

Intrapreneurship to engage employees: role of psychological capital

Intrapreneurship
for employees

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Abstract

Purpose – Intrapreneurship is gaining traction in organizations to buckle up for the dynamic business environment. Scholars have argued that intrapreneurship increases positivity at work and helps employees attach themselves better with their job. However, empirical evidence suggests that these relationships do not exist. The objective of this paper is to examine the mediating role of psychological capital (PsyCap) in the relationship between intrapreneurship and work engagement.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected through an online survey. Responses from 309 employees working in different industries in India were analysed. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to analyse the hypothesized relationships.

Findings – The results show that there exist positive relationships among intrapreneurship, psychological capital (PsyCap) and work engagement. Further, it was observed that the PsyCap partially mediates the relationship between intrapreneurship and work engagement.

Practical implications – Managers may not only encourage intrapreneurial behaviour in their organizations but also ensure that the employees are psychologically capable (high on PsyCap). It would enable the employees to engage themselves wholeheartedly into their work.

Originality/value – To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study is one of its kinds to relate intrapreneurship with PsyCap and work engagement.

Keywords Intrapreneurship, PsyCap, Mediation, Work engagement

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been the buzz word in business since long, with new ventures bringing about different changes in the business scenario (Reuther *et al.*, 2018). It is helping the organizations to foster innovation and enabling them to sustain environmental changes (Palazzeschi *et al.*, 2018). Research has highlighted its critical role in attributing high performance and productivity to the organizations (Gawke *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, organizations are harnessing the benefits of entrepreneurship by promoting entrepreneurial behaviour at the workplace. Employees' entrepreneurial activity at their workplace bestows organizations with sustainable competitive advantages (Barney, 1991). Hence, it is not surprising that employee entrepreneurship, also known as managerial entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship, is increasingly becoming a popular idea in the contemporary world (Morris *et al.*, 2011).

Intrapreneurship has been an important precursor of organizational performance since ages (Burgelman, 1983; Pinchott, 1985). As stated earlier, such behaviours are the drivers of



ventures and renewing strategies for firms (Guth and Ginsberg, 1990). The creation of ventures is associated with the development of new business, such as generating new products and integrating them into the overall business portfolio of a firm (Yang *et al.*, 2009). Renewing strategies refer to the development of corporate activities that aim at increasing an organization's competence and to taking risks for being adaptable enough to the internal and external changes. It also covers modifications in an organization's structure, resource distribution and service and product upgradation (Ireland *et al.*, 2003).

The concept of intrapreneurship has been defined in different manners in the relevant literature. For example, at the individual level, intrapreneurship has been described as a set of employee activities that includes initiation, risk-taking and ideation (Jong *et al.*, 2015; Langkamp Bolton and Lane, 2012). The above definition seems to overlap with the underlying idea of some of the work-related proactive behaviours of the employees. To differentiate between the two, Gawke *et al.* (2017) suggested a more concise definition for intrapreneurship, which states the following:

Intrapreneurship is an individual employee's agentic and anticipatory behaviours aimed at creating new businesses for the organization (i.e. venture behaviour) and enhancing an organization's ability to react to internal and external advancements (i.e. strategic renewal behaviour) (p. 89).

The implications of intrapreneurship on employees can be understood in more detail by examining the relationship between "job" and employees' experience at work. Gawke *et al.* (2015) developed the job demands–resources (JD–R) framework to explain work-related experiences of the employees and intrapreneurial behaviour. The JD–R model suggests that employers have certain expectations for each job, which is known as job demands or challenges. Employees need to fulfil these demands by investing their resources. Employees with sufficient person resources accomplish personal and organizational goals efficiently, which in turn, engage them more in their work. Conversely, if the challenges surpass personal resources, employees feel exhausted and highly stressed. Moreover, employees invest their physical, emotional and cognitive energies simultaneously upon realizing that their activities would obtain, retain and protect resources that they value.

In light of the above discussion, the authors were motivated to develop the current study and address some major research gaps pertaining to the concept of intrapreneurship. First, it was observed that the existing empirical studies on intrapreneurship have primarily focussed on examining its various organizational-level outcomes such as innovativeness and overall performance (Gündoğdu, 2012). However, research examining its relationship with individual-level variables such as *work engagement* (WE) and *psychological capital* (PsyCap) has not received much attention. We believe that examining such relationships are important because both WE and PsyCap have an intertwined relationship with performance of the individuals (Gooty *et al.*, 2009; Christian *et al.*, 2011). Further, studies (Luthans and Youssef, 2004; Lockwood, 2007) suggest that examining the improvement of PsyCap and engagement of employees may offer competitive advantages to firms. Intrapreneurs, as a special class of managers, may behave differently compared to other employees if these relationships are to be examined in their context. In other words, this may encourage firms to formulate newer policies and approaches for creating a conducive work environment for such employees.

Second, the current study also addresses some theoretical gaps in the literature. It extends the discussion on the impact of intrapreneurship on PsyCap by trying to establish the mediating role of PsyCap in such relationships. Prior studies have not examined the mediating role of PsyCap in the context of intrapreneurship adequately.

Finally, the geographical context is chosen for the study, i.e. India further enhances the novelty of the research. No such research on intrapreneurship has explored in the context of India till now.

Intrapreneur as an entrepreneur within the organization

Entrepreneurship behaviour involves five major components, namely, autonomy, innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness (Palazzeschi *et al.*, 2018; Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). The autonomy here refers to the free will in decision-making. Similarly, innovation refers to the ability to engage new ideas and develop products and services. Proactiveness indicates the ability to anticipate future needs and challenges. Finally, competitive aggressiveness refers to the proactive engagement in challenging relevant business competitors for sustainability (Palazzeschi *et al.*, 2018).

Entrepreneurship, leadership and professionalism form the backbone of successful business ventures. Notably, entrepreneurial behaviour and leadership have been emphasized in the literature for their greater role in business development processes (Di Fabio and Maree, 2012). Prior studies on entrepreneurship have examined it as both a trait and a state (Di Fabio *et al.*, 2016). While a large number of these studies have considered entrepreneurship as a whole, there also exists a limited number of empirical works which have investigated the role of managerial entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship in exclusivity. Reason for exclusively examining intrapreneurship can be ascribed to the more significant role managerial entrepreneurship plays in innovation and productivity of the organizations (Pearce and Carland, 1996; Drucker, 2014).

The concept of intrapreneurship refers to “the process by which teams within an established company conceive, foster, launch and manage a new business that is distinct from the parent company but leverages the parent’s assets, market position, capabilities or other resources” (Wolcott and Lippitz, 2007, p. 75).

Pinchott (1985) has defined the concept as “entrepreneurship inside of the corporation,” i.e. intrapreneurs are the champions of new ideas from their initiation to their profitable reality. In a nutshell, the concept refers to the entrepreneurial behaviour or tendency of employees within the organization. Intrapreneurs are expected to swim against the corporate tides, set new parameters and innovate things at his or her workplace (Corbett, 2018). Through a positive self-evaluation (i.e. *self-capital*), intrapreneurs consistently tackle the change that occurs during their career span. They do so by creating and developing innovative solutions and turning constraints into sustainable business resources (Di Fabio, 2014).

Di Fabio’s works have highlighted how intrapreneurs play significant roles in business today. She observed that the growing complexities in business, labour wage issues and the economic downturn had made the predictability of our career-related mobility almost unpredictable (Di Fabio, 2014). This also means that the career choices, growth and transition are now more subjective and depends upon the individual *per se*, unlike the past, when it used to depend upon the organization concerned, profoundly. Di Fabio’s work also pointed towards the possible reasons that motivate employees to take up roles which do not fall within the definitions and boundaries of traditional work roles. One such role is that of managerial entrepreneurship. Dynamic external environment consistently pushes workers to develop newer skills, to take up new roles and responsibilities and to exhibit high adaptability (Savickas, 2011; Di Fabio, 2014). Employees proactively engage in intrapreneurial behaviour to address the environmental constraints they face. She has defined intrapreneurship as the “skills required to proactively and flexibly meet challenges in an existing organizational context” (Di Fabio, 2014, p. 99).

Two essential elements involved in intrapreneurship include organizational sanctions and resource commitments. The sanctions refer to the official and informal acceptance of entrepreneurial venture inside the organization. The organizational sanction depends upon the assessment of operational relatedness and strategic importance for any intrapreneurial venture (Burgelman, 1984). The management’s acceptance of the entrepreneurial nature of employees does not necessarily mean that the intrapreneurial behaviour would thrive in the workplace. It further requires access to resources that can only be made available to the employees by the organization itself (Pandey, 2019). The resource commitment depends upon factors such as the firm size, prior experience, financial autonomy and others (Kuratko *et al.*, 1990).

The discussion on intrapreneurship is incomplete without clearly distinguishing the “intrapreneurs” from the “entrepreneurs”. From the above discussion, we can understand that intrapreneurs are the managers with entrepreneurial orientation within the organization. Moreover, there also exist some other differences that make the former a unique set of people who require special attention from the researchers and practitioners. For example, [Govindarajan and Desai \(2013\)](#) suggested six indicators to identify an intrapreneur. These indicators are as follows: (1) The source of motivation is freedom and autonomy. (2) They are closely engaged with their work. (3) They keep their ideas and discoveries secret until they are confident about people vouching for their work. (4) They can think visually. (5) They can come out of their comfort zone and take the initiative, which is contrary to or beyond the realm of the existing organizational strategy and practices. (6) They reflect humility, confidence and authentic behaviour at the workplace. The successful intrapreneurial venture is possible in case both the employees and work environment are conducive, visionary, flexible and supportive, which encourage them to take up new challenges every day ([Hisrich, 1990](#)). This has been explained by [Di Fabio \(2014\)](#), who argued that the entrepreneurs are similar to intrapreneurs as they too have an innovative mindset. However, unlike the former who are limited by the four walls of their workspace, the entrepreneurs are committed to realizing it using their skills and passion for creating their own business outside any firm or entity to which they could have been associated in the past at the time of realization of those ideas.

The intrapreneurship functions are not at the core of the organization; instead, they are at the level of organizational boundaries. It is a continuous search process operating at the frontiers. The activities at the core are different as they focus on daily routines, customary rules and efficiency of current operational tasks ([Sandberg, 1992](#)). Intrapreneurship is also different from the diversification strategies and organizational learning (OL). The focus of diversification strategies is on product and market relatedness of organizational business, whereas intrapreneurship is associated with non-product-related and non-market-related orientations. The diversification strategy addresses the question- “what business the firm should be in”? But, it is the intrapreneurship which helps us in understanding “what newness can be created in the firm”? ([Antoncic and Hisrich, 2003](#)). Therefore, OA can be distinguished from the concept of intrapreneurship. OL refers to the process involved in acquiring and archiving knowledge to improve organizational routines as well as helps in developing the dynamic capabilities of a firm. Intrapreneurship acts as a predisposition for OL rather than OL itself ([Antoncic and Hisrich, 2003](#); [Teece, 2012](#)).

Finally, we can examine the reasons behind some managers showing intrapreneurial behaviour over entrepreneurship though they are not legally bound to behave in such manners inside the firm. Other than the social and behavioural aspects that emphasize factors such as trait, organizational culture and others, the strategic factors equally play an important role ([Sinha and Srivastava, 2013](#)). Though the parent firm does not have complete rights over the new assets developed by the employees, it is more feasible for the employees to develop their idea within the firm rather than seek the support of the financiers from outside the parent firm. Further, the development of an idea inside the firm reduces the chances of duplications. Employees can use the existing downstream assets of the firm to develop their ideas into more salable ones. The complementarity between the intrapreneur and parent firm has been termed as “innovation rent” ([Subramanian, 2005](#)).

Theoretical underpinnings

The extant literature on human resource and strategic management has explicitly stated the importance of examining human capital to understand various determinants of organizing new ventures ([Parker, 2011](#)). Intrapreneurship can be understood from the perspective of the general and specific human capital framework ([Becker, 1964](#)). The skills, capabilities,

knowledge, prior experiences and other components form the general human capital factors (GHCs), which are useful for both current employer and future ventures. However, the specific human capitals (SHCs) refer to those skills, experiences or knowledge sets that are acquired through training and developments offered at the current organization. They are specifically designed to benefit the current firm. Employees have the option to quit the organization and utilize their learnings and experiences for starting a new venture, or they may decide to stay back with the firm and share their ideas with their employers to seek their support for any endeavour within the firm. The possibilities of employees leaving the organization and starting a venture outside the organization are higher in case GHCs are dominant (Parker, 2011). This is because such human capitals are characterized by abilities such as analytical skills, know-about opportunities, business conditions and communicated skills. These skills and abilities can be easily replicated in another organization (Zucker *et al.*, 1998).

In contrast to the GHCs, the SHCs are exclusively designed for the focal firms. These human capitals play a critical role in determining the trajectory of growth and culmination of an idea. It ensures that the implementation of the idea proposed by the creative managers of the firm is more effective through its application under the sanction and support of the focal firm. Prior studies have suggested that start-ups have limited resources and experience to formulate business strategies, especially in the case of business- to-business models. The issue of legitimacy and reputation equally affects their growth and profitability. The redeployment of resources by the managers of the parent firm can cause inefficiencies as the focal firm resists the transfer of resources outside the organization (Freeman and Engel, 2007). Thus, both the employee and the focal firm are equally benefited through innovation within the firm (Subramanian, 2005).

Need for intrapreneurship in business

Several reasons can be attributed to the need for intrapreneurship or corporate entrepreneurship in business. Existing literature suggests that addressing stagnation and decline in the marketplace requires resolving the changes through innovation. The innovation at the organizational level can be effectively achieved if the focal firm focusses on promoting intrapreneurial behaviour among its employees (Miller and Friesen, 1984). Further, the traditional approaches of corporate governance ineffectually address the current challenges of the dynamic work environment, disrupted business cycle and uncertain government policies (Kuratko *et al.*, 1990). Finally, corporates are losing on young talent who are always looking for better opportunities that may exist outside their parent organization. In such circumstances, organizations facing high attritions must create and promote infrastructure that can offer both the financial and the non-financial benefits to their employees. Innovative people form the most significant chunk of the workforce. This chunk keeps hopping for the new job to get rid of the rigid bureaucratic system that prevails within the organizations. Firms can address these issues by promoting intrapreneurial orientation among its workforce (Ronstadt, 1985; Hisrich, 1990).

In the introduction, we discussed the competitive advantages offered by intrapreneurship. Managers, as intrapreneurs, have been found to actively promote sustainable business development (Gupta *et al.*, 2013). They envisage and religiously follow the vision and mission of the parent organization even if uncertainty persists in their career. Deep benefit management (Gollakota *et al.*, 2010) and organizational success barriers are the two major business concerns, which are adequately addressed by intrapreneurs. The overall emphasis on strategic planning by these managers benefits stakeholders such as the clients, thereby offering firms with competitive advantages (CAs) in their business (Gupta *et al.*, 2013).

Here, it is important to understand that intrapreneurship alone does not contribute towards the CA; instead, it is one of the factors which can play a major role in offering such

advantages to the organization. Also, not all factors need to be effective in offering CAs to the firms, and their role is significantly moderated by contexts of other factors such as industry. For example, ICT has been found to offer CA to organizations in the hospitality industry (Mihalic and Buhalis, 2013). Similarly, factors such as organizational structure, conversion franchising and others can provide a CA to small businesses (Hoffman and Preble, 2003).

Empirical studies have examined the role of intrapreneurship on innovation and performance of the firms (Carrier, 1996; Benitez-Amado *et al.*, 2010). For example, Felicio *et al.* (2012) studied the role of intrapreneurship in the performance of 217 Portuguese firms. They found that intrapreneurship is useful in helping firms to develop the capacity of innovation and growth. It significantly improves the risk-taking abilities, competitive energy and proactiveness, which are some of the qualitative indicators of performance (Augusto Felicio *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, Benitez-Amado *et al.* (2010) examined the relationship between intrapreneurship culture and firm performance among the Spanish firms, which showed that intrapreneurship is an important predictor of the firm's market performance. As market performance, innovation and risk-taking abilities are some of the precursors of CAs in business; it can be said that intrapreneurship also offers superiority in business to the firms (Barney, 1995; Covin and Miles, 1999; Weerawardena and O'Casey, 2004; Urbancova, 2013).

Business, intrapreneurship and innovation

An employee wearing the intrapreneurial shoe performs a diverse set of jobs. His or her roles range from being a decision-maker, an innovator to a sponsor. Innovation is the key ingredient for intrapreneurship. Re-engineering, product extension and the introduction of an old product in a new market are some of the examples of innovation taking place in any business (Mokaya, 2012). Firms are increasingly promoting such innovation because of two major reasons. First, innovation has been found to significantly improve the financial performance of the firms (Kessler and Chakrabarti, 1996). Second, organizations are facing technological turbulence, stiff competition and the challenge of sustaining themselves in the rapidly changing business environment (Kessler and Chakrabarti, 1996). Intrapreneurship addresses the issue of enhancing the sustainability of a business through innovation. Scholars (Breuer and Lüdeke-Freund, 2014) have supported the view that innovation within the organization helps in adopting a sustainable business model. Innovation is a highly expensive strategy for a firm. Therefore, the presence of an intrapreneur becomes a readily available and cost-effective source that facilitates innovation within the firm (Hall and Wagner, 2012). The relationships among intrapreneurship, innovation and organizational growth can be further understood by examining the relation through theoretical lenses. Acs *et al.* (2009) introduced the knowledge spillover theory of entrepreneurship (KSTE), which explains managerial entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship as a function of three factors, namely, research and development, barriers to entrepreneurship and knowledge stock. Here, knowledge is embodied in individuals (such as managers, administrators, R&D staffs). A facilitating environment supporting the free flow of labour helps in the diffusion of knowledge, which is crucial for the growth of the organization (Braunerhjelm *et al.*, 2018).

Hypotheses development

Intrapreneurship and WE

WE has been defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004, p. 295). The engaged employees invest their physical energy connoting vigour, emotional energy connoting dedication and cognitive energy connoting absorption simultaneously into their work (Gupta and Shukla, 2018). Scholars have understood WE as both a positive behaviour as well as a mindset (Costantini *et al.*, 2017).

WE has been receiving the attention of scholars and consultants for several reasons. This can be understood at two different levels of analysis. At the first level, WE is assumed as an

effective precursor of organizational-level outcomes such as an increase in sales, higher productivity and profitability (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010). The second level of analysis examines the effect of WE on individuals. Here, WE has been found as an important factor in addressing issues such as burnout and dissatisfaction (Hakanen *et al.*, 2006). Scholars have argued that employees can feel energetic and associated with their work when such works are engaging in nature (Costantini *et al.*, 2017). Field studies suggest that WE have both long- and short-term implications on the performance of employees. For example, Gawke *et al.* (2018) observed that WE significantly affect in-role performance, innovativeness and work avoidance of employees. Similarly, another study by Babcock-Roberson and Strickland (2010) suggests that WE is positively associated with organizational citizenship behaviours. Thus, the relevance of WE for scholars and practitioners is multifold.

Intrapreneurs are highly proactive in venturing into new areas. They look for opportunities within their work for investing their physical, emotional and cognitive energies. Prior studies (Gorgievski *et al.*, 2010, 2014) have examined the relationship between WE and entrepreneurial performance. A significant number of these studies have examined this relationship using the concept of “*entrepreneurial passion*” (Gorgievski *et al.*, 2010). The concept has been defined as “the consciously accessible, intense positive feelings experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities associated with roles that are meaningful and salient to the self-identity of the entrepreneur” (Cardon *et al.*, 2009, p. 517).

Further, the literature on passion has mentioned two major types of passion, namely, harmonious passion and obsessive passion (Mageau *et al.*, 2009; Gorgievski *et al.*, 2010). The former can be defined as a motivational force, which instigates within individuals a desire to engage in their activity (Forest *et al.*, 2011). In this form of passion, though an individual is committed towards his or her work as is evident from his/her dedicated time and energy for the activity, the locus of control remains with the individuals. This generates a sense of personal endorsement within that individual for his or her work (Forest *et al.*, 2011). However, obsessive passion is characterized by negative feelings, and individuals with obsessive passion are under consistent internal pressure to perform the task (Mageau *et al.*, 2009).

It has been observed that both forms of passion may exist at the workplace. On the one hand, the harmonious passion at the workplace is a source of commitment, workaholism, WE and other cognitive and affective outcomes. On the other hand, the obsessive passion has been found to promote behaviours such as thinking about the work beyond office hours and workplace (Gorgievsk *et al.*, 2013). As intrapreneurship is essentially entrepreneurship within the boundaries of an organization, it can also be expected to share a similar relationship with passion and thereby with WE.

The relationship between intrapreneurship and WE can be understood further with the help of the JD–R theory, as discussed before. Intrapreneurs view problems as challenges and opportunities to thrive. Intrapreneurs show huge enthusiasm for any endeavour and strategic renewal behaviour; hence, they take the risk of committing a mistake and learn. Intrapreneurs are aware of their goals and the importance of achieving them on time (Kassa and Raju, 2015). Thus, they take out time for entrepreneurial activities. To adjust for such entrepreneurial work, they value time and engage themselves fully into the work (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, the relationship between intrapreneurship and WE can be hypothesized as follows:

H1. Intrapreneurship has a positive influence on WE.

Mediating role of PsyCap

Intrapreneurship and PsyCap

PsyCap is a set of personal resources that include hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism, and these are high among the psychologically capable individuals. Luthans *et al.* (2007a, b)

have defined PsyCap as a “positive psychological state of development of an individual” (p. 3). It is characterized by self-efficacy, optimism, preservation and redirection of goals and resilience. Here capital refers to our motivational propensities that can be developed through optimism, resilience, efficacy and other constructs.

Prior studies have provided different shreds of evidence for supporting the argument that personal resources, in this case, PsyCap, are enhanced by interacting with the environment in a novel way (Luthans *et al.*, 2006; Luthans *et al.*, 2007a, b; Newman *et al.*, 2014; Luthans and Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Personal resources like self-efficacy are accumulated through a gradual process of growth and development of our cognitive skills, social relationships, physical features and linguistics. All these characteristics and abilities are acquired through our experience of the surrounding environment (Amini and Mortazavi, 2012). Scholars have argued that exploratory and proactive work behaviour increases personal resources (van den Heuvel *et al.*, 2015). For example, a study conducted by Fredrickson *et al.* (2008) revealed that the meditation practices have a positive influence on personal resources that constitute self-acceptance, feelings of mastery and purpose in life. A recent intervention study on job crafting indicated that people who crafted their own jobs show higher personal resources such as self-efficacy compared to those from the control group (van den Heuvel *et al.*, 2015). Another set of studies suggests that the gain in personal resources and daily experiences of positive emotions are possible through work-related meditation practices (Fredrickson *et al.*, 2008). For example, through the success of intrapreneurial ideas or strategies, the intrapreneur becomes more optimistic, hopeful, efficacious and resilient. Similarly, Costantini *et al.* (2017) have used a resource-based intervention approach to explain how PsyCap assumes the role of personal resources, which subsequently enhances ones' ability to handle the job demands and think positively at work. Costantini *et al.* have argued that PsyCap should invariably increase resilience at one level and re-create other resources at a different level, as suggested by relevant literature (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008).

To extend this discussion further, the review of literature on intrapreneurial work environment suggests that they are conducive and supportive in nature. Employees with entrepreneurial orientation are expected to receive more support from their supervisors and top management team (TMT) owing to the benefits associated with having an entrepreneur inside the organization (Poza, 1988; Alpkhan *et al.*, 2010; Newman *et al.*, 2014). As supervisory support, conducive work environment, innovation and others factors can contribute towards higher PsyCap of an individual, we can expect that intrapreneurship should also share a similar relationship with PsyCap (Luthans *et al.*, 2008a, b, c; Hsu and Chen, 2017).

From a different point of view, Zhao *et al.* (2005) suggested that entrepreneurship can improve self-efficacy, optimism and desirability among employees, which are the different components of PsyCap. Therefore, it is expected that entrepreneurship within an organizational setting, i.e. intrapreneurship should also positively influence the level of PsyCap among individuals (Hostager *et al.*, 1998). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis about the relationship between intrapreneurship and PsyCap can be stated:

H2. Intrapreneurship has a positive influence on PsyCap.

PsyCap and WE

In occupational psychology literature, personal resources have been theorized to foster WE. The reason can be explained with the help of the conservation of resources theory, a part of the JD-R theory, which states that psychologically capable employees can provide personal resources that are necessary for accomplishing a job as they form a spiral (Salanova *et al.*, 2010) again. The successful utilization of these resources to face the work-related challenges

encourages a positive, work-oriented and motivational state called WE (Llorens *et al.*, 2006), which has been established through meta-analysis (Halbesleben, 2010).

Psychologically capable employees are high on self-efficacy and have high confidence and belief in their ability; hence, they can engage themselves fully into their work, which may enable them to meet situational demands (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, they are resilient, i.e. even if there is a failure, they can bounce back and re-engage themselves into their work, thus, enabling them to consistently invest their energy (Bakker *et al.*, 2011). They are also hopeful and optimistic; hence, they remain fully engaged and do not deviate from their path of completing their work, thereby fully investing their physical, emotional and cognitive energies into the work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008).

Several studies have provided evidence for the positive impact of PsyCap on WE. For instance, Xanthopoulou *et al.* (2007), in their study, found that personal resources enhance the engagement levels of Dutch employees. In the Indian context, the relationship between PsyCap and WE has been examined extensively. For example, in a quantitative study of Gupta *et al.* (2017) using a sample of 293 employees from diverse service sector industries in India, it was found that PsyCap has a strong and positive impact on WE. Gupta and Shaheen (2017) examined a sample of 217 employees working in different Indian industries. Findings of their study reaffirmed the claim that PsyCap does have a positive impact on WE. Given the extensive evidence available for this relationship, the result of the following hypothesis should re-affirm the prior studies:

H3. PsyCap has a positive influence on WE.

It is evident from the JD–R theory that employees high on intrapreneurship are agented and venture-oriented. Such intrapreneurial orientations make them efficacious, hopeful, optimistic and resilient for working on a job. Conservation of such resources provides a reservoir of personal resources to the employees. Therefore, for accomplishing their job, the employees can make sufficient investment of these personal resources into their jobs (called WE).

Empirical studies have found a strong relationship between intrapreneurship and WE. For example, one such study has found that the employee intrapreneurship is positively associated with WE especially for employees rated high on sensitivity towards rewards, which subsequently relates to innovativeness and in-role performance of these employees (Gawke *et al.*, 2018). Intrapreneurship has also been positively associated with PsyCap, as suggested in the discussion above. Further, PsyCap positively influences WE. In other words, intrapreneurship seems to affect WE via PsyCap. Therefore, there could be a possibility of PsyCap playing a mediating role between intrapreneurship and WE as per rule for mediation of Baron and Kenny (1986). According to this rule, the pre-condition for testing mediation is that the independent variable (in this case intrapreneurship) must have positive impact on the dependent variable (in this case WE) and mediator (in this case PsyCap). The mediator must have a positive impact on the dependent variable (in this case WE). Moreover, all the conditions in this mediation rule seem to have theoretical support for the present model, and therefore, testing the following hypothesis is important:

H4. PsyCap mediates the relationship between intrapreneurship and WE.

Figure 1 represents the hypothesized model. As evident from the model, PsyCap acts as a mediator for the relationship between intrapreneurship and WE.

Methodology

Participants and procedure

An online survey was sent to 1,000 individuals working in different Indian industries. Out of the 1,000 respondents, 309 complete responses were used in the analysis. The mean age of the

sample was 29.17 years, with a Standard deviation of 8.15 years. The sample had 117 (37.9%) females and 192 (62.1%) males with mean experience in the current organization of 4.02 years and a standard deviation of 5.5 years. In terms of educational accomplishment, one participant (0.3%) passed class 12, 59 participants (19.1%) were graduates and 246 participants (79.6%) either had or were currently pursuing part-time postgraduate programs. In terms of the organizational breakup, 268 (86.7%) were from the private sectors, 38 (12.3%) were from the public sectors, two (0.6%) worked in NGOs and one (0.3%) was a freelance professional. Around 58 (18.8%) of these organizations were into manufacturing, and 251 (81.2%) were in the service sector. Hence, the sample was heterogeneous in terms of composition. The confidentiality of the participants was assured by reporting only the aggregate data and results.

Measures

WE was measured using the shortened version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, i.e., UWES-9 (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). This scale was used successfully on Indian samples in past studies (Malik and Garg, 2017). The sample items included “*I am enthusiastic about my job*” and “*I get carried away when I am working*”.

PsyCap was measured using a 12-items, shortened version of the original 24-items PsyCap questionnaire (Luthans *et al.*, 2007a, b). This shortened scale was used in past studies (Chen, 2015; Luthans *et al.*, 2008a, b, c). The sample items included “*I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job*” and “*I usually take stressful things at work in stride*”.

Employee intrapreneurship was measured through an eight-items, shortened version of Employee Intrapreneurship Scale (EIS) (Gawke *et al.*, 2015), which was used successfully in other studies (Gawke *et al.*, 2017). The sample items included “*I undertake activities to realize the change in my organization*” and “*I actively establish new collaborations with experts outside my own profession*”.

Age, gender and experience in the organization were found to influence WE (Langelaan *et al.*, 2006). Hence, we used these factors as control. The demographic- and organization-level variables like education, type of organization and sector of operation (manufacturing/service) were also controlled to provide alternative explanations for the results.

Data analyses

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed along with the two-step (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) approach that includes the establishment of the discriminant and convergent validity through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the measurement model, subsequently employing the structural model to test the hypotheses. In this study, the number of parameters estimated was not many, and the model was not very complex. Therefore, SEM was preferred to provide stable solutions (Landis *et al.*, 2000; Woodrow, 2014). All CFA and SEM models were assessed against generally accepted fit indices as follows: $\chi^2/df < 3$, Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) > 0.90, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > 0.90 and

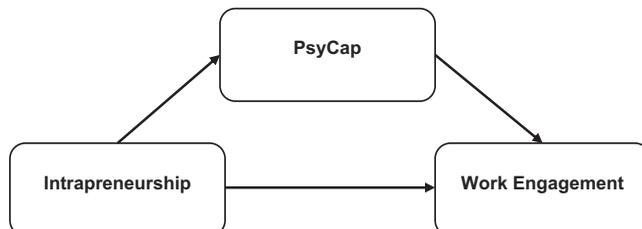


Figure 1. Model representing the relationship between intrapreneurship, PsyCap and WE

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) > 0.08 (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Jackson *et al.*, 2009). Intrapreneurship
for employees

Results

Table 1 shows that the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were above 0.7 (Malhotra and Dash, 2011; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994), thus establishing reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) was higher than 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), thus establishing convergent validity. Discriminant validity was ensured with the fulfilment of the following conditions, i.e. maximum shared variance (MSV) was less than AVE and the square root of AVE was higher than inter-construct correlations (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Common method bias for cross-sectional design

Harman's single-factor test was conducted, and all the factors extracted were constrained to one. Further, the total variance extracted was found to be below 50% (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The fit indices demonstrated a worse fit (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) with the one-factor model (CMIN/DF = 10.64, CFI = 0.56, SRMR = 0.15, RMSEA = 0.18) upon comparing with the original model (CMIN/DF = 2.83, CFI = 0.92, SRMR = 0.051, RMSEA = 0.077) (MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012).

In addition, we employed the common latent factor approach as used in the recent article in the Journal of Business Ethics (Serrano Archimi *et al.*, 2018). We compared the standardized regression weights of all items for models without and with common latent factors. The differences in these regression weights were found to be very small (<0.200), thus negating the influence of common method variance in our data.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and the correlations for the study variables. The correlations among the independent, dependent and mediator variables were found to be significant and in the expected direction.

Test of hypotheses

SEM with 90% bias-corrected confidence level of 1,000 bootstrap samples was used to test the three models that have a direct effect, partial mediation and full mediation. Table 1 shows the model fit indices of these three models. All statistical assumptions for multivariate analysis, as discussed in Hair *et al.* (2014), have been done before proceeding with the final analysis. The variation inflation factor (VIF) and Durbin–Watson value of the analysis were as follows. For intrapreneurship's effect on WE, the VIF was 1 and Durbin–Watson value was 2; for intrapreneurship's effect on PsyCap the VIF was 1.5 and Durbin–Watson value was 2.07. Finally, for the PsyCap effect on WE, the VIF was 1 and Durbin–Watson value was 1.98. The VIF and Durbin–Watson values are below the recommended threshold (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The direct-effect model showed that the standardized effect of intrapreneurship on PsyCap was 0.769 with $p < 0.001$. The full mediation model showed that the standardized effect of intrapreneurship on PsyCap was 0.508 with $p < 0.001$, and standardized direct effect of intrapreneurship on WE was 0.625 with $p < 0.001$. For the partial mediation model, which showed the best fit among all the three models, the standardized direct effect of intrapreneurship on PsyCap was 0.483 with CI [0.379, 0.585] and on work, engagement was 0.625 with CI [0.528, 0.708], thus supporting Hypotheses 1 and 2. The standardized direct effect of PsyCap on WE was 0.308 with CI [0.221, 0.398], thus supporting Hypothesis 3. The standardized indirect effect of intrapreneurship on WE was 0.149 with CI [0.093, 0.220], thus supporting Hypothesis 4. Results are shown in Figure 2.

MD

| | Mean | SD | α | CR | AVE | MSV | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---------------------|------|------|----------|------|------|------|---------|---------|------|
| 1. PsyCap | 5.35 | 1.25 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.60 | 0.37 | 0.77 | | |
| 2. WE | 4.71 | 1.42 | 0.94 | 0.94 | 0.63 | 0.56 | 0.61*** | 0.80 | |
| 3. Intrapreneurship | 4.19 | 1.58 | 0.95 | 0.94 | 0.65 | 0.56 | 0.47*** | 0.75*** | 0.81 |

| Models | CMIN | DF | CMIN/DF | SRMR | CFI | RMSEA | β (X to Y) | β (X to M) | β (M to Y) |
|----------------------------------|---------|-----|---------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Direct-effect model ¹ | 648.16 | 239 | 2.712 | 0.089 | 0.926 | 0.075 | 0.769*** | | |
| Full mediation ² | 1438.37 | 575 | 2.502 | 0.121 | 0.901 | 0.070 | | 0.508*** | 0.625*** |
| Partial mediation ³ | 1287.60 | 574 | 2.243 | 0.073 | 0.918 | 0.064 | 0.620*** | 0.483*** | 0.308*** |

Note(s): Measurement and structural model and other preliminary statistics

*** $p < 0.001$. Square root of AVE along the diagonal

SD = standard deviation, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted, MSV = maximum shared variance

DF = degrees of freedom; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; CFI = comparative fit index;

RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation

¹Intrapreneurship directly affects WE

²Intrapreneurship affects WE through PsyCap

³Intrapreneurship affects WE directly and indirectly

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics
and SEM results

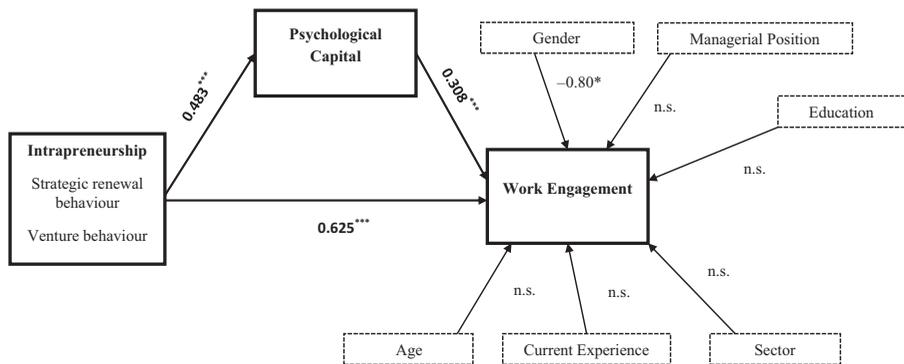


Figure 2.
Structural model

Note(s): n.s. represents not significant. * $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

Discussion

The organization's work condition significantly impacts employees' engagement and performance at work. How an employee is treated within the organization is detrimental in his or her commitment towards the organization (Arnoux-Nicolas *et al.*, 2016; Di Fabio and Kenny, 2016). Organizations are consistently matriculating strategies which can keep their workforce engaged. Intrapreneurial or managerial entrepreneurial opportunities are one such strategy that may keep their employees engaged at work. Therefore, it is not surprising that studies are coming up to understand intrapreneurship in more detail.

Previous research has linked intrapreneurship to firm-level variables such as firms' growth (Auer Antoncic and Antoncic, 2011), profitability (Antoncic, 2007) and innovative performance (Alpkan *et al.*, 2010). Similarly, academic output with regard to the antecedents of intrapreneurship or corporate entrepreneurship is gradually increasing (Bloodgood *et al.*, 2015; Corbett *et al.*, 2013). The individual outcomes of intrapreneurship in terms of attitudes

and behaviours are less studied (Reuther *et al.*, 2017). However, Gawke *et al.* (2017) made a significant contribution by linking it to WE.

The current study offers some important theoretical implications. Apart from WE being widely studied from the perspectives of students (Gupta and Pandey, 2018) and young consumers (Hassan and Pandey, 2019), this paper takes the case of engagement for employees. WE has been regarded as a better indicator of self, in comparison to similar concepts such as involvement, satisfaction and intrinsic motivation (Rich *et al.*, 2010). The current study adds to this stream of enquiry in two ways. First, it addresses the question as to how employees' intrapreneurial behaviour may yield beneficial outcomes in the form of employee engagement. Second, it has extended the prior findings of Gawke *et al.* (2017) by suggesting the mediating role of PsyCap in the relationship between intrapreneurship and WE.

From the frame of JD-R (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001) model and its extension by Pandey (2017), the findings of the current study position intrapreneurship as an organizational resource that rejuvenates individual psychological resource (Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007) of PsyCap and enhances engagement, thereby augmenting the theory through which work demands are met (Lu *et al.*, 2017), as resources of one type enhance resources of other types. Thus, personal resources are "relatively malleable and open for development" (Luthans *et al.*, 2008a, b, c, p. 209), which collectively offer organizations a sustained CE (Barney, 1991).

From the conservation of resource (Hobfoll and Freedy, 1993) perspective, it shows how intrapreneurship in the organization leads to the perceived enhancement of resources (Jha *et al.*, 2019) depending on the different dimensions of PsyCap, i.e. self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Luthans *et al.*, 2007a, b), which are utilized to enhance the engagement level of employees at work. Engagement thus can lead to desired outcomes and curb undesired outcomes of today's age like cyber loafing (Soral *et al.*, 2020). Studies have also confirmed the forward linkages of PsyCap to WE and then job satisfaction (Paek *et al.*, 2015). Thus, intrapreneurship creates an upward spiral of resource generation and conservation among employees, along with positive spillover effects (Braunerhjelm *et al.*, 2018).

Our study further leaves the possibility of examining the results of individual-level variables and intrapreneurship with intrapreneurship of firms. Wolcott and Lippitz (2007) proposed a framework for the intrapreneurial organization. The framework has four models, namely, opportunists, enablers, producers and advocates. According to the study, every organization begins with the opportunist model. Innovation and growth within these organizations are contingent on the initiatives taken by individuals called "project champions". These champions are intrapreneurs. The organization does not dedicate any resource or fund to the intrapreneurs. Hence, the intrapreneurs utilize existing resources and their personal and professional networks to create valuable assets (both tangible and intangible) for the organization. Enablers are those organizations that believe in the principle of collective support. The organization provides resources without delineating formal ownership to encourage innovation, as well as provides guidelines for exploration of the prospective areas by the employees like mechanism for transparency and fund allocation. This helps in channelizing the efforts of intrapreneurs in a direction, which can be most beneficial for the employer.

In the case of advocates, the organization formally delineates organizational ownership to the intrapreneurs and provides support through limited funding to the core team or group. Finally, producers are those organizations that not only delineate ownership but also protect their intrapreneurs by creating opportunities for them to pursue a career outside their business units.

In the light of our findings on intrapreneurship and WE, the four types of intrapreneurial organizations act as the control environment that may affect the degree of WE and retention of intrapreneurs by their existing employer. An opportunist organization may face high turnover of intrapreneur owing to the lack of any mentorship by the firm. Even if there is no impact on the retention of intrapreneurs for some other reasons, the degree of WE is expected

to vary upon comparing WE of intrapreneurs in relation to the four models (Steers, 1977; Kontoghiorghes and Frangou, 2009).

Managerial implications

These results show how inculcating intrapreneurship at the workplace leads to a win-win situation for organization and employees operating in today's business environment, which is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (Bennett and Lemoine, 2014). On the one hand, organizations gain from an innovative cultural foundation to deal with environmental turbulence, and on the other, individual gains from enhanced PsyCap and WE. The enhanced WE creates a domino effect as research shows its relation with many organizationally desired individual, group- and firm-level variables (Halbesleben, 2010; Salanova *et al.*, 2005). Organizational support for intrapreneurship has been shown to increase innovative performance, which is important for organizations today (Alpkan *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, intrapreneurship can be seen as a developmental tool that refines the human capital of a firm to be geared towards future demands.

The examination of intrapreneurship with individual- and firm-level variables is particularly relevant for practitioners. Intrapreneurs can transform the firm with which they are engaged because, unlike other employees, they are self-motivated, passionate, innovative and enthusiastic about exploring new avenues. Studies have shown that 70% of these highly motivated people have set up their own firms and left their former employer because of the absence of a favourable work climate and autonomy. Therefore, scholarly examination of intrapreneurs would provide us valuable insights to pitch for the organization's ability to retain these employees.

Limitations and future research directions

The cross-sectional design of this study poses limitations in terms of establishing causality. However, we found that similar relationships with different individual- and organization-level variables have been studied using a cross-sectional design (Chambel *et al.*, 2016). Future research could take a temporal design to establish causality. Moreover, future studies may use a longitudinal research design to explore the reverse causal relationships between PsyCap and WE, especially in the absence of certain evidence (De Waal and Pienaar, 2013). However, the current study and several other prior studies have found a significant impact of PsyCap on WE, which hints at the possibility of a two-way relationship. Scholars in the future are encouraged to examine this phenomenon, considering intrapreneurship in the nexus, using a multi-wave study. Subsequently, the data were collected from a single source, and proper care was taken to check for common method bias. Future studies could look at multiple sources like supervisors and colleagues and take a multilevel approach by taking into account team-level variables. The sample selected for this study belonged to different sectors and industries. The intensity of intrapreneurial orientation across industries or sectors could vary significantly; therefore, a focussed study on a particular segment can offer more in-depth insights. Further, this study is specific to India; hence, generalization across the developed nations must be made with caution. This study is instrumental in establishing intrapreneurship as an important organizational priority for having engaged employees.

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