

Impact of Psychological Capital on Adolescents' Wellbeing

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to explore the impact of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on Well-being among school-going adolescents. The data was collected from 100 adolescents within a specified age range (13 to 17 years) from different schools and were assessed with Academic Psychological Capital Scale (Brett Luthans, 2012), Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), PANAS questionnaire (Watson et al., 1988), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). Statistical analysis was done with Pearson correlation using SPSS software. The results unveiled a positive and significant correlation of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) with Psychological Well-being ($r = .349, p < .01$) Subjective Well-being ($r = .414, p < .01$), Personal Growth ($r = .231, p < .05$), Positive Relations ($r = .305, p < .01$), Self-Acceptance ($r = .301, p < .01$), Positive Affect ($r = .348, p < .01$), and Satisfaction with Life ($r = .476, p < .01$). Thus, the results state that PsyCap has a beneficial effect on the adolescent's well-being.

Keywords: *Psychological Capital, Adolescents' Wellbeing*

School life marks the beautiful journey of a child growing and learning each day. Transitioning from elementary school to secondary and senior secondary school, students move through several phases in their lives. When a children becomes an adolescents, they experience changes in many aspects of their lives, including psychological, emotional, and physical. Due to these changes, adolescents face numerous stressors in all facets of their lives, which may trigger stress, anxiety, depression, self-doubt. In extreme circumstances, these stressors can even lead to suicidal thoughts and behaviors, which can have a detrimental effect on an adolescent's mental health and general well-being. Some Previous researchers asserted that the positive constructs of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism enable people to deal with life's stresses. (Kaur & Amin, 2017; Gautam & Pradhan, 2018). An individual's level of stress is anticipated to be low if they score highly on these constructs, which contributes to their well-being. When these four positive constructs are employed together in the form of a single higher-order construct, the impact on students' well-being is greater than it is when they are used independently.

The term Psychological capital, abbreviated as PsyCap is an important construct evolved from the domain of positive psychology and was coined by **Dr. Fred Luthans** in 2004 and operationalized as an individual's level of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. An

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acronym “HERO within” is used to represent the PsyCap construct, where the whole PsyCap construct is a greater determinant of job satisfaction and performance than each of the individual components that comprises it up (**Luthans et al., 2007**). **Luthans et al. (2015)** conceptualize PsyCap as “one’s positive psychological state of development marked by stronger determination toward set goals and, when needed, readdressing direction to goals (hope) in order to succeed; having firm confidence (efficacy) to undertake and exert the necessary effort to excel in demanding tasks; withstanding and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) when beset by troubles and hardship to prosper; and framing a positive perspective (optimism) about accomplishing now and in the upcoming future.”

Significance of the Study

There was an extensive amount of research on the positive impact of PsyCap on well-being in an organizational or industrial setting. Past studies have demonstrated a positive association of PsyCap with the general well-being of employees (**Culbertson et al., 2010**; **Tripathi, 2011**), psychological well-being of employees (**Avey et al., 2010**), and entrepreneurs well-being (**Dewal & Kumar, 2017**) and also observed it as a predictor of workers' subjective well-being and satisfaction (**Luthans et al., 2007**; **Singhal & Rastogi, 2018**). As four major positive abilities (i.e., self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism) make up psychological capital. Understanding and nurturing this major construct is vital for adolescents, as it not only assists them in excelling in their academic world but also promotes their mental health, enhances their social relationships, aids in overall growth, and thereby fosters holistic well-being, leading to long-lasting success in their professional and personal spheres, which eventually results in providing the nation a powerful and resilient future workforce. Moreover, studies related to the influence of PsyCap on the student population are in the beginning stages, especially for school-going adolescents. Hence, our’s study tries to find out whether the established beneficial effect of PsyCap on well-being in organizations and the industrial population has equal importance in academic settings, enhancing the overall potential of adolescents and thereby facilitating well-being.

Psychological Capital and Well-being

Avey et al. (2010) suggest that perceived abundance of PsyCap may assist in enhancing wellbeing in individuals. In order to better understand the influence of positive psychological capital (PsyCap) on subjective wellbeing (SWB), **Afzal et al. (2016)** conducted a study involving 616 school-aged adolescents and found that optimism, hope, and resilience were significant predictors of subjective well-being. Similarly, **Li, Ma, and Guo et al. (2014)** discovered a positive and significant association of psychological capital with subjective well-being of undergraduate students. Another researcher, **Nielsen et al. (2017)** examined the influence of psychological capital on subjective wellbeing of 157 postgraduate business student with an age range of 22 to 44 years old and observed a direct positive relationship of Psychological Capital with subjective Well-being. One of the significant Indian studies is by **Mishra and Shafiq (2018)**, which revealed that PsyCap significantly predicts psychological well-being among 76 female students studying at Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi. The study aimed to explore the relationship of Psychological Capital, and Psychological Well-being among adults where Psychological Capital is considered as antecedents of well-being. Psychological Capital Questionnaire and Psychological Well-being inventory had been used to measure said variables. Results highlights the beneficial effect of PsyCap in facilitating psychological well-being eventually leading towards holistic living.

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Objective

To find out the Correlation of a PsyCap with Subjective Well-being (SWB) and its sub-components (Viz., Autonomy, Environment Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations, Purpose in Life, Self- Acceptance) along with exploring its association with Psychological Well-being (PWB) and its sub dimensions, namely, Positive Affect, Negative Affect and Satisfaction with Life.

Hypotheses

Drawing from the preceding review of literature following hypothesis were framed:

- Psychological Capital is expected to be positively related with Psychological Wellbeing and its sub- dimensions (Viz., Autonomy, Environment Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations, Purpose in Life, Self- Acceptance)
- Psychological Capital is expected to be positively related with Subjective Well-being and its two dimensions namely, Positive Affect and Satisfaction with Life and negatively related to Negative Affect (sub- dimension of Subjective well - being).

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

The aim of the present research is to study the impact of psychological capital on adolescent wellbeing, namely subjective wellbeing and psychological wellbeing. A sample of 100 adolescents, including 50 males and 50 females, was collected from different schools in SAS Nagar (Mohali) affiliated with PSEB in Panjab using Purposive sampling method. Informed consent was taken from school authorities and respective students prior to collecting data.

Inclusive criteria

- Only school- going adolescents were contacted.
- Adolescents who are well versed with English language.
- Only adolescents from urban areas were contacted.

Exclusive criteria

- Adolescents suffering from long- term mental illness or any psychopathology were not included in the sample.
- Adolescents from broken families were not included in the sample.

Measures

- **Academic Psychological Capital Scale:** This scale was developed by Brett Luthans in 2012 to measure psychological capital among students. This scale consists of 24 statements, including six statements for each facet, namely hope, self- efficacy, resilience, and optimism. The total PsyCap minimum and maximum score may range from 24 to 144. The PsyCap score for each Hero construct may range from 6 to 36. Luthans and Avolio (2007) reported Cronbach alpha for the PsyCap construct as a whole is 0.89, and for the hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism subscales, it is 0.76, 0.84, 0.71, and 0.79, respectively.
- **Psychological Well- being Scale:** A 42-item questionnaire constructed by Ryff and Keyes was used in current research to assess level of psychological well-being. It incorporates six subscales (ie., autonomy, environment mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance) with total 14 items. Respondents rate statements on a scale of 1 to 6, i.e., 1 means strong disagreement

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and 6 means strong agreement. The observed test-retest reliability of subscales ranges from 0.81 to 0.85, while the internal consistency ranges from 0.87 to 0.90.

- **Satisfaction with life scale:** This scale is used to assess global life satisfaction of an individual and is developed by Diener et al. (1985). It consists of total 5 items rated on 7 point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly disagree to 7= Strongly Agree. The range of scores extends from 5, denoting low satisfaction, to 35, denoting high satisfaction. Test-retest correlation after two months was reported to be .82, with an alpha .87. The five SWLS items had item-total correlations of .81, .63, .75, and .66, respectively, indicating strong consistency for the scale.
- **Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule Scale:** This scale was designed by Watson et al. (1988), and in the current investigation, it was used to assess adolescents' positive and negative affect. The participant has to rate each item, on a 5-point scale (where, 1 = very slightly to 5 = very much extremely), reflecting how much they had experienced each mood scale (feeling and emotion). Intercorrelations and internal consistency reliabilities on the PANAS scale range from .86 to .90 for positive affect (PA) to .84 to .87 for negative affect.

Statistical Analysis:

Pearson correlation were applied using SPSS Software. Descriptive statistics viz, mean standard deviation was also performed.

RESULTS

Table 1 showing Pearson correlation (r) between Psychological capital, Psychological well-being and subjective well-being

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. PsyCap	1	.146	.194	.231*	.305**	.071	.301**	.349**	.348**	.041	.476**	.414**
2. A		1	.186	.344**	.268**	.295**	.421**	.633**	.256*	-.010	.090	.192
3. EM			1	.176	.203*	.115	.208*	.399**	.093	-.074	.017	.109
4. PG				1	.267**	.447**	.295**	.643**	.169	-.094	-.114	.084
5. PR					1	.213*	.437**	.587**	.175	-.168	.140	.260**
6. PIL						1	.423**	.662**	.307**	.020	.056	.191
7. SA							1	.783**	.311**	-.140	.299**	.393**
8. PWB								1	.356**	-.089	.180	.337**
9. PA									1	.218*	.482**	.687**
10. NA										1	-.030	-.415**
11. SWL											1	.788**
12. SWB												1

Note. PsyCap= Psychological Capital; A= Autonomy, EM= Environment Mastery; PG= Positive Growth, PR= Positive Relations; PIL= Purpose in Life; SA= Self -Acceptance; PWB= Psychological well-being; PA= Positive Affect; NA=Negative Affect; SWL= Satisfaction with life; SWB= Subjective well-being

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The prime objective of the current research is to study the impact of psychological capital on adolescent well-being. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation, and the results show that psychological capital is significantly and positively related with Psychological Well-Being ($r = .349, p < .01$) and Subjective Well-Being ($r = .411, p < .01$). Moreover, results also revealed that PsyCap was significantly and positively related with personal growth ($r = .231, p < .05$), positive relations ($r = .305, p < .01$), self-acceptance ($r = .301, p < .01$), positive affect ($r = .348, p < .01$), and satisfaction with life ($r = .476, p < .01$). Our obtained statistical results support hypothesis 1 and 2. However, psychological capital was not found to be negatively related to the negative affect, which is one of the subcomponents of subjective wellbeing. Hence, current research finding failed to support hypothesis 3.

DISCUSSION

The core aim of the current study was to investigate the impact of psychological capital on the well-being of school-going adolescents. The results of the present research show that psychological capital is found to be significantly and positively related to subjective well-being and its two subdimensions, namely positive affect and satisfaction with life. Current research findings are consistent with earlier research, such as **Xin (2023)**, which demonstrated that the psychological capital of students was found to be positively related with life satisfaction ($r = 0.536$, $p < 0.001$) and positive affect ($r = 0.607$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the fact that the psychological capital construct leads to enhancement in one's level of subjective well-being. Another study by Finch et al. (2020) aimed to investigate the impact of PsyCap with subjective well-being on 456 Australian school students aged 9-14 years and found a substantial positive association between all HERO constructs and well-being. The statistical findings of our study also unveiled a positive correlation of the Psychological Capital construct with psychological well-being and its 3 subdimensions, viz., Personal Growth, Positive Relations, and Self-Acceptance. **Singh (2015)** attempted to find out the contribution of positive psychological capital (self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism) to one's level of psychological well-being and observed that optimism and resilience (two sub-components of PsyCap) significantly predict psychological well-being. **Rani (2015)** studied 375 young people with the aim of examining the association between Psychological Capital and Psychological Well-being and found that PsyCap and its constituent parts each had a strong, significant relationship with psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, the findings of the regression analysis showed that PsyCap was accountable for 40% of the variation in psychological well-being. It was also observed that the association between Psychological Well-being and the core construct, PsyCap, was stronger than the relationship between each of the individual components. Another researcher, **Datu and Valdez (2016)** attempted to examine the extent to which PsyCap predicts wellbeing in a Philippine setting. A total sample of 606 Filipino high school students were recruited and their well-being level was assessed with standardised questionnaire and it was found that PsyCap is positively related to positive affect (sub component of subjective well-being). This finding further concludes that endorsement of multiple positive psychological resources in the form of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy successfully leads to enhancement of one's cognitive, affective, and psychological wellbeing.

Implications

The current paper intends to provide a detailed insight into the impact of PsyCap on students' well-being in an Indian context. This concept needs to be explored well as, there are only a few studies linking the positive impact of PsyCap on the adolescents' population in an Indian context. It is pertinent to mention here that PsyCap is a state-like construct that is malleable and can be developed through various psychological strategies. So, the results of the present research can be heuristically utilized to facilitate, execute, and plan programs or activities in the school environment that help adolescents increase their positive motivational resources, like PsyCap, which can eventually help them increasing their overall well-being.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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