscales: autonomy with seven items, competence with six items, and relatedness with eight items. The internal reliability of the overall measure was .89, while the internal reliability of the subscales for autonomy, competence, and relatedness was .79, .73, and .84 respectively.

Scale on Proactive work behaviour- Four different actions that Parker and Collins (2010) categorize as proactive work behaviour were measured in the current study. The items were chosen from among those used in Parker and Collins' study (2010). The 13 items on the measure were selected based on factors like Taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999); Voice (Van Dyne & LePine; 1998); Individual innovation (Scott & Bruce, 1994); Problem prevention (Parker & Collins, 2010). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1- very infrequently and 5- very frequently). According to Cronbach's alpha, each subset of the measure had 21 instances of satisfactory internal reliability (Parker & Collins, 2010).

Procedure

Purposive sampling was used to collect data from a sample of 164 white collar employees aged 21-55 who were currently working in a particular organisation and their job includes professional, desk, managerial or administrative work. Data was collected through digitized form from all over India.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The mean score of Psychological Need Satisfaction (PNS) and Proactive Work Behaviour (PWB) is 126.061 and 44.886 respectively, with a standard deviation of 15.44 and 7.04 respectively. The mean of three psychological need satisfactions. i.e., Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness is 30, 26.799 and 34.854 respectively, with a standard

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deviation of 4.79, 4.88 and 6.30 respectively. The data was not normally distributed therefore, appropriate non parametric tests were used for analysis of data.

Table No. 1: Show the Spearman's Correlation Coefficient

Variables		PNS	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
PWB	Correlation Coefficient	.384**	.244**	.078	.256**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.319	.001

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table no. 1 shows the Spearman's Correlation Coefficient. The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (rs) showed a significant positive correlation (rs = 0.384, p < .005) between psychological need satisfaction and proactive work behaviour among white collar employees. Rejecting the hypothesis (H01), there is a significant relationship between psychological need satisfaction and proactive work behaviour among employees.

Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness were assessed to determine if there is a significant difference in correlation with proactive work behaviour. Spearman's rank correlation coefficients for autonomy, competence, and relatedness were 0.244, 0.078, and 0.256 respectively. It was noted that autonomy and relatedness had significant positive correlation with proactive work behaviour, but there was no large difference in correlation coefficient of autonomy and relatedness with respect to proactive work behaviour. Therefore, hypothesis (H02) is partially accepted. Hence regression analysis was used to determine the predictive value of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on proactive work behaviour.

Table No. 2: Shows the regression coefficient which establishes the relationship between Proactive work behaviour and Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. (p)
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	33.534	3.647		9.194	9.194
Autonomy	.217	.147	.147	1.479	.141
Competence	-.223	.153	-.155	-1.453	.148
Relatedness	.310	.118	.277	2.632	.009

a. *Dependent Variable: PWB*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness*

Table no. 2 shows the regression coefficient which establishes the relationship between Proactive work behaviour and Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness. The R square value is 0.087. The adjusted R square value is 0.070 which is 7% of total variance in the Proactive work behaviour that can be explained by the Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness. The

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independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, $F(3,160) = 5.100, p < 0.05$. The regression model is a good fit of the data.

The unstandardized coefficient for autonomy is .217 and t value is 1.479, therefore increase in one unit of autonomy predicts increase of .217 units in proactive work behaviour however it is not statistically significant as the p value is .141 ($p > 0.05$). The unstandardized coefficient for competence is -.223 and t value is -1.453, therefore increase in one unit of competence predicts decrease of .223 units in proactive work behaviour however it is not statistically significant as the p value is .148 ($p > 0.05$). The unstandardized coefficient for relatedness is .310 and t value is 2.632, therefore increase in one unit of autonomy predicts increase of .310 units in proactive work behaviour however it is statistically significant as the p value is .009 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, through multiple linear regression analysis it was concluded among the three basic psychological need, relatedness significantly predicts the proactive work behaviour of the white collar employees.

Table No. 3: shows t, df and p value for Proactive work behaviour on gender

Variables	Gender	N	M	t	df	p
PWB	Males	91	45.143	.561	162	.576
	Females	73	44.521			

Table no. 3 shows t, df and p value for Proactive work behaviour on gender. Independent sample t test found no significant difference in proactive work behaviour with respect to gender. Therefore, Hypothesis (H03) is accepted.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the relationship between Psychological need satisfaction and Proactive work behaviour among white collar employees. The study also investigated the difference in Proactive work behaviour with respect to gender of the 164 white collar employees.

The results of the study rejected hypothesis 1 indicating that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction of psychological needs and proactive work behaviour among white collar employees. In general, proactive work behaviours are more likely to be exhibited by employees whose psychological needs are addressed and satisfied. The result of this study is consistent with the findings of a study by Kawasaki (2019) and Chi et al. (2023). Self-determination theory (SDT) provides a general explanation of human motivation and personality and focuses on people's psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Individuals are more inclined to engage in proactive work behaviours when they feel more self-determined about their actions (Kawasaki, 2019). Therefore, satisfying psychological needs encourages employees to engage in proactive work behaviours.

Further, correlation coefficient of three basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) with respect to proactive work behaviour was analysed. Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness were positively correlated with proactive work behaviour. It was seen autonomy and relatedness were found to have a significant positive correlation with proactive work behaviour, whereas correlation of competence and proactive work

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behaviour was negligible. No large difference was noted in correlation of autonomy and relatedness with proactive work behaviour.

Additionally, the multiple linear regression analysis identified which of the three basic psychological needs would increase the possibility that an employee would behave proactively at work. It revealed autonomy and relatedness would increase the possibility of an employee's proactive work behaviour, however only relatedness plays a significant role in predicting proactive work behaviour of an employee. Regression analysis supported the findings of correlation analysis.

People are more driven to work proactively when they feel autonomous in their roles and linked to others. Autonomy could help how employees see their jobs and also help them to define them in a flexible way and entail proactivity (Parker, 2000). Social characteristics of a workplace and the job) give employee a sense of relatedness at workplace (Parker et al., 2006; Grant & Parker, 2009; Shin & Kim, 2015; Wu & Parker, 2013). The result of this study supports many research findings that Work Characteristics and leadership that includes working environment, job autonomy, job ambiguity, leadership style, task interdependence which gives employee a sense of autonomy and relatedness, are the antecedents of proactive work behaviour (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Simard & Marchand, 1995; Kickul & Gundry, 2002).

The results showed that there was no difference in proactive work behaviour in relation to gender. This result is supported by the findings of the study by Shirandula and Sepula (2017) and Khan et al. (2019). This means that proactive work behaviour is not based on individual characteristics such as traits and disposition, etc., but rather related to aspects of work and the workplace. Proactive work behaviour is primarily the result of external factors and not due to individual characteristics (Shirandula & Sepula, 2017).

There are several antecedents of proactive work behaviour but individual characteristics, work characteristics and leadership. But Autonomy and relatedness needs can be boosted by work characteristics and leadership. Management should focus on Leadership, supportive supervision, social support, perceived organisational support, and supportive organisational climate. Deci, Connell, and Ryan (1989) found that such training can increase employee self-concordance and that supervisors can be taught.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study looked at how proactive work behaviour and psychological need fulfilment correlated among white collar workers. It was found that psychological need satisfaction and proactive work behaviour had a significant positive correlation, with no difference in proactive work behaviour with respect to gender. Among three basic psychological needs, autonomy and relatedness had a significant positive correlation with proactive work behaviour, but relatedness had a significant predictive value.

Implications

The study showed that proactive work behaviours begin after psychological needs are satisfied. It is recommended that managers and supervisors adopt attitudes that promote their employees' perceptions of autonomy and relatedness at work. To give their employees a greater sense of autonomy, managers should give them some latitude in choosing how they

perform their job duties. However, managers should also recognize that workers themselves need to be aware that they have autonomy in their work.

The need for relatedness is essential for fostering proactive work behaviours in employees. To strengthen this, managers should recognise and value the tasks and responsibilities an employee performs, consider their opinions and viewpoints, and organise employee engagement activities to promote team building and group decision making. Organisational support also fosters an employee's sense of relatedness.

Limitation for the study

This study had some limitations, such as only self-report measures being used to obtain the data. The age and work experience of employees could not be assessed due to a certain category of respondents being able to secure more responses than the other categories. Additionally, the time constraint resulted in a limit to the number of respondents. Researchers can look into other contextual aspects that may have an impact on one's motivation to take initiative in future studies, such as workplace standards, organisational cultures, and appreciation from managers or supervisors. Future research on such underlying expectations of proactivity in a company may give new insights into how individuals might be best motivated to work beyond prescribed tasks and duties of their own volition.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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