



Psychological capital and psycho-ecological schemata in crisis intervention

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ABSTRACT

The testing times of crisis tend to churn the psychosocial, socioeconomic, anthropometric, geographical, political, cultural and the entire fabric of mankind. While, some individuals and their “psycho-ecological systems fall a prey to the vicissitudes of crisis; on the other hand, there are other patches of populations and civilisations that cross-cut through those testing times and return to normalcy with a new approach towards life. The present research is a quantitative and qualitative attempt to carve out the crisis intervention methods that enhance the psychological capital and facilitate psycho-ecological schemata of individuals. More specifically, the present research delves deeper into the aspects in the light of the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. Findings of the research indicate towards a significant positive difference and changes in psychological capital of the research subjects at both $p < .05$ and $p < .01$ level of confidence; stating that appropriate, timely and relevant Crisis Intervention foster hope, resilience, optimism and self-esteem as part of positive psychological capital of the individuals and their psycho-ecological schemata as well.

Keywords— Psychological capital, Psychological First-Aid, COVID-19, Crisis and Crisis Intervention

1. INTRODUCTION

The spectrum of human emotions and experiences in different stages and ages of life, tend to push him towards a continual litmus test of crossing through the odds. While, some individuals tend to cross-cut through life's vicissitudes with ease; on the contrary, some fall a prey to it. The history of human civilizations and collective psyche have been a witness to how humans have overcome or got churned during times of crisis. The perspectives, paradigms and practical implementation of Psychological Capital within an individual, system strengthening of the psycho-ecological systems of the Homo sapiens, tend to play a vital role in enabling them to conquer over the testing times of crisis. Psychological Capital refers to the positive and developmental state of an individual as characterized by self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency. (Luthans and Youssef, 2004). While, Psycho-Ecological Schemata is a trans-disciplinary area in cognitive science, Gestalt and ecological theories, which states that individuals tend to develop a world view of their intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences based on their interactions, information, and experiential stimuli (Sedikides; Green, 2000). Psycho-Ecological Schemata help individuals in developing mental images and understanding; mental set regarding their experiential world and channelize their cognition and behaviours accordingly. More so, Jackson and Erford (2010) have defined Crisis Intervention as, “an immediate and short-term psychological care aimed at assisting individuals in a crisis situation in order to restore equilibrium to their bio-psycho-social functioning and to minimize the potential of long-term psychological trauma”.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research allusions in different latitudes and longitudes of the globe, have indicated towards the need and efficacy of crisis intervention approaches. In a research titled, “An Experimental Evaluation of Crisis Intervention” (Bordow; Porritt, 1979), the trauma related to road accident and patient hospitalization was studied. The researchers highlighted that crisis intervention approaches had a positive impact and significant difference in returning to normalcy within 3-4 months after injury and also lessening the period of hospitalization. Dykeman (2005) indicated towards the cultural implications of Crisis Intervention. He opined that Crisis can have a Universal impact in terms of its nature and repercussions. However, some crises situations might be different as well. So, cultural backgrounds tend to play a key role both on the part of the crisis intervener and the crisis victim. Based on cultural backgrounds, the connotation of crisis can have completely different meaning, perception and approach. In a research titled, “Positive Psychological Capital: Beyond Human and Social Capital”, Luthans and his associates, 2004, have stated that, “Who am I”, is equally important as “What I know” and “Who I know”. They have indicated the imperativeness of Psychological Capital and have outlined its efficacy in personal as well as organizational growth through hope, optimism and resilience as well.

2.1 Gaps and Rationale

While, research indications and studies worldwide have thrown light on the efficacy of crisis intervention, psychological capital and psycho-ecological systems to some extent; however, their practical applicability in terms of Worldwide Crisis Situations and the

current Pandemic of COVID-19 has been seldom delved deep into. Studies were also sparse when it came to indicating the interaction effects of those factors, impact of interventions and the bringing about policy-level changes through research outcomes. Given to the gaps, the present study envisaged and aimed at developing intervention modules of Crisis Intervention in a way that fosters Positive Psychological Capital and spikes endeavours in terms with system strengthening of Psycho-Ecological Systems of the masses.

3. OBJECTIVES

- (a) To develop the PC-SRI or Psychological Capital Self-Report Inventory
- (b) To develop crisis intervention modules that addresses psychological capital and psycho-ecological system strengthening
- (c) To study the impact of interventions and interaction effects of the factors
- (d) To develop policy strengthening frameworks for wider positive implication

4. METHOD OF STUDY

The present research is a 2 X 2, quasi-experimental study, exploring both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The sampling frame of the research comprises of purposive and snowball sampling as the sample inclusion criteria; meanwhile, the sample consists of 105 subjects. The 2 X 2 research design, include factors viz. Crisis Cognizance: Awareness and Preparedness X Crisis Exposure: Previously exposed and not exposed. The study has been done in three phases wherein, tool development was the first phase; prototype testing was the second phase followed by the main research and data analysis. The obtained data were analysed using quantitative statistical measures like Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and qualitative measures. Figure 1 indicates the schematic algorithm of the present research:

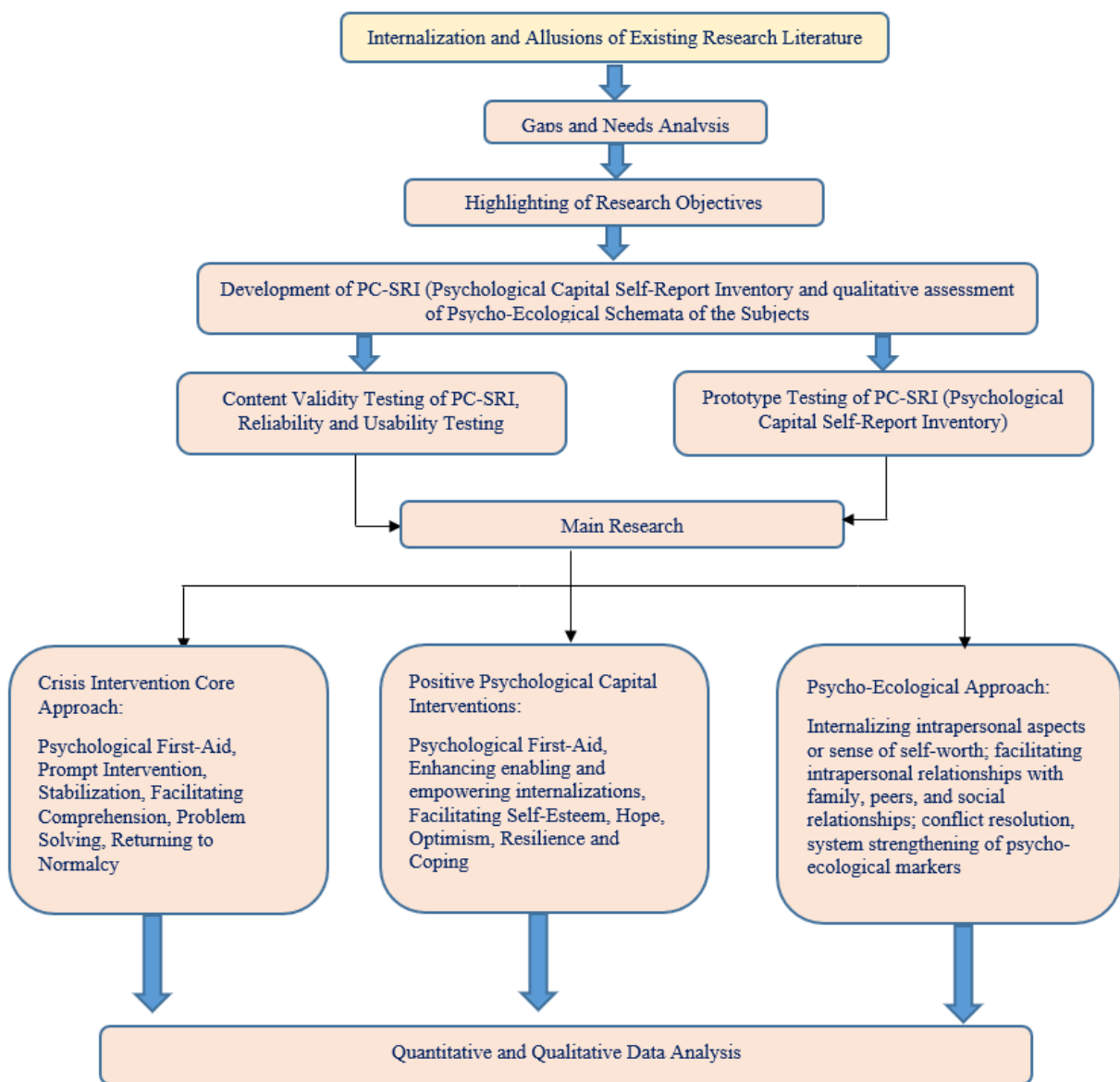


Fig. 1: Schematic Algorithm of the Present Research

5. ALGORITHM DESCRIPTION

The research was initiated with a comprehensive review of relevant literature and the implications with the current pandemic situation of COVID-19. Gaps in the literature indicated sparse studies in terms of crisis intervention in line with psychological capital and psycho-ecological schemata related approaches in the context of COVID-19. Further, the present research envisaged in developing a working model of novel psychological tool to assess positive psychological capital indicators and psycho-ecological

schemata. The content validity index of the Psychological Capital Self-Report Inventory developed by the researchers, were 23.3 for Item Level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) and .97 as the Scale Level Content Validity Index or S-CVI. More so, the reliability values of the Psychological Capital Self-Report Inventory indicated high split half reliability (.95), Spearman’s Rho (.95) and Chronbach’s alpha (.97) reliability coefficients significant at the 0.01 level of significance. After the tool development and prototype testing, the main research was conducted using different modules and approaches for the COVID-19 Crisis Intervention with the research subjects, followed by quantitative and qualitative analysis of data.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Quantitative Analysis of Data

The obtained data was analysed quantitatively using ANCOVA or Analysis of Covariance. The following table is indicative of the summary of research results based on the Analysis of Covariance for the research variables:

Table 1: Summary Table of Quantitative Results

DIMENSIONS	MAIN EFFECTS	F RATIO
Self-Esteem	Crisis Cognizance	4.25*
Optimism	Crisis Cognizance	4.79*
	Crisis Exposure	5.89*
Hope	Crisis Cognizance	5.31*
	Crisis Exposure	12.38**
Resilience	Crisis Cognizance	5.62*

p<.05*, p<.01**

The results of ANCOVA highlight towards a significant difference in the impact of interventions across the research variables. A significant difference at p<.05*, p<.01** levels of confidence was observed across all the variables viz. Self-Esteem, Optimism, Hope and Resilience; indicating that crisis intervention approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic has a positive impact on the psychological capital of the subjects.

6.2 Qualitative Analysis of Data

The research ear-marked the efficacy of psycho-ecological schemata of the subjects through targeted interventions and qualitative analysis of data. The following represents the common pattern of psycho-ecological schemata of the subjects:

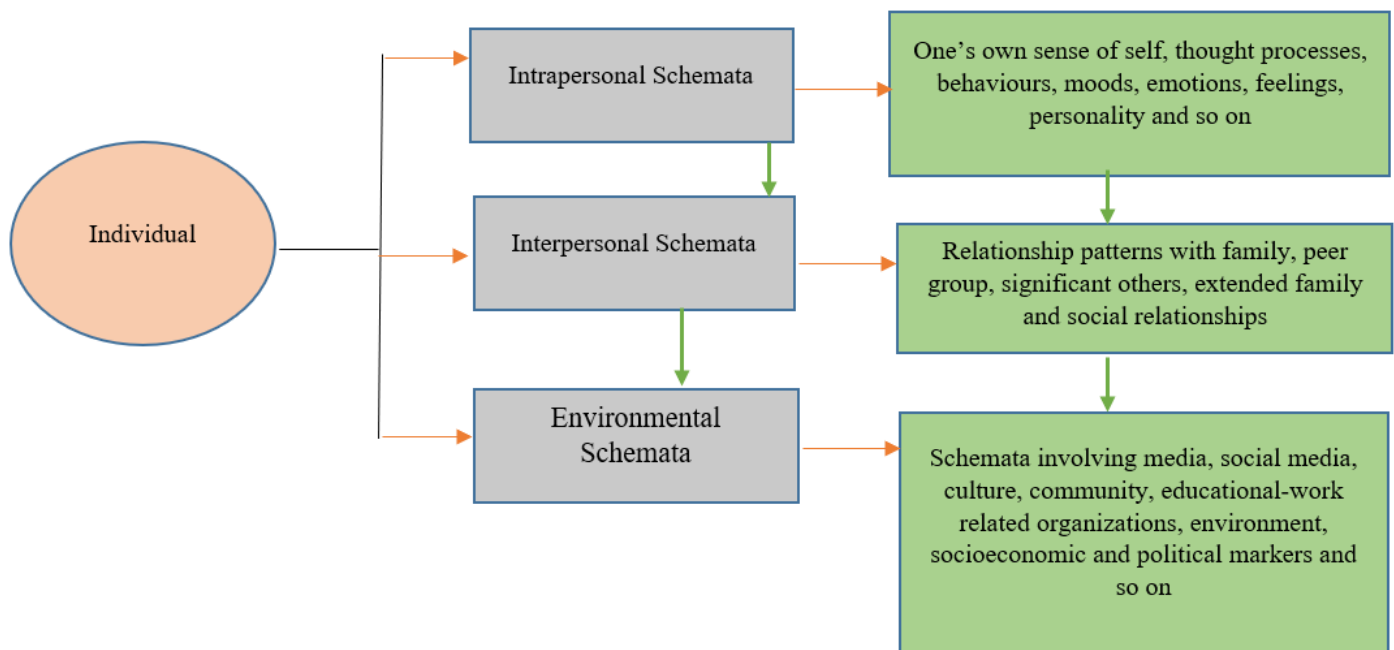


Fig. 2: Psycho-Ecological Schemata of the Research Subjects

Figure 2 epitomizes the complex pattern and interaction of schemata, relationships, and perceptual information that the research subjects felt and perceived in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Some subjects felt close to all the intrapersonal, interpersonal and environmental schemata. However, they were facing challenges in terms of complete acceptance of the same. They were apprehensive and worried about the future of the schemata and their inter-relations between all the factors presented above. They didn’t feel confident to cross over the COVID-19 pandemic with a well-balanced psycho-ecological frame. The research subjects were also anxious and stresses about returning to normalcy and starting life afresh. While, other subjects faced a great deal of challenges as they had a lot of self-doubt, guilt feeling of not being connected and comfortable enough with their family, significant others and peers. They felt panicky to hear and watch anything about the COVID-19. They also experienced psychoneurotic and psychosomatic ailments during the phases and before the interventions were introduced.

The qualitative analysis of the research and crisis intervention approaches did highlight on the positive changes in the research subjects posit interventions. Some reflective feedback like, “Feeling positive and more confident to overcome the COVID-19

pandemic”, “I shall work on developing more stable relationships with myself and my loved ones during the lockdown and forever”, “I have never felt this positive and healthy before” indicated that crisis intervention modalities do have a significant role to play in facilitating and strengthening the positive psychological capital and psycho-ecological schemata.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Since the unfolding of human civilisations, the World has witnessed both development and prosperity as well as crisis and devastation. Whether it is wading through the worst crisis or devastating scenarios; or learning to evolve from such life-threatening and churning situations (Fineberg, 2014; Golembiewski et. al. 2006; Taha, 2013), crisis intervention has been imperative in enabling the entire World populations to return to normalcy. In this process, awareness, preparedness, system strengthening, intrapersonal and interpersonal bonding, accountable and responsible citizenship, psycho-ecological web, and positive psychological capital including self-esteem, hope, optimism and resilience are major precursors of returning to a state of equilibrium through timely and relevant crisis intervention steps. The research carves out an optimistic path for overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic with prompt facilitation of positive psychological capital and psycho-ecological schemata across different longitudes and latitudes of the Globe.

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