



Positive Psychological Capital: A Positive Resource and Buffer for Academic Stress

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February 3, 2021

Positive Psychological Capital: A Positive Resource and Buffer for Academic Stress

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Abstract

Aim/ Purpose

The current study tends to examine the role of Psychological Capital (also known as Psy Cap) as a buffer against academic stress. Academic stress has a global presence and is an extremely challenging phenomenon for any academic institution. Extant literature has been conducted for school students, but there is dearth of research in the Asian region (Deb et al., 2018). Psychological Capital research has a firm footage for organizations, but there is dearth of Psychological Capital studies in the academic sector (Datu *et al.*, 2016). The students can be motivated through positive psychology and Psychological Capital as a positive resource has huge potential to do so. Hence, an inquiry into understanding the role of Psychological Capital to check academic stress can be worthwhile.

Research Methods

A cross-sectional sample is collected from 200 under-graduate students from a B-school from NCR. The sample comprised 129 males (n = 200, 65%) and 71 females (n = 200, 35%) students. The sample had an average age of 18.8 years with a range from 17 to 25 years. The study has used SPSS and AMOS software. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to understand the relationship between the study variables.

Key Findings

The results show a negative association between academic stress and Psychological Capital. The sampled data exhibited good model fit: CMIN/df = 1.277; RMSEA (.037), RMR (.045); IFI (0.980); and CFI (.979). The values are significant and in accordance with the permissible

limits given in literature (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Hair et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2010). The values of regression coefficient indicates that the study hypothesis is significantly validated.

Implications

Analysis paves way for an increased effort for using Psychological Capital as a valuable positive resource for combating academic stress. According to the National Mental Health Survey published by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Science (NIMHANS), the suicide incidence rate per 100,000 populations in the age group of 14-17 was 9.52, higher than the national average of 0.9%. In such a scenario it can be worthwhile to develop Psychological Capital in students. Results supported the hypothesis of the current inquiry. Psychological Capital was found to be negatively associated with academic stress. Psychological Capital can be used to develop positive psychology in the students. It can be an effective tool to check stressors that lead to stress. The foundations built in college years for excellence in career can be solidified by instilling positive psychology through psychological capital resource. In a study conducted by Sweetman and Luthans (2010), the authors reported that students having higher Psychological Capital scores may perceive their educational environment to be less stressful. The well-being of students may be enhanced due to their positive focus by inculcating psychological capital positive resource in them.

Limitations: The study comprises a cross-sectional study from one B-school only. Future research involving samples from different B-schools can be of further interest. Moreover, longitudinal studies can help better understand the role of Psychological Capital in tackling academic stress.

Keywords: Psychological Capital; Academic Stress; India

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