

## Psychological Capital and Work Engagement of College Teachers

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Teachers are the backbone of any society as they shape and mould the nation builders. With the implementation of NEP 2020, the responsibilities of the teachers have become more diverse and require an enhanced engagement and commitment more than ever. Hence it is important to understand their psychological capital and work engagement as they enter the era of a new education Policy. Psychological capital (PsyCap) consists of efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience that predicts the performance and satisfaction of an individual working in an organizational setting (Luthans, Avolio, et al 2007). In addition, work engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al 2001). Therefore, in the present study the relationship between the two variables was examined to assess the positive performance and job satisfaction of college teachers. Purposive sampling was employed. The sample consisted of 91 college teachers teaching in Nagaland. Psychological Capital questionnaire PCQ (Luthans, Avolio and Avey, 2007) and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) was used to collect the data. Results were analyzed using SPSS version 21.

**Keywords:** Psychological capital, work engagement, college teachers, job satisfaction

The introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) in 2020 brought about major changes in the education system of the country. The focus on vocational, multidisciplinary and holistic education has brought about a surge in the workload for teachers. This major transition has been challenging for teachers who now have to equip themselves with new skills and knowledge. The NEP 2020 has also created a lot of confusion among teachers and students alike in its implementation process. Furthermore, as teachers are seen as major stakeholders in education and contribute to the development and transforming the lives of the future generation, it is important to study their wellbeing and work engagement with the recent changes seen in the education landscape.

Over the past few years, there has been an intense surge of interest in the field of

positive psychology and its impact on the overall well-being of individuals'. An important concept in the field is Psychological Capital (PsyCap) which is regarded as an important resource to improve performance in the workplace, productivity and positive behaviour of employees in an organization. PsyCap is defined as "an individual's positive psychological state of development and is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success." (Luthans., Youssef., & Avolio., 2007). Thus, the PsyCap measures

four components, i.e., efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience. Previous research has reported that PsyCap results in better job performance, high work engagement, high job satisfaction, healthy work relationships, lower workplace burnout and overall well-being of employees in an organization (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman., 2007; Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010).

Work engagement is another important parameter in this study. According to Meng et al (2022), work engagement involves the emotional, cognitive and physical aspects of individuals in carrying out their work with fervour and dedication. It is an important resource that improves or increases the job efficacy of an individual. "Engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any object, event, individual, or behavior. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Absorption, is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Previous research finding has highlighted that work engagement is an essential component required to improve the task performance of an individual (Christian et al., 2011). Work engagement has also been reported to have a positive relationship with the overall job performance of an employee (Rich et al., 2010). Employees who

are engaged in their work are reported to experience positive emotions, exhibit optimal physical health, are able to utilize their skills and abilities to be productive and finally, they are able to transfer their attitude of positive engagement to their fellow colleagues which in turn increases the overall functioning in the workplace (Bakker, 2009).

The positive relationship between PsyCap and work engagement have been evidenced by previous studies (Saleem, et al, 2002; Hodges, 2010; Simons and Buitendach, 2013; Nordin, et al, 2019). In another study by Rizana, Helmy, & Wahyuni, (2022), the components of PsyCap (self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience) were reported to have an effect on the work engagement of teachers in Indonesia.

### **Significance and need of the study**

As it has been clearly evidenced in the mentioned studies, it is seen that there is a correlation between the PsyCap and work engagement of employees, when the four components of PsyCap (self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience) is high then the work engagement will automatically improve, however, there is a dearth of research conducted in this field among employees in Nagaland. In light of the major challenges and changes faced by teachers with the implementation of NEP 2020 and to contribute to the growing research of PsyCap and work engagement, the present research will examine the variables on the College Teachers of Nagaland.

### **Research Objectives:**

- To assess the gender difference of psychological capital among the teachers in Nagaland
- To assess the gender difference of work engagement among the teachers in Nagaland

- To assess the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement of college teachers in Nagaland

### Method

#### Sample

The total sample size of the study is 91 college teachers (Government and Private) currently employed in Nagaland

#### Procedure

Participants were contacted via social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Email) and asked to complete a google form. The researchers recruited participants from college teachers currently teaching at colleges in different districts of Nagaland. The study was approved by the ethical committee, Department of Psychology, Dimapur Government College.

#### Assessment tools

*Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (PCQ-12) Self-Rater Short Form (Luthans, Avolio and Avey, 2007): The questionnaire consists of 12 items and measures four components namely, efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience. PCQ-12 has undergone extensive psychometric analyses and support from samples representing service, manufacturing, education, military and cross-cultural sectors. Each of the four components in PsyCap is measured by 3 items. The

resulting score represents an individual's level of positive PsyCap.

*Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES-9)(Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004): The questionnaire consists of 9 items and measures three components namely, vigor, dedication and absorption. UWES-9 has reported of strong psychometric properties across various samples. Each of the three components in UWES is measured by 3 items. The resulting score represents an individual's level of work engagement

#### Analysis of results

The obtained data was analysed on Mann Whitney-U Test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test using student's statistical package SPSS.

#### Ethical Considerations

Informed consent of the participants was obtained. No mention of the names of the participants is mentioned anywhere in the study and confidentiality of the data is maintained

#### Results and Discussion

Frequency and percentage was computed and it was found that there were 28 males (30.8%) and 63 females (69.2%) in the present study. Mann Whitney U test was used to examine the gender differences in Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Work Engagement.

Table 1. Showing the values on Psychological Capital and the sub-scales of Male and female teachers

Variables	Gender	N	Mean Rank	U-Value	p-value	REMARK
Self-efficacy	Male	28	57.27	566.500	.005	SIG
	Female	63	40.99			
Hope	Male	28	52.18	709.000	.133	NOT SIG
	Female	63	43.25			
Resilience	Male	28	51.79	692.000	.122	NOT SIG
	Female	63	42.66			

Optimism	Male	28	53.16	681.500	.075	NOT SIG
	Female	63	42.82			
Overall Psy Cap	Male	28	55.57	614.000	.021	SIG
	Female	63	41.75			

A Mann Whitney U test was conducted to examine the difference between male and female teachers on Psychological Capital and the sub-scales. The results indicated significant difference between the two groups on self-efficacy,  $U= 566.500$ ,  $p= .005$ . The mean rank for the males was 57.27, while the mean rank for the females was 40.99 on self-efficacy. These findings reveal that male teachers have higher level of confidence in their teaching skills in comparison to the female teachers. The results may be reflective of the fact that male teachers are more equipped to persist when they are faced with a challenging task and are able to put in the extra effort when face with such challenges (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007). As self-efficacy is influenced by an array of factors which might include the culture, society, personal experiences and family upbringing, the male participants reporting a higher self-efficacy than the female teachers may be a reflection of these factors. Sun & Dapat (2024) and Wu (2024) reported of similar findings and reported male teachers to exhibit higher self-efficacy than female teachers. It is contradictory to studies conducted by Atta, et al., 2012 and Swain, Sahoo, and Behera, 2024 which reported of higher self-efficacy in female teachers in

comparison to males. And Kour (2022) reported of no significant difference between male and female teachers on their level of self-efficacy.

Significant difference was also observed on the overall psychological capital  $U= .005$ ,  $p= .021$ . The mean rank for the males was 55.57, while the mean rank for the females was 41.75 on overall psychological capital. A possible reason for the gender difference in the overall Psy Cap may be because of the gendered roles that are adopted and the perception of male and female teachers towards their own skills, confidence and capability as a teacher. The experiences of the male teachers in their work environment, the array of support that they receive and the opportunities that they receive to grow and progress may be a probable explanation for the difference. Males reporting of higher Psy Cap may also reveal that male teachers are better equipped to use their capacities and resources to deal with any situation that may arise as a teacher. The finding of the present study is consistent with studies reported by Mahipalan (2018) and Wu (2024). No significant gender difference was reported in hope, resilience and optimism. Rani & Chaturvedula (2018) and Chahal (2022) also reported of similar findings.

Table 2. Showing the values of work engagement and the sub-scales on male and female teachers

Variables	Gender	N	Mean Rank	U-Value	p-value	REMARK
Vigor	Male	28	48.88	801.500	.486	NOT SIG
	Female	63	44.72			
Dedication	Male	28	48.70	806.500	.507	NOT SIG
	Female	63	44.80			

Absorption	Male	28	46.77	860.500	.852	NOT SIG
	Female	63	45.66			
Overall Work Engagement	Male	28	49.41	786.500	.411	NOT SIG
	Female	63	44.48			

Mann Whitney U test was computed to see the gender differences on overall work engagement as well as the subscales of work engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption). The findings from Table 2 indicated that there were no gender differences in vigor  $U = 801.500, p = .486$ , dedication,  $U = 806.500, P = .507$ ; absorption,  $U = 860.500, p = .852$ . In addition the results also highlighted that there was no gender difference in overall work engagement,  $U = 786.500, p = .411$ . Hartman and Barber (2020), also reported no gender difference in work engagement although it was found that males have significantly higher career aspirations than their female counterpart. Similarly when we look at the mean ranks of males at 49.41 and females at 44.48, it can be assumed that males have a better work engagement than females. Moreover, when it came to vigor, dedication and absorption, mean ranks for males and females differed indicating that males had higher levels of vigor, dedication and absorption than females. On the contrary, these findings counter a previous study which highlighted that gender differences influence work engagement and females were reported to have a better work engagement compared to males (Gulzar & Teli, 2018).

Table 3. Correlation between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Work Engagement

Variable	Work Engagement
Psychological Capital (PsyCap)	.614**

\*\*Correlation sig. at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between

psychological capital and work engagement (Table 3). The findings highlighted that there was a significant moderate positive relationship between psychological capital and work engagement  $r(89) = .61, p \leq 0.01$ . This is supported by previous studies which also indicated a positive relationship between psychological capital and work engagement suggesting that higher levels of psychological capital fosters higher levels of work engagement (Biswal, Srivastava, Alli, 2023; Giancaspro, Callea, & Manuti, 2022). Furthermore, a study by Yao et al (2022) reported that psychological capital was found to play a moderating role in work engagement and Luthans et al (2008) also highlights that psychological capital which is often seen as one's internal resources positively impacts an individuals' efficiency at work.

### Conclusion

The present study examined the gender difference in psychological capital and work engagement of college teachers in Nagaland and also the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement. The findings revealed that there were significant gender difference in self-efficacy and overall psychological capital. However, no gender differences were found in overall work engagement and the subscales of work engagement. Furthermore, the correlation showed that there was a positive relationship between psychological capital and work engagement among college teachers in Nagaland. The present study may help policy makers to understand the organizational behaviour of teachers and create awareness on these concepts for their overall

productivity in the workplace. Future studies can explore these variables in relation to other socio-demographic characteristics using a larger sample size. Inferential statistics such as regression and ANOVA may be used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of workplace productivity and engagement.

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