

PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE AS A PREDICTOR OF JOB INVOLVEMENT

Soumendu Biswas*

ABSTRACT

Studies pertaining to human resource (HR) management in India have revealed a variety of factors that significantly affect employees' attitude towards their job not the least of which is their perception about their immediate job environment or in other words, the psychological climate. The present study posits psychological climate as a predictor of job involvement. For the purpose of study, data were collected from 357 managers/executives and subject to correlation and regression analysis. The results established that psychological climate is a statistically significant predictor of job involvement. The implication arising out of the results are also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing global spread of business and the greater participation of multi-national corporations (MNCs) in developing markets, calls for focusing attention towards management practices in different parts of the world (Budhwar, 2003; Napier & Vu, 1998). In this context, it is worth mentioning that among the rapidly expanding economies of the world, India holds a position of prominence (Biswas, Giri, & Srivastava, 2006; Budhwar & Boyne, 2004). It is evident therefore, that global changes have had a significant impact on the Indian economy too.

With reference to India in particular, it has been observed that its national culture has a rich heritage which is helpful in clarifying different human actions. It is further understood that these cultural facets are deeply ingrained in the individual psyche and are relevant in

positive cognition and affect of individuals at the workplace (Rao & Abraham, 2003). At the same time, the indigenous culture of India has been quick to accept alien customs and mores while preserving its distinctive values and rules (Biswas *et al.*, 2006). This has established the Indian social order as a classic example of the oriental world. In terms of crossvergent socio-cultural ethos therefore, India stands as a leader in establishing the norms and practices that dominate managerial practices in the contemporary borderless business environment (Ralston, Holt, Terpstra, & Kai-Cheng, 1997). In a cross-cultural framework, the above discussion indicates that the stature of India is quite elevated in the global socio-economic map. So much so, that Varma, Budhwar, Biswas, and Toh (2005) noted that India's traditional cultural systems are acting as fulcrum of the South East Asian business environment.

* Assistant Professor, Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, Haryana.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Before the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1991, the Indian business environment was discernible through the dominance of firms in the manufacturing sector. These firms, whether public or private, were usually large organizations and were marked by mechanistic processes and rigid practices (Biswas & Varma, 2007). In fact, firms belonging to the service sector such as, educational institutions, healthcare organizations, and media and communications were basically owned by the state. This was a direct consequence of Nehruvian welfare philosophy that emphasized pluralistic utilitarianism. The fall out of such a socio-political arrangement was the lack of emphasis on individual behavioural aspirations (c.f. Varma, *et al.*, 2005). Thus, till the privatization of the Indian economy in the early 1990s, Indian organizations were extremely bureaucratic and were characterized by one-way flow of decision making from the top to the bottom. Indeed, Hofstede (2001) observed that such managerial philosophies and practices are not uncommon in social cultures that are dominated by collectivism and high power distance norms.

Thus, to understand the group of actions in relation to the administration of members of an organization, the appropriate literature recommends an investigation of those variables that are related to an individual's acuity a propos their immediate workplace atmosphere based on their everyday experiences (Schneider, 1975; Strutton, Pelton, & Lumpkin, 1993). In this regard, it is worth noting that the relevant literature recommend the examination of psychological climate as a primary antecedent of a variety of individual-level

outcomes such as job satisfaction, job involvement, and turnover intentions (James, James, & Ashe, 1990; Parker, Baltes, Young, Huff, Altmann, Lacost, & Roberts, 2003; Woodard, Cassill, & Herr, 1994). This article seeks to empirically inspect these theoretical suggestions in the context of the Indian management scenario.

According to literature, job involvement is a construct that arises out of interactions between individual disparity of sensitivity about the work settings and personality traits (Ruh, White, & Wood, 1975; Sandler, 1974; Schein, 1983). According to Lodahl and Kejner (1965), job involvement affects people for whom his or her job constitutes the most important portion of life. Thus, job involvement can be conceptualized as "the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with his work or the importance of work in his total self image" (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965; p. 24). Hence, job involvement appears to be a construct that follows directly from the way individuals are affected by their immediate work environment and interpersonal relationships (Ruh *et al.*, 1975).

Based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis was formulated for the purpose of empirical testing:

H1: Psychological climate will have a significantly positive influence on job involvement

METHOD

Data collection procedure

The respondents involved in the study were executives/managerial cadre employees from different organizations. Data were collected from a total of 357 participants through a survey questionnaire. A covering letter describing

the reason of the study was attached with each questionnaire. This letter gave details about the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study. Furthermore, participants were assured that the responses would be used only for research purpose. The questionnaires, when completed, were returned to the researcher via mail, in pre-stamped envelopes which were made available with the questionnaires.

Sample

Of the 357 participants, 180 (i.e. 50.42 per cent) belonged to the manufacturing sector companies, while 177 (i.e. 49.58 per cent) belonged to service sector organizations. Moreover, 83.9 per cent of the survey participants were males, while 16.1 per cent were females. The average age of participants was 36.9 years. The average weekly hour spent by the participants at work was 52.4, and their average years of work experience was 10.7. Finally, 7.3 per cent of those surveyed belonged to senior management, 35.6 per cent were from middle management, and 57.1 per cent reported working at junior management levels.

Measures

Psychological climate was calculated using the Psychological Climate Measure as reported by Brown and Leigh (1996). This scale comprised six factors of PC namely, supportive management, role clarity, contribution, recognition, self-expression, and challenge and included 21 items. The reliability measure of this scale was found to be .90.

Job involvement was measured using 4 items of the Job Attitude Scale as developed and reported by Lawler and Hall (1970). This scale measured the affective attachment of individuals with their job. The value of the Cronbach's alpha representing the scale reliability was .82.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability indices for the key variables of this study. It may be noted that the psychological climate and job involvement ($r = .48, p = .01$) correlated significantly.

In order to examine the causal linkages, regression analyses were conducted on the variables included in this study. Table 2 shows the standardized regression estimates between the key constructs. As shown in the following table, job involvement was significantly and positively predicted by psychological climate (standardized $\hat{\alpha} = .48, p = .01$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the regression and the SEM procedures justifies the acceptance of the first hypothesis that is, psychological climate will have a significantly positive influence on job satisfaction. Theoretically, an individual's behaviour is affected by events in the external environment and in this context individual outcomes are going to be predicted by psychological perceptions rather than objective realities. These individual outcomes also include job-related outcomes such as work performance (James, Hater, Gent, & Bruni, 1978).

Interestingly, psychological perceptions of one's immediate work environment or in other words, psychological climate were once viewed as synonymous with the job satisfaction construct (Johannesonn, 1973). However, low inter-correlation between them have placed psychological climate and job satisfaction as distinct concepts which led to the formulation of the first of the present study hypothesis.

The results and analysis of the data collected for the present study led to the

acceptance of the hypothesis which stated that psychological climate will have a significant and positive impact on job involvement. In this study, psychological climate was conceptualized at both the unit-level as well as the individual-level. At both levels, the communality lies in that managerial policies, practices, and processes are based on the same individual's psychological perception (c.f. Schulte, Ostroff, & Kinicki, 2006).

In this connection, job involvement is conceptualized as the extent of an individual's psychological identification with his/her job. Hence, the acceptance of the second hypothesis stands conceptually justified. The theoretical implication of this statement is that the amount of involvement an individual will have with his/her job will depend upon the affirmative strength with which he/she psychologically perceives the various facets of his/her job and job environment.

Additionally, a positive view of an employee's immediate work environment would build up both discretionary as well as non-discretionary role perceptions. It would make work more meaningful and rewarding for the individual employee. The above discussion clearly impresses the theoretical underpinnings of the acceptance of the this hypothesis.

From a practical perspective, the results indicating support for a positive influence of psychological climate on job satisfaction points at the fact that the managerial processes must be clearly

defined so as to be precisely discerned by the employees. This precision in definition of processes refers not only to overall management policies but also, to an employee's immediate job-related details that would lead to an intensification of role and goal clarity and instill in the individual a greater sense of psychological fulfillment in discharging his/her role responsibilities. In this process, employees will also be able to develop sense and meaning-making out of their work and work environment.

In this context, managers should be especially attentive towards framing subordinates' performance requirements and standards. Subordinates should perceive that their job is innovative and challenging leading to process clarity and greater identification with the job or in other words, this would lead to a heightened level of job involvement.

Future scope of research

It was felt that there are certain areas arising out of the present study that may be addressed by future research. Firstly, the current study took into account the attitudinal variable of job involvement. Attitudinal variables have historically, showed marked difference when grouped by gender. Hence separate models based on gender should check for the mediational capabilities of job involvement. Finally, future studies may also take into account the construct of organizational citizenship behaviour which is a non-discretionary component of work.

Table 1 : DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, CORRELATIONS, AND RELIABILITY INDICES (N=357)

	Mean	S.D.	1	2
1. Psychological climate	3.65	.53	(.90)	
2. Job involvement	3.52	.60	.48**	(.82)

**p=.01

Values in parentheses represent Cronbach alpha

TABLE 2
REGRESSION ESTIMATES

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.48	.23	.23	.53

a Predictors: (Constant), PSYCLIMT

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.48	1	29.48	105.30	.00
	Residual	99.39	355	.28		
	Total	128.88	356			

a Predictors: (Constant), PSYCLIMT

b Dependent Variable: JOBINVLV

COEFFICIENTS

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.53	.20		7.83	.00
	PSYCLIMT	.55	.05	.48	10.26	.00

a Dependent Variable: JOBINVLV

REFERENCES

- **Biswas, S., & Varma, A. (2007). Psychological climate and individual performance in India: Test of a mediated model.** Employee Relations, 29(6), 664-676.
- **Biswas, S., Giri, V. N., & Srivastava, K. B. L. (2006). Examining the role of HR practices in improving individual performance and organizational effectiveness.** Management & Labour Studies, 31(2), 111-133.
- **Brown, S. P. & Leigh, T. W. (1996). A new look at psychological climate and its relationship to job involvement, effort, and performance.** Journal of Applied Psychology, 81, 358 - 368.
- **Budhwar, P. S. (2003). Employment relations in India.** Employee Relations, 25(2), 132-148.
- **Budhwar, P. S., & Boyne, G. (2004). Human resource management in the Indian public and private sectors: An empirical comparison.** International Journal of Human Resource Management, 15(2), 346-370.
- **Hofstede, G. (2001). Culture's consequences (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, NJ: Sage Publications.**
- **James, L. R., Hater, J. J., Gent, M. J., & Bruni, J. R. (1978). Psychological climate: Implications from cognitive social learning theory and interactional psychology.** Personnel Psychology, 31, 783-813.



- **James, L. R., James, L. A., & Ashe, D. K. (1990). The meaning of organizations: The role of cognition and values. In Benjamin Schneider (Ed.), Organizational culture and climate, pp.40-84. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.**
- **Lawler III, E. E., & Hall, D. T. (1970). Relationship of job characteristic to job involvement, satisfaction and intrinsic motivation. Journal of Applied Psychology, 54, 305 - 312.**
- **Lodahl, T. M., & Kejner, M. (1965). The definition and measurement of job involvement. Journal of Applied Psychology, 49, 24 - 33.**
- **Napier, N. K., & Vu, V. T. (1998). International human resource management in developing and transitional economy countries: A breed apart? Human Resource Management Review, 8(1), 39-77.**
- **Parker, C.P., Baltes, B.B., Young, S.A., Huff, J.W., Altmann, R.A., Lacost, H.A., Roberts, J.E. (2003). Relationship between psychological climate perceptions and work outcomes: A meta-analytic review. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 24, 389-416.**
- **Ralston, D. A., Holt, D. H., Terpstra, R. H., & Kai-Cheng, Y. (1997). The mipact of national culture and economic ideology on managerial work values: A study of the United States, Russia, Japan, and China. Journal of International Business Studies, 28(1), 177-207.**
- **Rao, T. V., & Abraham, E., S. J. (2003). HRD climate in organizations. In T. V. Rao (ed.) Readings in human resource development. New Delhi, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd.: 36-45.**
- **Ruh, R. A., White, J. K., & Wood, R. L. (1975). Job involvement, values, personal background, participation in decision making and job attitudes. Academy of Management Journal, 18(2), 300-312.**
- **Sandler, B. E. (1974). Eclectism at work: Approaches to job design. American Psychologist, 29, 767-773.**
- **Schein, E. H. (1983). Organizational Psychology, (3rd Ed.). New Delhi, India: Prentice Hall of India Private Limited.**
- **Schneider, B. (1975). Organizational climates: An essay. Personnel Psychology, 28, 447-479.**
- **Schulte, M., Ostroff, C., & Kinicki, A. J. (2006). Organizational climate systems and psychological climate perceptions: A cross-level study of climate-satisfaction relationships. Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 79, 645-671.**
- **Strutton, D., Pelton, L.E., Lumpkin, J.R. (1993). The relationship between psychological climate and salesperson-sales manager trust in sales organization. Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, 13(4), 1-14.**
- **Varma, A., Budhwar, P., Biswas, S., & Toh, S. M. (2005). An empirical investigation of host country national categorization of expatriates in the United Kingdom. Paper presented at the European Academy of Management, May 2005, Munich, Germany.**
- **Woodard, G., Cassill, N., Herr, D. (1994). The Relationship between Psychological Climate and Work Motivation in a Retail Environment. New York, NY: Routledge.**