

The Impact of Psychological Capital on Mental Well-Being among University Teachers: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach

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Abstract

The present study attempts to understand and measure the influential role of Psychological Capital (Skycap) on Mental Well-being among university teachers in India. Using survey methodology, data were collected from 226 men and women teachers aged between 25 and 60 years. The questionnaire contains details about the demographic profile of the respondents and questions related to PsyCap and Well-being using the 24-item Psychological Capital Scale (PCQ 24), and the 14-item Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS). The Dataset was examined using correlation and regression techniques, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), t-test and Structural equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate a strong positive association between psychological capital and mental well-being of teachers and provides better understanding of the interaction of these constructs within the university context especially among university teachers. Theoretical and practical implications for educational institutions and its relevance in policymaking and curriculum designing for faculty retention and quality education are established.

Keywords: *Efficacy, Hope, Optimism, Psychological Capital, Resilience, Teacher Well-being.*

1. Introduction

Changing and growing educational scenarios demand educational institutions rethink and alter their programs with increased emphasis on new technologies and better education for employment (Gautam, V *et al.* 2019). Rising enrolments in higher education are also forcing colleges to start

new programmes. A commonly reported problem is the decreasing level of competencies even among qualified teachers (Sushma 2021). Educational institutions are focusing on teachers' quality as it is seen as a key asset of an organization to enhance creativity, performance, and competitiveness (Pradhan *et al.* 2021). Teachers and teacher well-being are considered as an important issue in the twenty-first century (McCallum *et al.* 2017) and it has become imperative to study positive psychology and well-being and research in this field of study has been expanded (Cooke *et al.* 2016). Psychological capital (PsyCap) is often viewed as a catalyst for growth, success, and mental well-being of individuals (Anwar *et al.* 2021) and has tendency to cause positive emotions that are considered the most essential component of well-being (Rabenu *et al.* 2016 and Rabenu, Yaniv, 2017). Understanding mental well-being among teachers is crucial as it impacts teachers, students, educational institutions, and the nation as well (Duckworth *et al.* 2009). For teacher professionalism to thrive and education quality to improve, teachers must cultivate psychological empowerment (Berhanu, K. Z. 2023). It is evident from the works of literature that PsyCap is assumed to be of great importance in educational sector to promote positive learning outcomes (Gebregergiset *et al.* 2024) and considered to be a vital antecedent of teacher performance and mental well-being (Rehman *et al.* 2016). Therefore, it is essential to analyse the association between psychological capital and the well-being among teachers so as to deliver quality educational outcome that fosters younger generations to lead sustainable and healthy life in future.

2. Theoretical Framework

Job demands-resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017) and conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2001) were primarily utilized to develop the relationships between psychological capital and well-being. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory is widely used to analyse the impact of work environment on well-being and performance (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). The core concept in JD-R theory is that work environment and job characteristics are categorized into job demands and job resources. According to JD-R theory, Job demands refers to the aspects of the role that require sustained physical and mental effort and therefore, linked with physiological and psychological costs (Demerouti *et al.*, 2014; Bakker and Demerouti, 2017) such as heavy workload, conflicting expectations from supervisors and clients, and workplace harassment. Whereas, Job resources are the aspects of the role that assist in achieving job objectives and stimulate personal growth and development (Demerouti *et al.*, 2016) such as support from peers, freedom in decision making, and opportunities to career growth. On the other hand, COR theory focuses on how individuals strive to procure, sustain, and safeguard

resources, and understanding how the availability and loss of resources can impact their well-being and adaptation to stress (Hobfoll, 2001). The core assumption of the COR theory is that individuals strive to manage stress by protecting and building resources (Holmgren *et al.* 2017). COR theory suggests that the loss of resources is more stressful than the gain of resources, which implies that individuals may be more motivated to prevent resource loss than to acquire new resources. Employees with the capability of availing themselves of sufficient resources are found to engage more at work and have higher level of well-being (Wang *et al.* 2020). In addition, it contributes to the accumulation of resources, reducing resource scarcity that facilitates individuals to face adversity, thereby results in greater well-being (Chen *et al.* 2015). It is evident from research that PsyCap helps individuals identify, assess and utilize available resources, which can then be used to gauge one's overall well-being (Luthans *et al.* 2010). Fostering PsyCap through Psychological Capital Interventions (PCI), can enhance well-being and performance by equipping individuals to better navigate their resource environments and enrich greater sense of well-being.

3. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Psychological Capital

The disciplines of Organizational Behaviour have not resulted in better understanding of human strength, flourishing and optimal functioning and this led to the emergence of a positive psychological approach in terms of Positive Organizational Behaviour (POB) (Luthans *et al.* 2006). "POB is defined as the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace (Luthans, 2002b)". The research on POB investigated the influence of psychological resources on work performance and well-being in facilitating better organisational environments and outcomes (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Among numerous organizational concepts, POB introduced Psychological Capital (PsyCap) which is a widely used concept in recent researches (Luthans, 2008). Psychological capital is termed as the resources or strengths or traits of an individual such as hope, self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience which can be built and refined to promote well-being and work performance (Luthans & Youssef, 2004) and found to have strong synergy as they contribute to greater influence in relation with work performance and accomplishment of goals than each of the individual construct's contribution to work outcomes. (Luthans *et al.* 2007 and Luthans *et al.* 2015). The possession of positive psychological resources of individuals could help them effectively deal with challenges and engage better in various aspects of work and life that contribute to their well-being (David *et al.*

2024). Literature evidences have shown how PsyCap has been linked to several desirable outcomes of an employee including enhanced work performance (Luthans *et al.* 2005, 2007), reduced absenteeism and turnover (Avey *et al.* 2006), high degree of job satisfaction (Luthans *et al.* 2007), organizational involvement and commitment (Luthans *et al.* 2005) and well-being of the employees. “Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is defined as a positive psychological state of personal growth and development characterized by four key components: (1) self-efficacy, which is the confidence to undertake and exert the necessary effort to succeed in challenging tasks; (2) optimism, reflecting a positive expectation of success both currently and in the future; (3) hope, involving persistence toward goals along with the flexibility to adjust strategies when needed to achieve those goals; and (4) resilience, the ability to recover from setbacks, adapt to adversity, and continue striving for success (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007)”. PsyCap is often used to describe an individual’s psychological strengths that may be measured, developed, and maintained to enhance performance. The constructs of PsyCap are deeply connected to mental well-being, as they provide individuals with the psychological resources to navigate challenges, maintain a positive outlook, and achieve personal fulfilment.

Mental Well-being

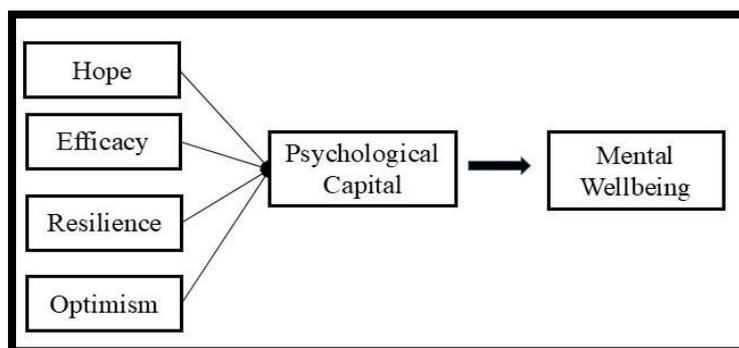
Well-being has evolved as one of the crucial area of research recently and research evidences show that well-being of the employees in the workplace has gained momentum to a greater extent (Avey *et al.* 2009). Mental wellbeing is defined as “a state in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to contribute to his or her community (WHO, 2013)”. Literature has explained well-being under two perspectives namely subjective well-being (SWB) and psychological well-being (PWB). Subjective well-being, often called self-reported well-being, refers to an individual’s personal assessment of their overall life satisfaction as well as their evaluation of specific areas and activities within their life. SWB, rooted on hedonic perspectives of pleasure explains people’s beliefs and feelings that they are living a satisfying and fulfilling life’ (Diener 2012) which focuses on pleasure aspect of well-being. Psychological wellbeing (PWB) refers to the emotional and cognitive functioning of an individual, focusing on how they perceive and navigate their life. PWB is based on eudaimonia perspectives and represents self-realization, with the core objective and focus in life being to attempt to realize one’s real potential to achieve the goal (Ryff and Singer 2008; Ryff, 1989) which focuses on meaning-related aspect of wellbeing. However, the mental well-being of an individual encompasses

both hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives and is considered as an important aspect to be taken care of by the organizations (Zheng *et al.* 2015). PsyCap tends to enhance the hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in both direct, and indirect manner through job satisfaction among teachers (Kurt *et al.* 2019). It is found from literature that hedonic behaviours enhanced positive emotions, life satisfaction and supported regulate emotional regulations while decreasing negative emotions, stress, and depression. On the other hand, eudaimonic behaviour fostered deeper sense of life meaning and inspired feelings of elevation, which arise from observing acts of moral virtue (Henderson, L. Wet *et al.* 2013). Employees with higher sense of well-being tend to contribute more and have greater levels of performance and productivity that help the organization to gain a competitive advantage (Singhal *et al.* 2018, David *et al.* 2024). PsyCap is termed as a set of personal capacities or strengths that foster employee engagement, mitigate stress (Abbas & Raja, 2015; Virgaet *et al.* 2020), and promote well-being and work performance (Imran & Shahnawaz, 2020). The developmental quality of PsyCap is considered to be advantageous for enhancing employee performance and well-being (Luthans *et al.* 2006). It is evident from literature that employees possessing higher psychological capital and strengths are happy with their work and delighted with their lives which depicts a state of well-being (Avey, 2010). PsyCap offers a viable set of resources and mechanisms that can improve well-being (Paul, 2023). Based on the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1:** Efficacy has a positive significant effect on the mental well-being of teachers.
- **H2:** Optimism has a positive significant effect on the mental well-being of teachers.
- **H3:** Hope has a positive significant effect on the mental well-being of teachers.
- **H4:** Resilience has a positive significant effect on the mental well-being of teachers.
- **H5:** Psychological capital has a significantly positive effect on the mental well-being of teachers.

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) is developed based on the theoretical evidences and hypothesis formulated for the study.

Figure1. Conceptual Framework



4. Research Objectives

- To assess psychological capital and mental well-being among university teachers
- To investigate the degree of relationship between psychological capital and mental well-being among university teachers

5. Methodology

The study is descriptive and adopts a survey methodology among university teachers using Convenient Sampling method. Data was collected both online and offline from teachers, both married and unmarried male and female university teachers. The final sample included 226 teachers from Indian universities. The questionnaire contains details about the demographic profile of the respondents and questions related to PsyCap and Well-being. Scales on Psychological Capital and Mental well-being derived from established scales that were previously published and validated were used for the study.

Measures

The scales used for the study are as under:

Psychological Capital (PCQ-24) is a 24-item scale of four constructs: hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (HERO), measured using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) is a 14-item scale measuring mental well-being using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = none of the time to 5 = all the time).

Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha coefficients indicates that the reliability of the overall PsyCap construct was $\alpha = 0.799$ (hope $\alpha = .775$, efficacy $\alpha = .885$, resilience $\alpha = .743$, optimism $\alpha = .856$) and the reliability of Well-being was $\alpha = .889$ demonstrating strong reliability confirming internal consistency for all constructs measured.

6. Data Analysis and Results

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents (N = 226)

Factors	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	61	27
	Female	165	73
Age	Less than 30	85	38
	30 – 45	113	50
	46 – 60	28	12
Marital Status	Married	144	64
	Unmarried	82	36
Educational Qualification	PG	70	31
	PG with M.Phil	94	42
	PG with Ph.D	62	27
Nature of Job	Permanent	167	74
	Probationary	59	26
Years of Experience	Less than 5	100	44
	5 – 10	103	46
	11 – 15	15	6
	More than 15	8	4

Source: The authors

The demographic profile (Table 1) comprises 226 teachers, of whom 73% were female and 27% male. Most respondents were married (64%), while 36% were single. Half of the teachers (50%) belonged to the 31–45 age group, 38% were below 30 years, and 12% were aged 46–60 years. In terms of qualifications, 42% held an M.Phil. 31% were postgraduates, and 27% had a postgraduate degree with a Ph.D. A majority (74%) were permanent employees, while 26% were on probation. Regarding experience, 46% had 5–10 years, 44% had less than 5 years, and only 10% had more than 10 years of experience.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation result between PsyCap and Mental Well-being

Study Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	PsyCap	Self-efficacy	Hope	Resilience	Optimism	Mental Well-being
PsyCap	94.159	28.191	1					
Self-efficacy	23.469	8.108	0.960**	1				
Hope	24.000	7.342	0.976**	0.930**	1			
Resilience	23.336	6.713	0.970**	0.889**	0.928**	1		
Optimism	23.354	6.941	0.969**	0.888**	0.923**	0.953**	1	
Mental Well-being	45.009	10.767	0.711**	0.739**	0.706**	0.634**	0.663**	1

Source: The authors

Notes: **Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels

The above correlation analysis (Table 2), denotes that there is a significant positive association between PsyCap and Well-being of teachers. The mean

values depict that the scores of all the scales were high and the correlations between PsyCap and Mental Well-being were positive and significant at $p < 0.01$ level. The Pearson correlation coefficient was found to be 0.711 at 99% confidence interval. Thus, the hypothesis H₅ that “there is a significant positive relationship between PsyCap and mental well-being,” is supported. Further the analysis revealed that the correlation between Self-Efficacy and Well-being was found to be the highest (0.739) and therefore the hypothesis H₁ that “Self-Efficacy has a positive relationship with Mental well-being” is confirmed at 0.01 level. Similarly, the correlation between Optimism and Well-being is positive (0.663) and hence, supporting the hypothesis H₂ that “Optimism has a positive relationship with mental well-being”. The relationship between Hope and Well-being was positive (0.706) and hypothesis H₃, that “Hope has a positive relationship with mental well-being” is accepted at 0.01 levels. On the other hand, it was identified that there is a positive association between Resilience and Well-being (0.634) leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis H₄, that “Resilience has a positive relationship with mental well-being”. The results indicate that individuals with greater PsyCap tend to have higher level of mental well-being. Also, teachers with better self-efficacy and high mental resilience were found to manage their work better which contributes to better well-being.

Table 3: Model Summary, ANOVA, Coefficient values of PsyCap and its influence on Mental Well-being

Model								
Summary			ANOVA			Coefficient		
	R	R ²	F	Sig	B	T	Sig	
Psycap	0.711	0.505	228.858	0.000	0.711	15.128	0.000	

Source: The authors

- Notes:** 1. Dependent Variable: Mental well-being
2. Independent Variable: Psychological Capital

Table 4: Regression Analysis result between PsyCap and Mental Well-being

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.444	1.764		11.025	.000
	Psychological Capital	.272	.018	.711	15.128	.000

Source: The authors

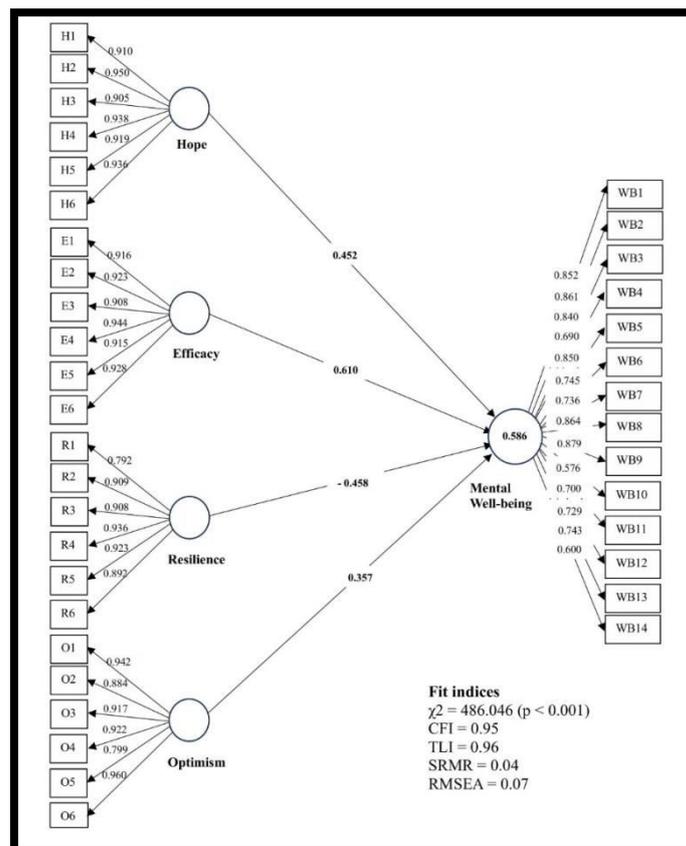
Notes: Dependent Variable: Mental wellbeing

The prediction model presented above (Table 3) is statistically significant, $F = 228.858$, $p < .005$, showed that psycap is accounted for 50% variance in

the mental well-being scores ($R^2=.505$, Adjusted $R^2 = .503$) indicating a strong effect of PsyCap on mental well-being. It is evident from regression analysis (Table 4) that PsyCap predicted mental wellbeing (7.11 per cent) indicating that one unit increase in PsyCap tend to increase mental wellbeing by 0.272 units. The findings indicate that PsyCap improves mental wellbeing of teachers and investing in improving PsyCap would enhance the quality of teaching and wellbeing among teachers.

Structural Model – Path Coefficients

Figure2. PLS SEM Analysis – Path Coefficients



The path coefficients using PLS-SEM analysis (Figure 2) demonstrates the statistical significance of the model. The findings indicate that hope ($\beta = 0.452$), efficacy ($\beta = 0.610$) and optimism ($\beta = 0.357$) have significantly positive impact on mental well-being. Further, the results show that resilience ($\beta = -0.458$) does not have a direct impact on mental well-being. These results support the conceptual model and efficacy emerges as a strongly significant factor impacting mental well-being. Therefore, it is evident that PsyCap can significantly and positively predict mental well-being among teachers. In conclusion, teachers with high degree of PsyCap generally experience greater well-being.

7. Practical Implications

The results and discussions show the significance of PsyCap in the field of academics with reference to teachers' well-being. The outcome of the study clearly suggests practical implications for the effective functioning of universities by developing psychological capacities of the teachers that would enhance mental well-being of the teachers. The analysis indicate that it is essential to develop the psychological capacities of the teachers so as to maintain and enhance the welfare and well-being of the teachers and students as well (Yongzhan Li. 2018). A higher level of PsyCap will create positive emotions that can lead to greater motivation, fulfilment with work, and the ability to manage stress which in turn will result in improved performance and mental well-being (Al-Ghazali *et al.* 2022). Creating a supportive workplace for teachers is essential for fostering an environment where they feel valued and respected (Minott, M. A. 2024). Thus, it is suggested that universities should consider these evidence-based findings and focus on retaining skilled and experienced teachers so as to deliver quality education (Langford, S *et al.* 2022). Periodical inputs on Work Life Balance, Employee Engagement, and Talent management, Career counselling, wellness programs etc., can be given for the holistic development of the psychological capacities and well-being of the teachers (Xuet *al.*2023). This would reduce employee turnover, depression and dissatisfaction among teachers. In addition, PsyCap Interventions (PCI) also be considered for the development of personal resources (Luthans *et al.*2006)through various techniques such as coaching, vicarious learning, workshops on technology proficiency, communication skills, mentoring programs, and other developmental activities (Da, S.*et al.* 2020).Implementation of effective professional development strategies that are aligned with their needs (Nguyen, H. C. 2018) using PCIare found to build resiliency and optimism to a greater extent that results in higher work engagement and performance outcomes (Grover *et al.* 2016; Luthans *et al.* 2006; 2008; Zhang *et al.* 2014).To develop the psychological capacities of teachers it is suggested that educational institutions need to understand the dynamics at play (Alene, Aet *al.* 2023) and conceptualize, plan and execute educational activities and programs (Gebregergiset *al.* 2024) such as faculty enrichment programs, workshops on content creation and delivery techniques, orientation on policy making and initiatives for sustainable development of teachers and quality education. Therefore, implementation of interventions and Psychological Capital-oriented programs in universities would enhance the quality of teaching and mental well-being among teachers.

8. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Limitations of this study include the small and uniform samples, which is difficult in generalization of the results. The opinions rendered in this study

are limited to teachers working in universities identifying the importance of PsyCap and Mental Well-being in the Indian context only. Also, this study focuses only on two variables namely PsyCap and Mental wellbeing. These limitations provide opportunities for future research. Generally, Asian societies are largely collectivist, emphasizing group identity, harmony, and shared goals (Kawamura, 2012; Hofstede, 2001). In such cultures, employee behaviour aligns with group norms and obligations (Oyserman & Lee, 2007). This highlights the need for further research in diverse cultural and workplace settings globally. Future studies could explore the antecedents and consequences of various constructs. There could be several more factors such as academic leadership, personality trait, reward and recognition policies etc. which may cause direct or indirect influence on the factors studied. Understanding and analysing such factors could support universities to identify and develop required psychological capacities and resources in teachers.

9. Conclusion

The changing work environment, diversity in the workforce, technological development, and other challenges call for a shift in the approach and management of teachers. As it becomes imperative for universities to support and enhance teachers' health and well-being, this study focuses on identifying the significance of PsyCap and its influence on mental well-being among university teachers. The present study will enable universities to realize the importance of positive psychological capital and its contribution to teacher well-being. In addition, the present study will pave the way to further explore the role and influence of PsyCap and well-being in other fields of study.

Author Contributions

Both authors equally contributed in developing the conceptual framework, analyzing the data, and writing the manuscript.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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