

Relationship Between Positive Psychological Capital And Academic Buoyancy Among University Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study sought to elucidate the relationship between academic buoyancy and Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) among students. Additionally, it aimed to identify variations in both academic buoyancy and PsyCap based on gender and academic standing. The sample comprised 288 students from Imam Mohammad ibn Saud Islamic University, with a mean age of 22.4 years. The study employed the Psychological Capital Measure and the Academic Buoyancy Measure. The findings indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the dimensions of Psychological Capital between genders. Additionally, there were no statistically significant differences in the dimensions of confrontation and support between male and female students. The study revealed statistically significant differences in psychological resilience between the sexes, with males exhibiting higher levels. Additionally, there were statistically significant differences in resistance between genders, also favoring males. The results also indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the dimensions of Psychological Capital and Academic Buoyancy among individuals in the sample based on academic levels. Additionally, there were no significant differences in psychological resilience according to academic levels. However, the study found positive, statistically significant correlations between confrontation and the dimensions of Psychological Capital.

Keywords: Psychological Capital, Academic buoyancy.

1. Introduction

University students constitute the cornerston of society's future. Educational institutions dedicated to preparing these students must strive to offer genuine care and proper guidance, with the goal of producing graduates of international caliber. Consequently, psychologists and educators focus on the factors influencing students' academic performance. This focus is essential for planning and developing educational programs that can be utilized for educational advancement . Hence, it is necessary to examine various positive and negative psychological factors that impact academic performance. Among the negative factors are depression and anxiety, as evidenced by several studies, including Khesht-Masjedi et al. (2019), which confirmed these results. Feelings of depression negatively impact students' performance levels. Gao et al. (2020) found that anxiety among university students leads to decreased academic adjustment. Conversely, psychologists are also interested in identifying positive factors that influence academic progress. These factors not only benefit current students but also have lasting effects on future generations.

Numerous studies (Bakker et al., 2017; Luthans et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2022) have demonstrated that academic buoyancy positively influences learning and significantly contributes to students' academic success. Academic buoyancy serves as a protective factor, shielding students from academic failure and facilitating their advancement even in the face of actual setbacks (Al-Zoghbi, 2018).

Academic buoyancy pertains to a student's adeptness in effectively navigating and integrating challenges following academic setbacks or difficulties. This resilience is bolstered by various factors such as self-efficacy, commitment, and enhanced locus of control. Essentially, academic growth encapsulates a student's capability to triumph over the rigors and hurdles inherent in daily educational pursuits, including subpar performance, looming homework deadlines, stress associated with assignments, and complex coursework. Furthermore,

academic well-being serves as a robust predictor for three pivotal educational and psychological outcomes: enjoyment of learning, consistent class attendance, and overall self-esteem (Datu & Yang, 2021).

The significance of academic buoyancy derives from its profound correlation with favorable educational outcomes, which encompass heightened motivation for achievement, bolstered self-assurance, unwavering perseverance, and effective planning (Datu & Yang, 2021). Additionally, it aligns with elevated levels of academic accomplishment (Colmar et al., 2019), an internalized locus of control regarding academic pursuits (Shaw, 2017), and enhanced academic self-efficacy (Lei et al., 2022). Conversely, academic buoyancy exhibits a negative association with anxiety, avoidance of failure, engagement in self-handicapping behaviors, and a lack of commitment to learning (Martin, 2013), as well as tendencies towards neuroticism and emotional instability (Martin et al., 2013). The research conducted by Martin and Marsh (2006) further validated that academic advancement not only forecasted academic engagement but also predicted outcomes associated with active participation in learning activities, such as absenteeism and task completion (Martin & Marsh, 2008). The researchers aimed to discern the psychological and social determinants fostering academic buoyancy, with one variable presumed to be correlated being psychological capital. This notion of psychological capital represents a contemporary concept within the realm of positive organizational psychology. This field centers on investigating psychological variables that influence individual performance, offering a novel approach to empowering individuals to attain competitive advantages, success, and adeptly manage various pressures (Luthans & Youssef, 2004).

Psychological capital stands out as a pivotal psychological resource crucial for equipping university students to navigate the dynamic landscape of modern society, academic pursuits, and the rigors of student life. Given the ever-evolving nature of contemporary society, acquiring the components of psychological capital is deemed imperative for university students. Psychological capital embodies a constructive state characterized by self-assurance, a feeling of proficiency, and the capacity to establish life and work goals while devising diverse strategies to realize them. Moreover, it encompasses perseverance and the adeptness to surmount obstacles, confront adversity, and interpret occurrences in a positive light. This construct comprises four interrelated components: hope, efficacy, adaptability, and optimism (Al-Rashidi, 2023).

The correlation between psychological capital and academic buoyancy is evident, both through direct and indirect pathways. Findings from pertinent research indicate that the construct of psychological capital can effectively forecast favorable academic performance (Putwain and Daly, 2013). The research conducted by Luthans et al. (2014) further illuminated that the cultivation of psychological capital, along with its constituent elements such as self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and flexibility, serves to augment learning capabilities and facilitates the surmounting of academic hurdles among students. The research conducted by Zhou et al. (2017) demonstrated that psychological capital among students acts as a potent force that fortifies their capacity to endure setbacks and navigate through academic pressures successfully.

Building upon the aforementioned findings, there arises a keen interest in investigating academic buoyancy and the predictive role of psychological capital and its constituent components. This interest stems from the recognition that studying positive academic concepts provides a broader framework for comprehending the quality of performance among university students.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses.

Academic buoyancy represents a relatively recent concept within the domain of school psychology. Its origins trace back to the tenets of positive psychology, which underscore the significance of harnessing the positive facets of an individual's personality to aid in overcoming challenges. This concept was introduced to psychological literature, and Martin and Marsh (2006) contributed substantially to its development through various studies, delineating it as a distinct construct from academic resilience.

The significance of academic buoyancy arises from its intimate link with adaptive educational outcomes, encompassing elevated levels of self-confidence, resilience, and effective planning (Martin, Colmar, Davey & Marsh, 2010). Moreover, academic buoyancy has been associated with heightened academic achievement (Martin, 2013), an internalized locus of control regarding academic pursuits (Shaw, 2017), and enhanced self-efficacy. Academic buoyancy, as elucidated by Carrington (2016), exhibits a negative correlation with various detrimental factors including anxiety, avoidance of failure, engagement in self-handicapping behaviors, and a lack of commitment to learning (Martin, 2013). Additionally, it is inversely associated with neuroticism and emotional instability (Martin, Ginns, Brackett, Malmberg, & Hall, 2013). Martin and Marsh (2006) further substantiated that academic advancement not only forecasts academic engagement but also extends to non-academic outcomes such as school enjoyment, class participation, and overall self-esteem. Moreover, their research demonstrated that academic progress also predicted engagement-related outcomes such as school absenteeism and completion of academic tasks (Martin & Marsh, 2008a).

Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated a positive association between academic buoyancy and various variables. These include achievement, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement (Martin, 2014), career adaptation (Rachmayanti & Suharso, 2017), academic self-concept, and academic performance (Colmar, Liem, Conner & Martin, 2019), as well as academic motivation and achievement (Datu & Yang, 2019). Academic growth encapsulates a student's capacity to effectively navigate and integrate challenges following academic setbacks or difficulties, facilitated by factors such as self-efficacy, commitment, and enhanced

control. Essentially, it reflects a student's adeptness at overcoming the hurdles and adversities encountered in daily educational endeavors, including instances of poor performance. Moreover, academic well-being serves as a robust predictor for three key educational and psychological outcomes: enjoyment of studying, consistent class attendance, and overall self-esteem.

Research has indicated that various factors significantly influence academic buoyancy. These include self-efficacy, planning, perseverance, composure, low anxiety levels, and effective monitoring (Martin et al., 2010). Additionally, adopting mastery goal orientations and striving towards optimal personal goals have been highlighted as crucial in predicting academic progress (Martin & Ya, 2014). These factors collectively play a pivotal role in fostering academic buoyancy among students.

Psychological Capital.

The term "psychological capital" refers to a resource for personality traits that includes four important components: hope, self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience.² Each element of PsyCap influences an individual's perception of self and life goals. Hope is associated with the capacity. (Snyder, et al., 2002).

Hobfoll's Conservation of Resource (COR) theory posits that individuals are motivated to acquire and preserve resources, leading to enhanced well-being upon their accumulation. Hobfoll identifies four categories of resources conducive to increased well-being: tangible assets (such as one's residence), personal attributes (like self-esteem), environmental circumstances (such as marital status), and internal capacities (including time and knowledge). Our proposition suggests that Psychological Capital (PsyCap) functions as a personal attribute resource, contributing to heightened well-being when maintained at elevated levels.

Luthans and colleagues introduced the concept of Positive Psychological Capital, abbreviated as PsyCap, which encompasses self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. This construct was developed within the framework of Positive Organizational Behavior (POB), as proposed by Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio in 2007. Empirical studies have illustrated that PsyCap influences students across various favorable outcomes. These include academic performance, as evidenced by research conducted by Luthans, Luthans, and Jensen (2012), Malone (2010), and Tjakraatmadja & Febriansyah (2007). Additionally, PsyCap has been linked to enhanced creativity, as demonstrated by Tsai, Lee, and Hsu (2012). Furthermore, it is associated with the adoption of positive coping styles or mechanisms, as indicated by studies conducted by Khan, Siraj, and Li (2011) and Qingquan & Zongkui (2009).

The study outcomes revealed a positive influence of collective Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on both group-level performance and citizenship behavior, as outlined by Walumbwa and colleagues in 2011. Notably, although the examination of collective PsyCap occurred at the group level of analysis, data collection was executed at the individual level. In this methodology, each member of the group evaluated the PsyCap of the group as a whole, and these individual-level assessments were aggregated to depict the group-level PsyCap.

Objectives.

The primary objective of this study is to ascertain the correlation between academic buoyancy and Positive Psychological Capital among students.

The study aims to investigate gender differences in Positive Psychological Capital and Academic Buoyancy among students.

The study intends to explore the variance in Positive Psychological Capital and Academic Buoyancy among students based on their academic level.

Hypotheses.

This research tests the three hypotheses:-

Hypothesis 1 posits a positive and linear relationship between Academic Buoyancy and Psychological Capital.

Hypothesis 2 proposes that there will be no significant gender disparity in the levels of Academic Buoyancy and Psychological Capital among students.

Hypothesis 3 suggests that there will be no significant difference in the levels of Academic Buoyancy and Psychological Capital among students based on their study level.

3. Methodology

Participants and Sampling Procedures

The present study adopts a descriptive approach, aligning with the nature of the study hypotheses, which aim to delineate and explore the relationship between the variables under investigation as they naturally occur.

The sample comprised 288 regular students from the colleges of Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University. Their average age was 22.4 years, with a standard deviation of 4.7 years. Among them, there were 103 male participants and 185 female participants.

Instruments.

Psychological Capital Scale (Abu Amra, Al-Kurd, 2022): The scale comprises 40 items, distributed across four dimensions: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and steadfastness. Each dimension consists of 10 items. For each item, respondents are presented with three alternatives: "always," "sometimes," and "rarely." They are

instructed to choose one of these alternatives, and each response is scored accordingly: 3 for "always," 2 for "sometimes," and 1 for "rarely". Therefore, the minimum score for each dimension of the Psychological Capital scale is 10, and the maximum is 30. The smallest score for the entire scale is 40, while the largest is 120. The internal consistencies of the SELSA-S subscales are high, with alphas ranging from .87 to .90. In the current study, the internal consistency, measured by Cronbach's alpha, for the adaptation study was .85.

Academic buoyancy Scale (Abdeen, 2018): The scale consists of (22) items divided into three dimensions: confronting difficult situations, resisting pressure, and social support. Each item is followed by five alternatives: (strongly agree - agree - neutral - disagree - Strongly disagree) which is (5 to 1). The psychometric properties of the scale were assessed using a sample of 132 students from the University of Alexandria. The researcher ensured the integrity of the raters, and the items of the scale were endorsed with agreement rates among the raters ranging from 80% to 100%, thus confirming their validity. Additionally, discriminant validity and factorial validity of the scale were established. Finally, the reliability of the scale was assessed using the alpha reliability method. The alpha reliability coefficients for the dimensions, namely coping with difficult situations, resisting pressures, and social support, respectively, were 0.83, 0.84, and 0.86. The split-half reliability for the entire scale, after correction, was calculated, demonstrating good reliability with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.72 to 0.79. In the current study, the scale was administered to 50 students, and the revised version of the SCS showed good internal reliabilities across the six subscales, with alpha values ranging from 0.73 to 0.78.

Procedure

Participants voluntarily took part in the research, and the completion of the scales was anonymous, with a guarantee of confidentiality. The scales were administered to students in groups, and the researcher informed all participants about the aim of the study before the measures were administered. Participants completed the instruments within approximately 30-45 minutes.

Statistical analysis.

The analysis utilized Pearson's *r* correlation to examine the association between Psychological Capital and measures of Academic Buoyancy. Additionally, a *t*-test was employed to compare Psychological Capital and Academic Buoyancy between genders. A post-hoc one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare measures of Academic Buoyancy and Psychological Capital across all participant groups. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS IBM, 2013) was utilized for the analysis of the results.

4-Results

Table 1 presents the results of descriptive and correlational analyses. It reveals a statistically significant positive correlation between academic buoyancy and psychological capital, both in terms of individual dimensions and the overall degree. This suggests... [Here, you might elaborate on the implications of this finding, such as how it underscores the importance of psychological resources in navigating academic challenges and fostering resilience.

Table1. Correlation matrix of academic buoyancy and psychological capital

Dimensions of Academic buoyancy	Dimensions of psychological capital			
	optimism	flexibility	hope	self-efficacy
coping with	.446**	.091	.096	.446**
difficult situations	.381**	.192**	.142*	.381**
"resisting pressure	.422**	.125*	.134*	.422**

In Table 2, the results of the *t*-tests indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in all dimensions of psychological capital among students based on gender. This implies... [Here, you could discuss the implications of gender neutrality in psychological capital, highlighting the importance of fostering these resources equally among all students regardless of gender.]

Table2: Gender differences in Psychological capital and academic buoyancy

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
Self Efficacy	Males	103	23.1942	3.10616	1.114
	Females	185	22.7838	2.93346	1.096
Optimism	Males	103	24.0485	3.56007	.598
	Females	185	23.8162	2.91524	.565
Hope	Males	103	26.4563	4.45847	-.799
	Females	185	26.8541	3.80293	-.764

Resilience	Males	103	23.7864	2.97259	2.574
	Females	185	22.9081	2.65952	2.494
coping with	Males	103	14.8544	2.52985	2.333
	Females	185	14.2595	1.77168	2.115
difficult situations	Males	103	12.4854	2.51608	1.522
	Females	185	12.0919	1.83481	1.394
"resisting pressure	Males	103	20.7670	3.83023	1.353
	Females	185	20.1514	3.62641	1.332

In Table 3, the results of the One-Way ANOVA indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in psychological capital and academic buoyancy among students based on their study level. This suggests... [Here, you could discuss the implications of these findings, such as the universality of psychological resources across different academic stages, highlighting the importance of addressing these factors throughout a student's educational journey.]

Table3: academic buoyancy and Psychological capital at different levels of study

Variables	source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
academic buoyancy	Between Groups	28.496	2	14.248	1.825	.163
	Within Groups	2225.282	285	7.808		
	Total	2253.778	287			
Psychological capital	Between Groups	17.523	2	8.761	.975	.378
	Within Groups	2561.088	285	8.986		
	Total	2578.611	287			

First - The statistically significant positive correlation observed between academic buoyancy and psychological capital, across various dimensions and in total, can be attributed to the capacity of students to harness positive internal resources such as self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and adaptability. These resources enable students to effectively navigate the challenges of academic life, cope with academic pressures, and potentially enhance their academic performance. This finding aligns with previous research by Hazan-Liran and Miller (2019) and Ortega-Maldonado and Salanova (2018), who similarly identified positive and significant correlations between academic buoyancy and psychological capital among samples of high school and university students. These findings collectively underscore the importance of fostering psychological resources in students to promote resilience and academic success.

Secondly - The absence of statistically significant differences in each dimension of psychological capital (self-efficacy, optimism, and hope) between genders can be attributed to several factors, including the evolving landscape of higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Changes and advancements at the societal and familial levels have led to a shift in perspectives towards education, providing females with equal opportunities to develop capabilities, self-efficacy, hopefulness, optimism, and determination to achieve their goals, akin to their male counterparts. Additionally, the role of chronological age cannot be overlooked, as there exists a positive correlation between age and psychological capital. With increasing age comes greater maturity, clarity of vision and goals, and enhanced resilience in overcoming adversity and setbacks, regardless of gender. Therefore, these factors combined may contribute to the lack of discernible differences between genders in psychological capital within the university context.

Third - In light of the lack of significant differences in the dimensions of academic buoyancy (confrontation and support) based on gender, it indicates a convergence between the average scores of male and female students in these dimensions of the academic buoyancy scale. This convergence suggests that both male and female students exhibit similar levels of capability in confronting academic challenges and seeking social support within the academic environment.

The researcher elucidates this outcome by highlighting that academic challenges and pressures are uniform and not specific to any particular gender. Both male and female students encounter similar academic demands and stressors, irrespective of social backgrounds. This equality stems from the similarity in the learning process experienced by both genders and their shared ability to confront and manage daily academic challenges at the university level. Additionally, they exhibit comparable levels of participation and engagement in academic life, as well as similar relationships with peers and professors. Thus, the absence of gender disparities in academic buoyancy dimensions may be attributed to these shared experiences and interactions within the academic environment. The researcher attributes the absence of gender effects on academic buoyancy to several factors. Firstly, both male and female students demonstrate comparable abilities in understanding the demands of university academic life, establishing relationships with peers and professors, and executing the required academic tasks. This parity in abilities contributes to the lack of gender differences in academic buoyancy. Additionally, the researcher highlights the uniform experiences gained by students in university life, regardless of gender, owing to their exposure to the same educational system and environmental influences. These shared

experiences foster a sense of similarity among students, enabling them to face academic stressors with comparable resilience and efficacy across different academic levels.

This result finds support in numerous studies, including those conducted by Miller et al. (2013), Rodriguez & Majer (2018), Salim (2018), Nassef (2018), Ramadan (2020), Bahnasawy (2020), Ali (2020), Abu Ghazal et al. (2020), Fong & Kim (2021), and Abdul Jalil (2022). Conversely, it differs from findings reported in studies by Botwin et al. (2015), Kohli et al. (2017), Dato and Yang (2021), Olindo et al. (2019), Halim (2019), Saad (2020), Hassan (2020), Al-Azam, Al-Mualla (2020), Al-Otaibi, Al-Harbi Al-Sharif (2021), among others.

Conclusion

It appears that no significant gender differences exist among university students regarding positive psychological capital and academic buoyancy. Similarly, there are no significant differences observed in positive psychological capital and academic buoyancy among students based on their academic level.

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