



Relationship Between Self- Efficacy Optimism, Personal Optimism and Career Planning in Manufacturing Sector

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Abstract

In times of career transitivity, knowledge about the factors that supports a successful career planning is vital, owing to the fact that an individual needs to have a positive futuristic approach. This article concerns the relationship between self- efficacy optimism, personal optimism and career planning. The study included 283 managers from public and private manufacturing sector. Correlation and regression analyses were used to examine the relationship between optimism and career planning. The results indicated that there exist a strong relationship between optimism (measured by self- efficacy optimism, personal optimism) and career planning. The findings and results were discussed and future research recommendations were also addressed.

Keywords: Career planning, Indian Sector, personal optimism, Positive Psychology, self- efficacy optimism.

Introduction

Dynamic business environment have brought many changes in the socio- economic environment and poses a greater challenge which needs to be dealt with in a positive manner. In all, a new science of strength and resilience is unfolding, one that will endeavour to make normal people stronger and happier, more productive, masterful and efficacious. Positive psychology and the emotions it entails impact strongly upon physical health, as numerous researchers are beginning to show (Salovey et al., 2000). The notion of optimism becomes pertinent when one considers Eysenck's (1976) statement that the personality trait is comprised of several subtraits, including sociability, impulsivity, and optimism. Various authors supported that an optimistic explanatory style (Abramson et al., 1978; Seligman et al., 1979; Peterson & Seligman, 1984; Seligman et al., 1984) is associated with a wide array of constructive performance deliverables in fields like athletics, academia and other functional domains (Peterson & Seligman, 1988; Peterson & Barrett, 1987; Nolen et al., 1986). According to Kruger and Killham (2005) of Gallup Management, managers significantly impact the employee engagement and well- being at workplace, which at the hind side plays a major role in the performance of an organization (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007). Further, Fredrickson's (1998) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions provides a description of how managers might create more engaged employees. An optimistic explanatory style has been linked to a wide range of positive performance outcomes in academic, athletic, and work domains (Seligman et al., 1984).

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Various studies have tried to measure the association of optimism with the performance-related variables. Still, there is a paucity of research in exploring the linkage of dimensions of optimism with the career planning especially under the scenario when there is shift in the concept of careers from traditional to boundary less. Careers are currently seen from the point of view of a progression of ventures in numerous associations (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996).

In the current research, we try to examine the relationship of optimism with career planning. Another particular feature of this study is the adoption of operationalization of career based on Luthans (1981) it is a set of separate but related work events that delivers continuity, order and a meaning in an individual's life. This research encompasses integration of concepts of career planning with positive psychology to explore the effects of optimism on career planning dimensions in the Indian scenario.

Cultural Context

The present research chose the Indian context to measure the relationship between dimensions of Optimism and Career Planning owing to its cultural diversity which has a huge impact on the management practices being followed (Arora & Rangnekar, 2015). India, being a strong believer in collectivism, display a lot of affection and dependence on one another and all the decisions are taken keeping in mind the prevailing societal norms (Hui & Triandis, 1985). As gathered from the epic of Ramayana, Indians have a positive outlook in general, which is reflected in the work they perform. Also, the survey done by India Today in 2005 revealed that Indians are more focussed and dedicate towards their career keeping in mind that the present generation is a balance- seeker. Considering these particular aspects of culture in Indian sub-continent, the present study seeks to study the role of dimensions of optimism in Career planning among the managers working in the Indian Manufacturing organizations.

Literature Review

Optimism

Optimism can be defined as a general expectation that individuals might experience good outlooks in life (Gillham, 2000). Various studies have shown that Optimism strongly predicts behavior which leads to attainment of the goals. Even when there is anticipation of unfavourable outcomes, Optimism makes an individual to expect for favorable outcome. Further, researchers (Chemers et al., 2000; Gillham, 2000) established that people who are optimistic are likely to have coping behavior in stressful situations. Also, it enhances the adaptability of an individual to face a change in more assorted manner.

Additionally, optimism plays an important role in academics related, work-related, and psychological adjustments. Lent and Hockett (1987) revealed that optimism is associated with higher levels of career exploration, planning, career goals and life goals. As per Carver & Scheier (2002), optimists might be more likely to make efforts to ensure their well-being and engage in productive patterns. Optimism has attracted a large measure of interest from psychological researchers, yet as a construct is still markedly subject to theoretical and applied debate. As we have seen thus far, some researchers (Lockhart et al., 2002) argue that optimism facilitates learning and promotes perseverance in an individual, while others (Schneider, 1998) argue that it rather endows a degree of naivety that prevents the child from understanding the constraints of reality, and may consequently lead the individual into physical danger. Such arguments as to the adaptive utility of optimism, however, may be premature, since more fundamental issues as to the definition of optimism, and the most accurate and appropriate mode of measurement of this construct, still remain outstanding.

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The positive influence of dispositional optimism has been largely understood under the auspices of Carver and Scheier's (1989) cybernetic model of regulating self. As per this model, goal-directed behaviours are strongly influenced by people's expectations about what the results of their behaviours might be (Armor & Taylor, 1998; Bandura, 1977, 1986; Seligman, 1975; Rotter, 1954). If prospects for success are favourable, behaviour will be initiated and maintained; if prospects are unfavourable for success, then behaviours will not be initiated, or the person would disengage from existing pursuits (Armor & Taylor, 1998). Actual outcomes from studies support this model favourable expectancies are seen to increase effort, motivation and persistence, even in the face of obstacles that might usually impair performance (Armor & Taylor, 1998). Such observations clearly align with lay or commonsensical understandings of what it means to be "optimistic". Conversely, studies demonstrated that less favourable expectancies for success have been associated with premature, detachment from tasks, and more internal attributions for failure (Armor & Taylor, 1998; Gillham, 1995). The link between expectancy-based cognitions and affect is abundantly clear – where the expectation for success does not exist, then disengagement, anxiety, and helplessness results, the key forerunners of a depressive episode.

Optimism (Carver et al., 2010) may be related to development and performance of an individual owing to his persistence. It deals with the avenues of how an individual, group or organisation flourishes. Objectives are activities, qualities or end-states that individuals perceive as being either alluring or undesirable. Many studies support that Optimistic employees tend to achieve objectives qualities or end-states that individuals perceive as being either alluring or undesirable more effectively and efficiently (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Researchers have characterized the populace as generally optimistic by their estimations i.e. Nes and Segerstrom (2006) asserted that almost of 80% of individuals are named hopeful. In 1985, Scheier & Carver identified Optimism as the cognitive or rational disposition to expect favorable output. Similarly, Srivastava & Angelo (2009) defined Optimism as a propensity to anticipate favorable outcomes or results. Researchers argued that there are various differences at individual level in optimism i.e. some individuals are more motivated than others to assume that good things would occur across different realms of life. Also, Gavrilov-Jerkovic (2013) defined optimism as the general expectation of positive outcome without emphasizing on the agent who controls the outcome.

In addition, Wrosch et al. (2003) and Carver et al. (2010) recognized positive thinking as a variable that can be both particular and general: both an evaluation of life when all is said and done and an appraisal of a specific territory or occasion in one's life. Within this framework, optimism has been defined in a more inclusive way and operationalized to incorporate two parts: Personal optimism & Self efficacy. Personal Optimism is the tendency or penchant to take a look at the brilliant side of any circumstance (Gavrilov- Jerkovic, 2013) and expect the most ideal result from any arrangement of occasions (Srivastava & Angelo, 2009). Also, Personal optimism (Carver & Scheier, 2014), which has been studied with positive effects on motivation, career satisfaction and well-being (Williamson et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2013; Rasmussen et al., 2009; Nes & Segerstrom, 2006; Lounsbury et al., 2003), and comparatively a new construct, self-efficacy optimism (Rottinghaus & Miller, 2013; Rottinghaus et al., 2005), which is conceived of as a characteristic adaptation and defined as an element of a bigger set of optimistic anticipations, encompassing expectations of personal competence as a unique characteristic (Gavrilov- Jerkovic, 2013). Further, Carver and Scheier (2010) have emphasized that optimistic people expect positive outcomes and events throughout the course of life.

The impression of optimism (Granberg & Brent, 1983; Weinstein & Lachendro, 1982; Weinstein, 1980) is expressed in terms that positive upcoming life transitions are more likely and negative future transitions of life are more outlandish for themselves than for other individuals like them.

Further, Drake in 1984 contended that state of mind and the individual's optimism impacts the cortical regions and in-turn the performance of an individual.

While Bandura and Wessels (1994) accepted that conduct is fundamentally more controlled by perceived self-efficacy than by result outcomes, and that outcomes are altogether impacted by possibility convictions, whereas expectancy-value philosophers (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) express uncertainty in this relationship. In addition, Karademas (2006) supported that self-efficacy envisages satisfaction of life and despair through optimism.

Through various studies it has been established by researchers that the linkages between optimistic explanatory style in correlation with efficacious job performance (Seligman & Schulman, 1986). Kouzes and Posner (1999) that if employees are optimistic, they perform at a higher level and are highly engaged with the organisation.

Career Planning

Career can be defined as a set of separate but interrelated work activities that provide direction, meaning and continuity to an individual's life (Hall, 2002). It does not merely constitute a sequence of job-related experiences, but comprises of accurately sequenced role experiences, leading to a rise in levels of responsibility, compensation, social along with professional status, power and authority. It represents a sorted path being followed by an individual across time and age in his/her professional life. In the words of Hall (2004), Career comprises of a series of jobs and positions held and work accomplished over a period of time, rather than just referring to one job or a position.

Due to altercations in the nature of careers over a period of time, people feel accountable for career management (Hall, 2002). This change has amplified the need to plan and engage in the career behaviors proactively (Thomas et al., 2010). Various measures for distinct career behaviors such as career planning (Gould, 1979), career planning programs (Walker, 1978) and networking/ social support (Wolff et al., 2011) exist. Previous studies (Bolles, 2009; Hall, 2004; Hall, 1976) have pointed to the need for individual career planning for a successful career. Several private and public organizations are looking into different aspects of formal career planning programs (Walker, 1978). The aim of these programs is to enhance the extent of personal career planning, which could lead to more prompt and effective careers and career choices.

"Career planning is the deliberate process through which someone becomes aware of his or her interests, personal skills, motivations, knowledge and other characteristics; acquires information about choices and opportunities available; identifies specific career-related goals; and establishes an action plan to attain the goals" (Dessler, 2008). Also, Career planning gives confidence to take greater responsibility for one's self development. This development also entrenches the shaping of skills measured as significant in the present scenario (Doyle, 1997). Results of the empirical research, which was conducted at the student and employee levels, demonstrated that career planning is of higher importance in order to win a job and for long term achievement of career - goals (Folsom & Reardon, 2003; Brosio&Paulick, 2003). Career planning attitudes are defined as predispositions which try to assess the degree of engagement in career planning (NOICC, 1992). Therefore, there is a need to develop attitudes, interests and skills of career planning which are required for effective and efficient career choices.

The Optimism and Career Planning

Optimism is considered to be a self-regulating mechanism in determining whether an individual will start or continue working towards the desired goals, which is in-sync with the control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1981, 1982). According to the theory, if individuals' expectations of eventual

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success are adequately constructive then they have the tendency to remain engaged in efforts to reach anticipated aims and objectives despite of all the roadblocks.

According to a study, Career issues are especially notable for youthful populaces where youngsters should be educated, gifted, and sure to set future objectives and settle on profession related choices. Imperative to this life change from education to work are youngsters' levels of career development, their profession related basic leadership capacities, and the precision of their future work- related objectives. Further, Geers (2000) established the relationship between optimism and academics, health, other outcomes.

Sullivan and Mahalik (2000) assessed the impact of Self Efficacy on the career planning - vocational exploration among 60 women in New England. The authors undertook an experimental study design, in which thirty women received a 6 week career related course that focused on increasing their Career Self Efficacy. In addition, Lent & Hackett (1987) investigated the relation among self-esteem, Optimism, career anticipations, career objectives and career exploration, considering that gender would also impact the career planning, which depicted that male and female both plan for their career. Further, Creed et al. (2006) evaluated the relation between Self Efficacy and Career Decision- making. Also, Bertoch (2010) added to the literature of relationships among goals, career planning, career decision- making and performance in the course of career development.

In 2010, Gunkel et al. assessed the relationship among career planning, personality considered moderator and Career Decision- making. The research established that culture has a significant effect on career planning. As per a study conducted by Murphy et al. (2010) career transitions and other general themes, comprising of the role of anticipations, optimism and resilience in the college-to-career transition. The results from this study also suggested that realistic and well-informed expectations might play a central role in emerging adults' perceptions of both their current Life Satisfaction and experience of their transitions to the working world. In 2011, Duffy established that Optimism or higher the positive outlook in life the more an individual plans the course of his career. Also, the students had positive outlook on their future career related to higher Career Adaptability and Career Optimism. Atta et al. (2013) examined the impact of Self Efficacy on career planning attitude measured by negative career thoughts. The authors estimated that Career Self Efficacy would be negatively related to negative career thoughts. Based on the research reviewed thus far, the dimensionality of the POSO-E (Personal optimism and self-efficacy optimism scale- Extended) remains unclear, also the scale has not been tested on Indian samples, nor has the construct of optimism been studied in relationship with career planning, where a futuristic orientation is the primary concern.

Also, the current study empirically examines the relationship of optimism in terms of subscales i.e. personal optimism and self-efficacy optimism along with career planning. Therefore, within this framework following hypothesis has been formulated:

H1: Personal optimism is positively related to Career Planning

H2: Self-efficacy optimism is positively related Career Planning.

H3: Optimism is positively related to Career Planning.

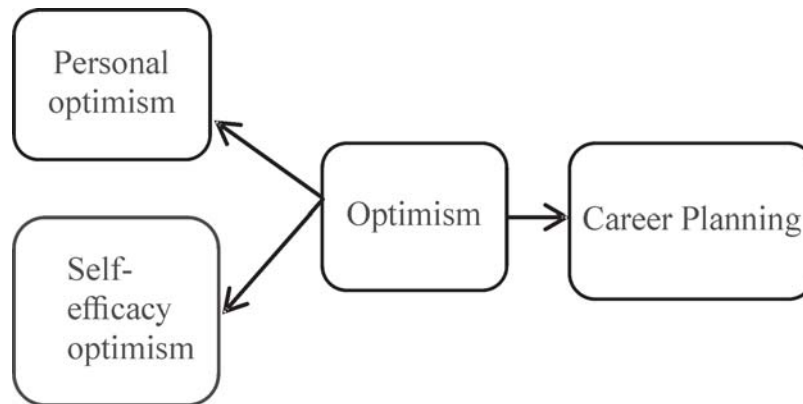


Figure 1: Hypothesised Model

Methods

Participants and Procedures

The sample of the study included middle-level employees working in the Indian organizations. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey-based research design for the purpose of collection of data. Specifically, respondent employees were surveyed via convenience sampling method (Suen&Ary, 2014). The data were collected by conducting personal visits and through training programs from the Public sector organisations. Of the survey questionnaires that were distributed, nearly 301 survey questionnaires were returned from the respondents. After preliminary screening and subsequent processing of the missing data, 25 survey forms were discarded, thereby resulting in overall 283 usable responses.

Respondents consisted of 87.6 percent males and 12.4 percent female middle-level employees from public and private manufacturing sector organizations in North India. The respondents were in four age groups: 21-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years for the current study. The employee's demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1 which includes their tenure in total as well as with the present organization along with their education profile, and they are mainly junior level, middle and higher level employees working in the public and private manufacturing sector of India.

Measures

Optimism

Optimism was assessed by using a 9 item scale where the subscales of personal optimism contains 4 items and self-efficacy optimism consists of 5 items adapted from POSO (Jerkovic' et al., 2013). The responses on the scale items were tapped using the seven-point Likert Scale that ranged from 7 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Career Planning

The Career Planning was assessed by using a 3 item scale adopted from scale developed by Hirschi et al. (2014). To confirm for the contextual usefulness of the Career Planning scale in the Indian context, we conducted a pilot study on managers from multiple organizations (n=35). The pilot testing was found to be reliable for the variables (Cronbach's $\alpha > .7$) (Nunnally, 1978). Participants responded to items on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Usually) to 7 (Never).

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Results

Collected data were tabulated and essential inferential statistical measures were applied. In order to perform quantitative analysis SPSS statistical software (Version 23.0) was used. Also, an Exploratory Factor analysis has been applied to check the validity of the items (Table 2). The factor loadings depicted that the items stands valid in the Indian context, which means the Unidimensionality of the scale have been tested for the current study.

To examine the association between the independent and the dependent variable, coefficient of correlation and regression were calculated and the outcomes were as follows. It can be seen that both the categories of optimism i.e. Personal Optimism and Self-efficacy optimism had positive correlations with Career Planning. Also, Cronbach s á of the all the study variables were found to be more than 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Number	%	Variables	Number	%
Age, Yrs			Tenure, yrs		
<30	179	63.25	< 15	173	61.13
30-40	62	21.90	15-25	48	16.96
>40	25	8.83	> 25	33	11.66
Non- Respondents	17	6.00	Non- Respondents	29	10.24
Gender			Education		
Male	201	71.02	Under-Graduate		
Female	69	24.38	Post-Graduate		
Non-Respondents	13	4.59	Non-Respondents		
Experience (Present Organization)			Ownership		
< 15	194	68.55	Public sector	149	52.65
15-25	41	14.48	Private sector	134	47.34
> 25	29	10.24			
Non- Respondents	19	6.71			

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics

Item No.	Item	Factor Loading
1	Facing future in optimistic way	.71
2	Something positive in future	.82
3	Don't worry about Future	.81
4	Seems everything is bright	.83
5	For each problem I will find solution	.79
6	I will find a way	.93
7	I master difficulties	.71
8	I can master difficulty	.68
9	I always find a solution	.71
10	Design my future	.84
11	took things to achieve career goals	.96
12	planned goals or my future career	.74

Hypothesis 1: The study resulted in a standardised coefficient $\hat{\alpha}$ equivalent to .719 and the value is highly substantial ($P < 0.05$). The highly significant and big positive value signifies that Career Planning and Personal optimism are highly related (see Table 3). Thus, the first hypothesis stands valid and is accepted. Especially, the result suggested that 51.6 % of the employees accepted that individuals with high personal optimism tend to form plans for future on a personal as well as career level (Wille et al., 2013). The reason for this may be that in manufacturing sector the individuals need to be optimistic about the situations which need to be inculcated through positive outlook to achieve organisational goals. Further, Optimism is able to predict the mental health along with the physical (Robinson-Whelen et al., 1997). Also, Optimism is associated with career decision making, career planning and other career related variables (Creed et al., 2002).

Table 3: Model summary Personal Optimism and Career Planning

Model	R (Standardised β coeff.)	R ²	Adj. R ² .	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.719 ^a	.516	.518	3.46105

Source: Authors'own.

Hypothesis 2: The study resulted in a standardised coefficient $\hat{\alpha}$ equivalent to .701, and the value is largely positive that implies self- efficacy optimism is positively related to career planning (Table 4). Thus, the second hypothesis stands accepted. This signifies that optimistic people desire to be involved, say finding out job possibilities may be by collecting information from others or by themselves, taking part in activities which could broaden the horizon and help in understanding what kind of work an individual wants to do. The positive links between self- efficacy and performance have been reported extensively (Wolters & Pintrich, 1998; Manstead & Van-Eekelen, 1998; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Newby-Fraser & Schlebusch, 1997; Vrugt et al., 1997; Pajares, 1996; Sadri & Robertson, 1993). Thus, Planning for a career and exploring the potential areas is required to implement one's goals to develop one's career or progress vocational development.

Table 4: Model summary of Self- efficacy Optimism and Career Planning

Model	R (Standardised β coeff.)	R ²	Adj. R ² .	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.701 ^a	.491	.490	2.49112

Source: Authors'own.

Hypothesis 3: The Table 5 depicts that if all the dimensions of optimism are applied together then R² is equivalent to .581, and the value relatively significant ($p < 0.05$). This positive value implies that optimism and Career planning are related to a significant level but the degree of relationship is not very strong owing to the other factors (networking, career satisfaction, interpersonal relationship, resilience, hope, life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect) which affect the relationship (Manstead & Van-Eekelen, 1998). Thus, the third hypothesis is accepted. Specifically, the result ($R^2 = .581$; $p < 0.05$) suggests that 33.7 %. In other words, the results show that if the two dimensions of Optimism are applied together, career planning i.e. tendency to plan ahead to achieve a goal in life is amplified by 33.7 %. Employees advocated that individuals having belief in themselves tend to perform better and that too for a long period of time indicating that there is a need to attain the goals they have set for themselves (see Table 5). Under such circumstances, they will work with more passion and enthusiasm, resulting in a better productivity.

**Table 5: Combined results of the inter-correlation among all dimensions
of Optimism and Career Planning**

Model	R ²	Adj. R ² .	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.581	.337	1.65262

Source: Authors'own.

These findings also indicate that optimism may have a key role to play in an individual's career orientation (Creed et al., 2002). If positive anticipations of the forthcoming times for an individual can be nurtured then they are likely to exhibit higher levels of career planning and exploration, more confident about their choices of career, and have new career - goals. Thus, when developing interventions or programs that focuses on career orientation in individuals or employees of an organization, an important component will be to include methods to increase the participants' levels of optimism (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; Scheier & Carver, 1992).

Conclusion and Future Scope

Owing to a lot of competition due to globalization, the business environment puts a lot of pressure on how well the organizations structure and what practices they follow to motivate and retain their employees. The findings revealed that a higher level of optimism is positively and largely demonstrate a higher level of career planning (Creed et al., 2002). Further, the implication inherent in this finding is the importance of investigating optimism and pessimism independently when conducting further research in this area. Obtaining a single score for optimism is no longer appropriate, and it is recommended that two scores be obtained, one for optimism and one for pessimism (Seligman et al., 1984).

As per the present findings, a number of areas need to be further examined. Study needs to inspect the developmental course of optimism and pessimism in general and specifically in relation to the development of career maturity variables for young people. Related to this, the importance of positive outlook in defining an individual's career-related activities and career course needs to be studied. For example, how does optimism impact the job performance, and the role of mediating and moderating variables? It is likely that optimism research will substantiate a productive opportunity to facilitate a better understanding of the career development.

The study results have huge implications for manufacturing organizations in Indian context. For example, organizations should motivate employees to build a positive outlook (Hu et al., 2014). Further, personal optimism and self-efficacy optimism should be cultivated in the employees by providing training and development to promote the competence and skill-building events which would help in better productivity and the employees would be in a better position to understand the scenario at workplace. Also, the employees should understand the importance of positive thinking and to what level it affects the course of career, which should be demonstrated by the employer as well. Finally, the study might help in preparing the guidelines for positive thinking which can be executed in the manufacturing organisations.

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