

## **A Study of Positive Psychological Capital on Employee Engagement on a Defence Establishment of India**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is a vital build of Positive Psychology which consists of four psychological components namely Self-efficacy, Hope, Optimism and Resilience. Previous researches have shown that PsyCap do have a positive association with work-related outcomes such as employee engagement, employee attitude, behavior, and job performance. Most of the researches related to the PsyCap and Employee engagement were done on employees of multinational firms/ business strata ignoring the world's largest organization "The Defence Establishments". In today's world defence personals operate in a very dynamic, technical and complex work environment, which brings about an increase in mental health issues and hampering organizational outcome as well as employee engagement. The present study was undertaken to explore the relationship between Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Employee Engagement (EE) on a defence establishment of India.

On the basis of availability of sample, data of 30 participants from a defence establishment of India were collected in a field survey. Basic descriptive analysis, Pearson's correlation and Regression analysis were performed. Results revealed a positive relationship of PsyCap with Employee Engagement.

**Keywords:** *Positive Psychological Capital, Employee Engagement And Defence Establishment.*

**F**rom the time immemorial it has been noticed that success of any flourishing company depends on the contribution of its engaged employees. In the context of defence forces which play their role in a continuous dynamic environment with more technical advancements, critical weather conditions and challenging work environment. At times it becomes very stressful for the personals to adopt their work culture which may hinder their role performance. Thus, now-a-days defence organizations are more concerned about the development and maintenance of their human resources along with the development of physical power. The reason behind this is that

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progress of every organization depends upon the positive growth and individual involvement of its employees. Work involvement is related to engagement of its employees. Employee engagement may be define as engagement of employees all physically, emotionally and mentally, which automatically bring positive outcome in the form of productivity for the organization.

### ***Employee engagement:***

The history of employee engagement goes back with Goffman who for the first time use the term “embracement” (Goffman 1959, 1961) to explain investment of individual self and his energy into one’s role. He believes that role involvement includes one’s attachment to his role which is important for an active engagement which is visible in the form of individual’s effort and attention for assigned role.

Inspired by Goffman’s (1959,1961) perspective of “role embracement” , Kahn (1990) developed a theoretical viewpoint to describe when and why individuals involve themselves at work in varying degree and show difference in their individual performance. Further, in the path of his investigation Kahn explored engagement and disengagement among employees. Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as “employee engagement is the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. The “cognitive component” includes employees’ viewpoint about the organization, its leaders and work environment. The “emotional component” includes employees’ feeling about their organization, there affirmative or unenthusiastic attitudes toward the organization and its leaders. The “physical component” of engaged employee includes the corporeal energies exerted by persons to achieve their goals (Kahn, 1990). Hence, engagement means psychophysical presence of employees while occupying and performing an organizational role.

Baumruk (2004) et al defined employee engagement as “*emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization.*”

Hewitt Associates (2006) defined employee engagement as “*the employees desire to say- speak positively about the organization, stay - desire to be a member of the organization and strive - go beyond the expected for the organization*”.

Truss et al (2006) defined employee engagement as “*passion for work*”.

Wellins and Concelman (2004) defined employee engagement as “*the illusive force that motivates employees to higher levels of performance. This coveted energy is an amalgam of*

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*commitment, loyalty, productivity and ownership.*” They further added “*feelings and attitudes employees have towards their jobs and their organization*”.

Few psychologists argued that these definitions often sound similar to “*organisational commitment*” and “*organisational citizenship behavior*”. Robinson et al (2004) defined engagement as “*one step up from commitment*”. As a consequence, employee engagement has the manifestation of being another movement, or might be called as “old wine in a new bottle”.

May et al (2004) viewed “*engagement as most closely associated with the constructs of job involvement*”. Whereas, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) defined it as “the holistic sensation that people feel when they act with total involvement”.

### ***Approaches of Employee engagement:***

In 2011 Shuck identified four approaches to employee engagement which are as follows:-

- Needs satisfying approach, Kahn (1990) was a scholar who first used the term engagement in the organizational set up to understand the individual and his unique needs as work place context. This approach is based on his idea that work engagement is the face of individual's ideal self during task behaviors.
- Burnout antithesis approach, in which positive energy, individuals involvement, self-efficacy are presented as the opposites of stress and burnout which includes exhaustion, cynicism and lack of accomplishment.
- Satisfaction-engagement approach, in which engagement is a more technical version of job satisfaction, evidenced by Gallup's own Q12 engagement survey which gives an  $r=.91$  correlation with one (job satisfaction) measure.
- The multidimensional approach, Saks (2006) further developed the idea of Kahn. Saks (2006) viewed engagement as “a distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional and behavioral components associated with individual role performance”. In this theory a clear difference is maintained between job and organizational engagement, usually with the main focal point on past history and its results to role performance rather than organizational identification.

### ***Positive Psychological Capital:***

#### **Positive Psychology**

The study of organizational behavior throughout history moves on the same direction path as followed by clinical psychology by emphasis on shortcomings and psychopathology. As well as demonstrated a bias that what is wrong towards men (Pages and Donohue, 2004). Consequently, the current OB research is concerned with the diagnosis of the problems and weaknesses and focuses on 'fixes' demands for organizational mental health.

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Martin Seligman, President of American Psychological Association actively interested on relieving cultural disagreement, Seligman (1999) in the direction of improving the lives of people called for a new science to be known as “positive psychology” Seligman (1999). This area of psychology, in Seligman’s view, had moved from its unique heredity in making the lives of people more rewarding and fruitful, to a post-World War II focus almost solely on curing and improving of mental infirmity and for the betterment of lives of all people. He called for psychologists to work that directs to well-being of individuals, communities, and societies. Seen the increasing rate of anxiety and depression Seligman called for increasing amounts of research focus on the finding and expansion of positive attributes about persons that would amplify their level of well-being on one hand and reduce the negativity and symptoms of despair on the other hand.

Despite the expansion of the positive progress inside applied psychology, initiated by Martin Seligman and his colleagues (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), perception has been shifted through which OB is examined. Several paradigms concerned with positivity in the place of work have progressed over the past 20 years, together with Positive Organizational Scholarship and Positive Organization Behavior.

The literature of POS and POB has a different meaning and research focus. POS mainly contributes to the study of positive outcome, organizational procedures and their composition as a whole. On the other hand, POB is a study of leaning human resource strengths and psychological capabilities which are measurable and successfully managed for performance enhancement that can be implemented. The POB Criteria of trait-state continuum proposed by Luthans & Youssef (2007) includes hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism and the higher-order construct of PsyCap comprised of these four constructs. Detailed discussion of each of these will be presented in the following sections.

### ***Psychological Capital -***

Positive Psychological Capital is the positive and developmental state of an individual as characterized by high self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency. The four components are defined as follows:

***Hope*** – Is defined as a feeling of expectation and desire for a positive thing to happen. It includes determination for achievement of goal and proactive planning for the same.

***Self efficacy*** – Is defined as individual’s self confidence in their ability to achieve a specific objective in a specific condition.

***Optimism*** – Optimism is an internal disposition or tendency to look on the more positive or favorable side of events or conditions and to expect the constructive outcome for future.

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Additionally, optimism leads to hope and efficacy. Further, both hope and optimism are necessary components of resilience.

**Resilience** – Is defined in Positive Psychology as a positive way of coping with adversity or distress. In organizational aspect, it is defined as an ability to recuperate from stress, conflict, failure, change or increase in responsibility.

Researchers considered “positive psychological states as a powerful higher-order core factor. This factor is known as Psychological Capital or PsyCap, and is defined as: an individual’s positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) (2) making a positive perception (optimism) about future; (3) moving toward goals and when necessary, changing the paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when surrounded by problems or adversity, develop elasticity and flexibility to sustaining and bouncing back” (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007).

### ***Psychological Capital: Is Not a Summation:***

The term psychological capital or PsyCap is not a summing up of four resources of PsyCap rather it is a Meta construct which combines the four mechanisms to work together. Thus, PsyCap is found to have more noticeable effect on the enviable outcomes than the effect of individual resources. Hence, PsyCap is found to have more potency than sheer summation of its four resources.

### ***Psychological Capital: Measurement***

For scoring of 24 items of PsyCap questionnaire (PCQ) the investigator needs to add all scores on 6-point scale. Higher scores point out more positive PsyCap. Moreover, efforts are made to develop psychometric supports for the PCQ.

### ***Psychological Capital: Development***

The PsyCap and its resources are developmental in nature. Micro intervention training enhances individuals’ level of PsyCap. “Psychological Capital Intervention (PCI)” (Luthans et al, 2010) is accessible both in online as well as in-house formats.

### ***Psychological Capital: Organizational Outcomes***

It is believed that PsyCap has components that are very useful for organizational development. Many researches have been clearly showing the benefits of PsyCap on employee performance, engagement and operations etc.

In addition, psychologists like Luthans, Avolio et al. (2007); Avey, Luthans & Jensen, (2009); Johnson et al. (2009); Smith & Palmer, (2010) and Avey et al. (2010) found that PsyCap has positive relationships with other organizational outcomes such as employee attitudes, behavior,

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and psychological well being, organizational commitment, work-life happiness, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors

Moreover, PsyCap has been positively associated with employee's engagement (Hodges, 2010; and Hughes, Avey, and Norman, 2008). Furthermore, it is negatively associated with employee stress and turnover (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009)

Besides that studies by Avey et al., (2006) Avey, Hughes, Norman & Luthans, (2008); Avey, Wernsing et al., (2008); Avey et al., (2009); Avey, Luthans & Youssef, (2010); Norman, Avey et al., (2010) also explored a negative associations between PsyCap and unwanted employee attitudes and behaviors like absenteeism and workplace deviance.

### ***Relationship between Positive psychological capital and employee engagement:***

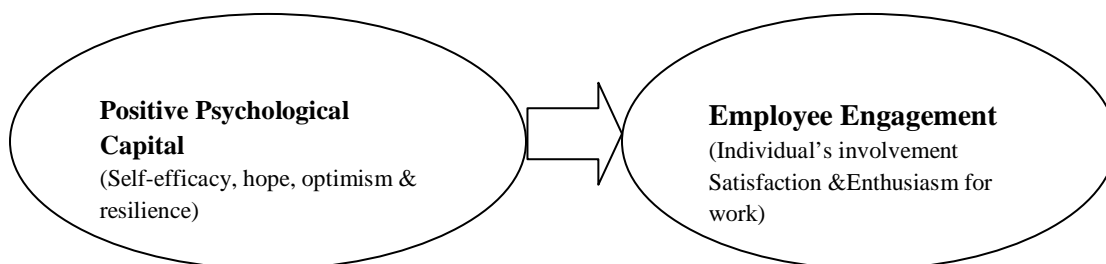
Youssef & Luthans (2007) examined the impact of positive PsyCap on work-related outcome such as work engagement in which they found that positive PsyCap have a positive impact on work engagement.

Buy and Rothmann(2010) conducted a research to explore correlation between organizational commitment and work engagement . Their findings inform that organizational commitment and engagement have positive correlation as engaged employees have good social operations and adequate commitment.

Sihag P. & Sarikwal L (2014)provided evidence in their research that PsyCap have positive impact on employee engagement.

### ***Proposed Model of the study:***

The at hand study model is base on the theory of engagement of Satisfaction-Engagement Approach.



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### ***Significance of the study***

- The current investigation is an extension to the literature of to existing assumptions and researches on organizational behavior related to Psychological capital and employee engagement.
- Most of the researches related to the PsyCap and Employee engagement were done on employees of multinational firms/ business strata ignoring the world's largest organization "The Defence Establishments". This study, on the other hand, selected a defence organization as the research population.
- In today's world defence personal's operates in a very dynamic, technical and complex work environment, which brings drafting increase in mental health issues and hampering organizational outcome as well as employee engagement. The present inquiry was undertaken toward explore the relationship between Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Employee Engagement (EE) on a defence establishment of India.
- The present research is the first study exploring the effect of Psychological capital (PsyCap) on employee engagement on an Indian Defence Organization.

***Statement of the problem:*** The problem can be stated as, "Is there any correlation between Positive Psychological Capital on Employee Engagement?"

***Objectives of the study:*** To study the relationship between positive psychological capital and employee engagement.

***Hypotheses of the study:*** *Hypothesis 1:* The positive psychological capital will have positive relationship with employee engagement.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### ***Population:***

In the present research, real population of all the employees from a major Defence establishment of India was selected as subject. This division of armed force has potency of 127,000 vigorous workforces. However, a range of dependable sources provided remarkably different estimations of its potency over the years (Military Balance, 2010).

### ***Sample:***

In the present examination, on the basis of availability of sample, data of 30 participants from a defence establishment of India were selected. The participants will be provided with the brief knowledge about the venture and a explanation of the time obligation. The participants who agreed to voluntarily participate in the survey will be provide with survey questionnaires related to Positive Psychological Capital and Employee Engagement and instructions related to accomplishment of the questionnaires.

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**Research Design:**

The research design which will be used in this study will be descriptive.

*RV-* Professional profile, family profile, service tenure and age.

**The Instruments:**

The independent variable in this study is *Positive Psychological Capital or PsyCap*. With the permission of [www.mindgarden.com](http://www.mindgarden.com) the positive psychological capital will be measured by using **Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ)** using the 24-item questionnaire developed by Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, (2007) designed to measure 4 components -Work self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency. Responses were collected with the help of 6 point likert scale, using level of agreement or disagreement with each statement from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6 = strongly agree).

The dependant variable, *Employee engagement* will measure by using the **Gallup Q12© Employee Engagement Survey** by Buckingham & Coffman (1999) and Harter et al. (2002), which initiate with an item which assess overall workplace satisfaction. On a five-point scale, where “5” is extremely satisfied and “1” is extremely dissatisfied. Rest 1-12 items in the scale assess employee engagement on 6 point scale, where, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree, 6=don’t know/does not apply.

**Data Analysis Techniques:**

For data analysis basic descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients and Regression analysis will be used on IBM SPSS 17 version software tool.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The data were analyzed with the help of Mean, Standard deviation, Person Correlation and regression analysis. So as to find out the relationship between psychological capital and employee engagement. The results of this study have been explained as under:-

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
PsyCap	30	107.00	140.00	128.3000	7.20704
EE	30	37.00	62.00	56.0667	5.39434
Valid N	30				

It can be observed from table 1, where, the N= 30. The measure of central tendency (Mean) of the positive psychological capital and employee engagement are 128.300 and 56.066 respectively. The measure of dispersion (Standard deviation) for positive psychological capital and employee engagement are 7.207 and 5.394 re.



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**Table 2: Pearson Correlation**

		PsyCap	EE
PsyCap	Pearson Correlation	1	.783**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
EE	Pearson Correlation	.783**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

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

Table 2, Pearson correlation table, explores the relationship between positive psychological capital and employee engagement. This table reveals that (a) correlation of PsyCap with itself ( $r=1$ ) and the number of non missing observations for PsyCap ( $N=30$ ). (b) correlation of PsyCap and EE ( $r=.783^{**}$ ), based on ( $N=30$ ) observations with pair wise non missing values. (c) correlation of EE and PsyCap ( $r=.783^{**}$ ), based on ( $N=30$ ) observations with pair wise non missing values. (d) correlation of EE with itself ( $r=1$ ) and the number of non missing observations for EE ( $N=30$ ). The results shows correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. Thus, the positive psychological capital is found to have positive relationship with employee engagement. So, our research hypothesis (i.e.,  $H_1$ ) is accepted.

**Table 3.1: Regression Table Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.783 <sup>a</sup>	.613	.599	3.41714
Predictors: (Constant), PsyCap				

Table 3.1 shows the model summary and overall fit statistics. Investigator found that the adjusted  $R^2$  of this model is 0.599 with the  $R^2=0.613$  that means the linear regression explains 61.3% of the variance in the data.

**Table 3.2: The Regression F- test Table**

Model		Sum Squares	of Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	516.915	1	516.915	44.268	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	326.951	28	11.677		
	Total	843.867	29			

a. Predictors: (Constant), PsyCap

b. Dependent Variable: EE

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Table 3.2 is the F-test table, the linear regression’s F-test shows that there is linear relationship between the two variable, with  $F=44.268$  and 29 degrees of freedom the test is highly significant, thus we can assume that there is a linear relationship between the variables i.e, PsyCap and EE.

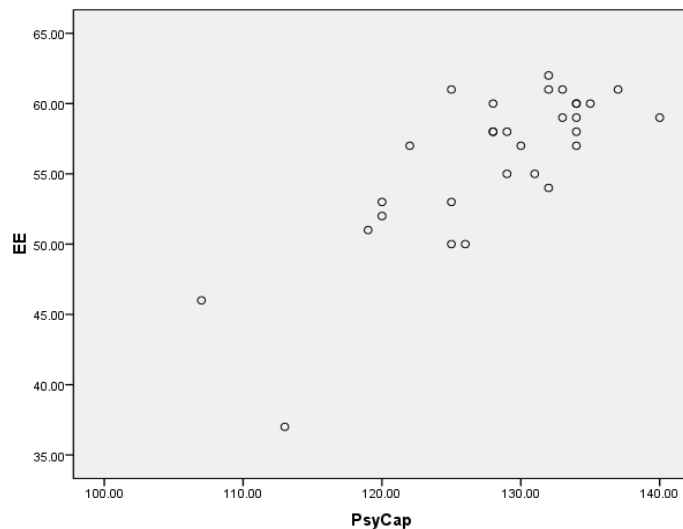
**Table 3.3 The Regression Coefficients Table**

Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
-19.092	11.313		-1.688	0.103
0.586	0.088	0.783	6.653	0

a. Dependent Variable: EE

Table 3.3 shows the regression coefficients, the intercept and the significance of all coefficients, and the intercept in the model. We find that our linear regression analysis estimates the linear regression function to be  $y=-19.092 +0.586x$ . Further, in our linear regression analysis the test, tests the hypothesis that there is relationship between PsyCap and EE. The t-test finds that both intercepts and variables are highly significant ( $p<0.001$ ) and thus we might say that they are different from zero. According to this table PsyCap also found positively contributed to employee engagement with 0.783 standard regression weight and acceptable p value. So our research hypothesis (i.e. H 1) was accepted that showed positive PsyCap was positively related to employee engagement for defence establishments of India.

**Diagram 1: Scatter Diagram**



The Diagram 1 shows the scatter plot for investigating the possible relationship between two variables that both related to the same event. It also shows a positive correlation between positive

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PsyCap and EE for defence personals in India. Hence our hypothesis (H1) is accepted on this ground also.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The current inspection examined the relationship of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) with employee's engagement (EE) at defence establishment of India. The results of Pearson correlation revealed that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level with significant standard regression weight and p-value, the study hypothesis was accepted. Thus, it can be said that positive PsyCap is positively related to employee engagement. This study found support from the work by Avey, Luthans & Jensen (2009) which shows that individual's inbuilt resources, like the constructs of Psychological Capital (i.e. Hope, Optimism, Self-Efficacy and Resilience), may contribute to decreased Stress and burnout and increased work Engagement. Another study made by Sihag P. and Sarikwal L.(2014) also shows that Psychological capital is positively related to Employee Engagement. This inspection also recommended scope for more research to examine the individual resource of Psychological capital in other groups of people, employees in various demographic groups and for different positions and levels in organization.

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### ***Conflict of Interests***

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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