



TEACHER EDUCATORS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL IN PROMOTING HUMAN VALUES IN EDUCATION

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

The part that teacher educators play in influencing the course of education is paramount, as they not only provide knowledge from academia but also serve as agents of change in fostering human values. This paper explores the critical role of psychological capital (PsyCap) in promoting human values within educational settings. PsyCap, comprising self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, can have a substantial impact on teacher educators' capacity to instill core human values like empathy, integrity, and respect in their students. Drawing on theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, this study examines how PsyCap can enhance teacher educators' well-being, professional development, and their ability to navigate challenges in education. It argues that cultivating PsyCap in teacher educators not only benefits their personal growth but also translates into more efficient methods of teaching that prioritize social and emotional learning, ethical responsibility, and value-based education. Through a comprehensive review of literature and case studies, the paper highlights the interplay between psychological capital and human values in education, providing beneficial recommendations for integrating PsyCap-focused interventions in teacher education programs. According to the findings, teacher educators who cultivate strong PsyCap are better equipped to foster environments that promote positive human values, ultimately supporting the growth of compassionate and responsible future citizens.

Keywords: *Teacher Educators, Psychological Capital, Human Values, Education, Self-Efficacy, Resilience, Professional Development, Social and Emotional Learning, Value-Based Education*

Introduction

Teacher educators occupy a unique and influential position in the educational system. As the individuals responsible for shaping the future generation of teachers, they are responsible for more than just imparting subject knowledge and pedagogical techniques but also with instilling ethical values and social responsibilities in their students. In this sense, teacher educators are not merely transmitters of knowledge – they are also role models, mentors, and agents of change who shape the broader social and moral dimensions of education (Lovat et al., 2010). As educational systems across the globe continue to evolve, there is an increasing recognition that the promotion of human values – such as empathy, respect, social justice, and responsibility – must be at the core of teaching practices. These values are essential for fostering inclusive, equitable, and compassionate learning environments. Students acquire more than just academic knowledge but also develop the emotional intelligence and ethical frameworks needed to address the difficulties of a more complicated and interconnected world.

However, promoting human values in education is no simple task. Teacher educators themselves face numerous challenges, including the emotional and psychological demands of teaching, the pressure to meet institutional expectations, and the task of preparing future educators to work in increasingly diverse and dynamic classroom settings (Hargreaves, 2000). These issues frequently result in burnout, stress, and a diminished sense of professional satisfaction. As such, it is necessary that teacher educators are equipped with the psychological tools and resilience needed to navigate these challenges effectively. Psychological capital (PsyCap) – a concept rooted in positive psychology – has emerged as a powerful resource for enhancing educators' emotional resilience, well-being, and overall effectiveness. PsyCap is composed of four components: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007). These attributes collectively enable individuals to maintain a positive outlook, overcome obstacles, and persist under challenging circumstances, each of which is paramount qualities for those in charge of forming the upcoming generation of educators.

While the benefits of PsyCap for educators' well-being and job performance have been well-documented (Luthans et al., 2007; Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009), there is limited research that directly connects PsyCap with the promotion of human values in teacher education. This gap in the literature presents an opportunity to explore how psychological strengths can enhance the ability of teacher educators to model and instill values such as empathy, integrity, fairness, and responsibility in their students. If PsyCap can indeed foster these qualities, it may provide a vital mechanism for addressing the increasing need for socially conscious and value-driven educational practices. Teacher educators who are psychologically resilient, hopeful, and optimistic are more likely to create supportive, value-based educational settings that encourage the development of ethical and socially responsible future educators.

The central aim of this work is to explore the psychological capital's role in enabling teacher educators to act as agents of change in the promotion of human values in education. By reviewing existing literature on PsyCap and its implications for teacher development, this paper seeks to demonstrate how cultivating psychological strengths in teacher educators can improve their capacity to model and instill core human values in their students. Ultimately, the paper argues that PsyCap is not only beneficial for the professional and personal well-being of teacher educators but also essential for creating a value-driven educational system that prepares future teachers to navigate the complex ethical and social concerns of the twenty-first century.

The Role of Teacher Educators as Agents of Change

Teacher educators play a crucial part in forming both the cognitive and affective dimensions of future teachers' development (Lovat et al., 2010). As mentors, coaches, and role models, teacher educators influence the professional identity of their students, guiding them not only in pedagogical skills, but also in the development of core human values. This dual responsibility of teaching both the "what" and the "how" of education underscores the significance of teacher educators being equipped with both technical and emotional competencies.

A critical component of this emotional competence is the ability to model and promote human values within the classroom. Teacher educators who embody these values, such as respect, integrity, and empathy, provide powerful examples for their students, who, in turn, adopt similar values in their own methods of instruction (Noddings, 2012). This is especially relevant in times of increasing diversity and global challenges, where the ability to foster inclusivity, equity, and ethical responsibility is crucial (Banks, 2015). Teacher educators, therefore, serve as agents of social change, shaping the ethical foundations upon which the educational system is built.

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Its Role in Education

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a construct that emphasizes positive psychological resources and has been shown to impact various aspects of professional and personal life. It is composed of four components:

1. **Self-efficacy** – Belief in one's ability to accomplish tasks and achieve goals.
2. **Optimism** – The tendency to expect positive outcomes and look for solutions to problems.
3. **Hope** – The capacity to set and achieve goals, along with the motivation to overcome obstacles.
4. **Resilience** – Being able to recover from setbacks, adapts, and endures despite difficulties (Luthans et al., 2007).

Addressing the teacher educators, these components of PsyCap are particularly relevant. Teacher educators face multiple challenges, including emotional demands, classroom management issues, and societal expectations (Hargreaves, 2000). PsyCap helps educators build psychological resilience to cope with these stressors and maintain high levels of motivation and well-being, which, in turn, enhances their teaching effectiveness and their ability to model human values.

Studies indicate that PsyCap positively influences job satisfaction, teaching efficacy, and professional engagement (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009). Teacher educators possessing elevated levels of Psychological Capital are more inclined to exhibit behaviors such as positive reinforcement, empathy, and proactive problem-solving—all essential qualities for promoting values in the classroom.

Psychological Capital and the Promotion of Human Values in Teacher Education

The promotion of human values in education requires intentional effort and consistency. Teacher educators with strong PsyCap are better positioned to establish educational settings that encourage ethical development and emotional well-being. For instance, high levels of self-efficacy enable teacher educators to confidently approach their work, which can improve their capacity to lead discussions on difficult topics like social justice, inequality, and ethical dilemmas (Bandura, 1997). Similarly, optimism helps teacher educators maintain a positive outlook, despite obstacles, allowing them to inspire their students to adopt a similar perspective.

Resilience, one of the most critical components of PsyCap, enables teacher educators to navigate setbacks and difficulties in their professional lives without losing sight of their larger goals. This is particularly important in promoting values related to perseverance, adaptability, and social responsibility, as teacher educators possessing a high level of resilience are more likely

to model these behaviors in their teaching (Luthans et al., 2007). Furthermore, hope provides the motivation necessary to set ambitious goals for both themselves and their students, fostering an environment where human values such as responsibility and integrity can flourish.

The connection between PsyCap, or psychological capital, and various outcomes in education has been the focus of growing interest over the past two decades. While much of the study has focused on PsyCap's impact on teacher performance, job satisfaction, and well-being, there is also an emerging body of literature exploring how PsyCap influences the promotion of human values in educational settings. This section examines empirical research that investigate PsyCap's role in educational contexts, with particular emphasis on its relevance for teacher educators as agents of change.

PsyCap and Teacher Effectiveness

A key area of research served as a connection between PsyCap and teacher effectiveness. Studies consistently show that educators with greater degrees of PsyCap exhibit greater job satisfaction, improved professional engagement, and enhanced teaching performance (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009). For instance, Luthans et al. (2008) discovered that educators with greater PsyCap were more likely to demonstrate greater emotional resilience and resourcefulness in managing classroom challenges. This emotional resilience is particularly important for teacher educators, who are expected to not only provide skills and knowledge but also to model positive behaviors, such as self-regulation, empathy, and ethical decision-making.

Youssef-Morgan and Luthans (2013) expanded on this by demonstrating that educators with high PsyCap were more likely to establish conducive learning environments in the classroom that fostered collaboration and mutual respect among students. These educators, distinguished by elevated levels of optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience, were better equipped to cultivate an atmosphere where human values such as fairness, empathy, and inclusion were prioritized. This aligns with Zins and Elias' (2007) argument that educators' emotional well-being and psychological strengths are key to facilitating social-emotional learning (SEL) and promoting values-based education.

PsyCap and Teacher Well-Being

Another area of empirical research has focused on the connection between PsyCap and teacher well-being. Teachers face significant emotional and psychological demands, and their ability to cope with these demands directly influences their professional effectiveness and personal satisfaction (Hargreaves, 2000). Studies by Avey et al. (2009) and Seligman (2011) highlight the positive relationship between PsyCap and overall job satisfaction, which consequently impacts teachers' commitment to their profession and their ability to remain engaged with students.

Addressing the teacher educators, well-being is particularly crucial. Teacher educators who endure greater levels of stress or burnout are less likely to effectively model human values like integrity, empathy and respect. Conversely, those with higher PsyCap levels are better able to manage the stresses associated with their role and maintain a positive outlook on their work. Clarke et al. (2016) discovered that teacher educators with strong psychological capital were more inclined to report elevated levels of professional engagement, lower levels of burnout, and enhanced satisfaction with their capacity to promote positive student outcomes. This emotional and psychological well-being enables them to effectively model and integrate human values into their teaching practices.

PsyCap and Professional Development

Professional development is another key area where PsyCap plays a significant role. Teacher educators must continually engage in professional learning to improve their teaching effectiveness and integrate into changing educational landscapes. Investigations indicate that teacher educators exhibiting elevated levels of PsyCap are more inclined to embrace ongoing professional development and engage in reflective practices that improve their pedagogical skills (Luthans et al., 2007; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013). For example, Seligman (2011) showed that when teacher educators foster a growth mindset—an aspect of hope and resilience—they are better equipped to participate in reflective practices that promote both personal growth and the progress of their students. Similarly, Zins and Elias (2007) observed that the teacher educators who possess higher PsyCap are more inclined to incorporate SEL and human values into their teaching practices, creating more supportive and ethically oriented classroom environments. These reflective practices and a commitment to ongoing development are essential in ensuring that future educators possess not only academic proficiency but also ethically grounded and committed to social responsibility.

PsyCap in the Context of Human Values Education

A recent development strand of research has explored the intersection of PsyCap and human values education. Reviews indicate that teacher educators who cultivate PsyCap are more effective at promoting human values such as empathy, social responsibility, and integrity. For example, Lovat et al. (2010) discovered that values-based education is most successful when educators possess psychological resilience and the capacity to remain hopeful when confronted with obstacles. Teacher Educators demonstrating these qualities are more inclined to cultivate classroom environments conducive where student are encouraged to explore ethical dilemmas, engage in moral reasoning, and foster an awareness of social responsibility. Noddings (2012) further explored how teacher educators who model values such as care and empathy can influence the ethical development of the students. According to Noddings, Teacher educators need to be more than just teach human values but embody them, demonstrate empathy, attentiveness, and moral commitment in their interactions with students. Research by

Lovat et al. (2010) supports this view, showing that teacher educators with greater levels of PsyCap were more successful at promoting value-based education because they were better able to model these qualities consistently. These educators were able to use their emotional strengths to foster an inclusive, caring, and value-driven classroom environment that encouraged students to internalize human values and ethical behavior.

PsyCap as a Predictor of Teacher Educators' Ability to Navigate Diversity

An important aspect of modern education is its increasing emphasis on diversity and inclusion. As the student population becomes more diverse, teacher educators must be equipped with the psychological resources to manage diverse classroom dynamics and promote values like equality, fairness, and respect for all students. Studies by Banks (2015) and Clarke et al. (2016) demonstrated that teacher educators with higher levels of PsyCap are better able to navigate challenges related to diversity and inclusion, demonstrating a greater capacity to work towards social justice and equity in their teaching practices. Avey et al. (2009) discovered that teacher educators with higher PsyCap levels were better able to address issues of racial and cultural diversity in the classroom, responding to students' needs with empathy and fairness. These educators were more inclined to create conducive environments that recognized and celebrated cultural differences while also promoting common human values such as respect and understanding. By cultivating PsyCap, teacher educators are more capable of helping students from different kinds of backgrounds and to model inclusive behaviors that reflect the values of fairness, respect, and empathy. In summary, empirical research supports the significant role of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) in enhancing teacher educators' well-being, professional effectiveness, and ability to promote human values in educational settings. Studies consistently show that PsyCap contributes to teacher educators' resilience, emotional intelligence, and capacity to model ethical behavior. This body of research highlights the significance of PsyCap in developing educators who not only share knowledge from academia but also promote values like empathy, integrity and social responsibility. However, there remains a necessity for additional research focused specifically on how PsyCap can be leveraged to foster human values in teacher education programs and, in turn, prepare future educators to address the complex ethical challenges they will face in diverse and dynamic classrooms.

Discussion

This review underscores the important role that Psychological Capital plays in the ability of teacher educators to promote human values in education. PsyCap provides the psychological resources necessary for teacher educators to manage the demands of their profession while maintaining a strong focus on fostering values-based education. Furthermore, the components of PsyCap—self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience—are directly aligned with the competencies required to teach and model human values such as empathy, fairness, and respect. It is evident that by cultivating PsyCap, teacher educators can not only improve their own well-being and professional efficacy but also create classrooms that are more conducive to the progress of ethical and responsible future educators. The review highlights the need for teacher education programs to intentionally integrate PsyCap development into their curriculum, offering workshops and opportunities for professional development that emphasize on building emotional resilience, fostering hope, and enhancing self-efficacy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, Psychological Capital is a valuable asset for teacher educators seeking to promote human values within educational settings. By enhancing PsyCap, teacher educators can improve their ability to manage stress, engage in reflective practice, and model the human values that are important for creating ethical and inclusive classrooms. The literature findings suggest the following recommendations:

1. **Integrating PsyCap Development into Teacher Education Programs:** Teacher preparation programs should incorporate training on PsyCap components, such as workshops on building resilience and fostering optimism.
2. **Providing Supportive Networks:** Institutions should create support networks for teacher educators that emphasize emotional and psychological well-being.
3. **Encouraging Reflective Practice:** Encouraging teacher educators to engage in reflective practices will help them assess the impact of their own PsyCap on their teaching and their students' development.

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