

Psychological Capital and Proactive Attitude Among Emerging Adults

Ria Marilyn John¹, Sandhra Vinod², Amany Baiju³, Krupa Dinah Mathews⁴

^{1,2,3}PG-MSc Psychology Department of Psychology, Kristu Jyoti College of Management and Technology, Changanacherry, Kerala, India.

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Kristu Jyoti College of Management and Technology, Changanacherry, Kerala, India.

Email ID: riamarilynjohn@gmail.com¹, sandhravinod702@gmail.com², amanyabaiju729@gmail.com³, krupa.mathews94@gmail.com⁴

Abstract

A person's positive psychological condition of growth, that is characterized by high levels of the four components of HERO feelings- Hope, Efficacy, Resilience and Optimism, is known as Psychological Capital. Proactive Attitude (PA) is a personality trait that is associated with motivation and action. It is a notion that there is an array of opportunities for change that can be made to improve oneself and one's environment. The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between Psychological Capital and Proactive Attitude among Emerging Adults. A sample was collected from a specific age group of 18 to 25 belonging to several colleges in Kerala. The research instruments used were Psychological Capital Assessment Scale and Ralf Schwarzer's Proactive Attitude Scale. The Statistical analysis was done using SPSS. The data was not normally distributed therefore, the statistical analysis used was Spearman's Rank Correlation. The finding of the study indicates that there is significant relationship between all four subscales of Psychological Capital- Hope, Efficacy, Resiliency, Optimism and Proactive Attitude among Emerging Adults. All the four elements of Psychological Capital were positively correlated with Proactive Attitude.

Keywords: Efficacy; Hope; Optimism; Proactive Attitude; Psychological Capital

1. Introduction

Fred Luthans, et al., (2007), defined psychological capital as 'an individual's positive psychological state of development'. Luthans introduced the idea of psychological capital. The four components of psychological capital are hope, efficacy, resiliency and optimism, which is crucial for one's well-being and happiness. Hope is a mental process that encourages one to discover their goal-directed determination to and develop strategies to achieve them, which raises the possibility of achieving desired outcomes. Hope can only be realized if the path is realistic and attainable, not if it is simple or quick. According to Bandura (1997), people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects is known as efficacy. It is the feeling that one can effectively follow a path forward to achieve goals after making the required effort. Reivich & Shatté et al. (2002) and Fred Luthans et al. (2002) defined resiliency as the ability to overcome unfavorable occurrences and become stronger after overcoming negative events. Another explanation for resiliency is the capacity to

bounce back from difficult life experiences, such as challenging life events or environments. It is the capacity to overcome difficulty and deal with challenges, particularly by being flexible in one's thoughts, feelings, and actions. Optimism is the belief that one will succeed both in the present and in the future. It is a way of thinking in which individuals attribute positive events to the skills and abilities of oneself or their team while attributing negative life events to temporary, external events. It is important to note that optimism is not just the expectation that everything in the future will go smoothly but rather it is the belief that even though there will be challenges in life the future will be generally positive. Proactive attitude is the belief that one has the ability within themselves to take initiative and responsibilities for their own actions and improve their own environment through positive change. The key components of proactive attitude are resourcefulness, responsibility, values and vision. An individual with proactive attitude believes that they have the resources within

themselves or outside them to overcome every challenge that they face. That is, they believe that they have external resources like goods, services and people and also internal resources like intelligence, courage, and strength within themselves that allows them to be persistent in their endeavors and set goals. These individuals keep a balanced view about blaming themselves or others for the negative and positive events that happen to them. There are two kinds of responsibilities that has to be differentiated, they are the responsibility that an individual should accept for their past event and the responsibility to make things possible. One of the most important component of psychological capital is efficacy, which is the belief in one's own ability, can significantly predict proactive attitude as most people high in efficacy are more likely to engage in behaviors that are new and challenging as they are less likely to wait for changes in the environment rather they are confident enough to make things work for them. The second important component of psychological capital is optimism, which has a strong link to proactive attitude because individuals who are optimistic are more likely to see challenges as opportunities for growth. Since optimistic individuals also believe that their efforts will lead to positive outcomes, they are more likely to process a prosocial attitude. Resiliency is another critical aspect of psychological capital which allows individuals to bounce back whenever they are faced with failures. This dimension of psychological capital is very important for maintaining proactive attitude as resilient individuals are more likely to show persistence when faced with difficulties. Hope which is another one of the four dimensions of psychological capital helps in fostering proactive attitude in individuals as it can act as a motivational force to strive and achieve our goals despite the challenges. The need and significance of the study states that the psychological capital (PsyCap) and proactive attitude are essential in academic success as they can lead to better academic performance, engagement, and well-being. Students with positive Psychological Capital can improve learning abilities and academic performance. It is important for building positive role models for emerging adults,

stimulating hope and optimism and change the way in which they construct a leadership identity. Overall, this facilitates Leadership qualities. Proactive Attitude helps them to look at everything as an opportunity for improvement [1-3].

1.1. Review of Literature

Brett C. Luthans, Kyle W. Luthans and James B. Avey (2013) aimed to investigate whether psychological capital (PsyCap) of business students can be developed through a specific training intervention. The sample consisted of 214 undergraduate business students from 2 mid-sized Midwestern universities. The participants were randomly assigned to either treatment or control groups at the classroom level, resulting in a treatment group of 118 students and a control group of 96 students. The researchers used psychological capital scale which consisted of 24 items to collect data. Purposive sampling method was used. The result suggests that PsyCap intervention was effective in enhancing the psychological capital of business students, indicating that such training can positively influence their academic performance and overall psychological resources. Pavol Kačmár, Daniela Baranyiová, Lenka Zentková (2022) conducted a study to examine the role of dimensions of emerging adulthood and psychological capital in the intention to stay in organizations in young people in the developmental stage of emerging adulthood. The sample consisted of 192 participants in the age range of 19–29 years, 79 were men and 113 were women. The researchers used the revised version of Compound Psychological Scale (CPC-12R), IDEA-8 Scale, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES – 17) to collect data. Methods including convenience sampling method and online data collection were used. Results showed that there was a total effect of PsyCap on the intention to remain in organization. Priscilla Rose Prasath, Peter C. Mather, Christine Suniti Bhat, Justine K. James (2021) conducted a research which examined the relationships between psychological capital (PsyCap), coping strategies, and well-being among university students using self-report measures. The sample consisted of 609 university students from the United States. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 66. The inventories used were Psychological Capital Questionnaire –

Short Version (PCQ-12), Brief COPE Questionnaire, PERMA-Profiler. Results revealed that well-being was Significantly lower during COVID-19 compared to before the onset of the pandemic. Multiple linear regression Analyses indicated that PsyCap predicted well-being, and structural equation modelling demonstrated the mediating role of coping strategies between PsyCap and well-being. Tanzila Nobel and Huma Zafar (2012) performed research on the role of parental attachment and proactive attitude among adolescents. The study was conducted on a sample of 600 adolescents ranging from 13 to 19. The scales used were subscale of the inventory of parental and peer attachment (mother attachment scale and father attachment scale) and proactive attitude scale. The results revealed that both mother and father attachment are linked to proactive attitude among adolescents.

1.2. Objective

To find the relationship between Psychological Capital and Proactive Attitude among Emerging adults.

1.3. Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant relationship between Hope and Proactive attitude of emerging adults.
2. There will be a significant relationship between Optimism and Proactive attitude of emerging adults.
3. There will be a significant relationship between Resiliency and Proactive attitude of emerging adults.
4. There will be a significant relationship between Efficacy and Proactive Attitude of emerging adults.

2. Methods

2.1. Sample Characteristics

A sample of 139 participants from the emerging adulthood ranging (18 to 25 years) participated in the survey. The participants were selected using a convenience sampling method from different colleges in Kerala [4-7].

2.2. Research Instruments

2.2.1. Psychological Capital Assessment Scale (PCAS-RRCM)

The Psychological Capital Assessment scale was

developed by Dr. Reena Rani and Ms. Menka Choudhary in 2020. It is widely accepted as a standard scale for measuring Psychological Capital and is composed of 34 items which measure hope, optimism, resiliency and efficacy. The test follows a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. If an individual scores high on the test it would mean that he or she has high psychological capital and can do well in academic activities but on the other hand if the individual scores low on the test it would mean that the individual has difficulty with their academics.

2.2.2. Proactive Attitude Scale

The Proactive Attitude Scale was developed by Ralf Schwarzer in 1999. The scale consists of 8 items and participants can rate their responses on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from not at all true to exactly true. This scale helps in assessing the ability of an individual to make a positive change in their own life. Individuals who score high in this test tend to try new things and suggest new ideas and go beyond their day-to-day activities. They are also good at teamwork and at getting the outcome they desire. But on the other hand, people who score low in the test tend to have a feeling of powerlessness to change their negative environment or responses.

2.3. Data Collection Procedure

Confidentiality of all data collected was ensured and the consent from participating individuals were taken before administering the survey. The data were collected using Google forms. The participants were selected using a convenience sampling method from different colleges in Kerala.

Table 1 Spearman's Rank Correlation Between Psychological Capital and Proactive Attitude Among Emerging Adults

Variables		Proactive Attitude
Optimism	r value	0.359**
	p value	0.000
Resiliency	r value	0.436**
	p value	0.000
Efficacy	r value	0.405**
	p value	0.000
Hope	r value	0.412**
	p value	0.000

** the value is significant at the 0.01 level

2.4. Statistical Technique

The statistical analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The version used here is 25. Statistical technique used was Spearman's rank correlation as the data was not normally distributed and to find the relationship between the variables. It was nonparametric.

1. Result and Discussion

1.1. Result

Table 1 shows significant correlation between Psychological Capital and Proactive attitude. The r value between Optimism and Proactive attitude is 0.359** and corresponding p value is 0.000. The r value and p value of Resiliency and Proactive attitude are 0.436** and 0.000 respectively. Efficacy and Proactive attitude have a r value of 0.405** and a p value of 0.000 respectively. Hope has a r value of 0.412** and a p value of 0.000 respectively.

1.2. Discussion

The study's objective was to find the relationship between psychological capital and proactive attitude among emerging adults of the age group of 18-25. Psychological capital refers to the psychological wellbeing of individuals characterized by four dimensions- hope, efficacy, resiliency and optimism. Psychological capital plays a significant role in developing a positive state which enhances an individual's academic achievement and professional life. On the other hand, proactive attitude refers to a personality trait that drives an individual's motivation and action rather than simply reacting to events when they occur. The result showed a significant correlation between subscales of psychological capital and proactive attitude. All the four dimensions of psychological capital were positively correlated with proactive attitude. There is a positive relationship between hope and proactive attitude which is significant at 0.01 level to proactive attitude, inferring that there was an enhanced motivation, positive mental health and goal orientated behavior. They might have high life satisfaction, may tend to focus more on personal development and maintain strong social connections which support their mental health. Our findings were consistent with the findings of C. R Snyder's theory of hope proposed in 1989. The theory defines hope as

a positive motivational condition characterized by two components, pathway thinking and agency thinking. This concept is inherently connected to proactive attitude as both are characterized by an active engagement in pursuing their goals and the belief that one has in his or her own ability to overcome challenges. There is a positive relationship between efficacy and proactive attitude which is significant at 0.01 level, which implied that they may have confidence in their abilities even in the presence of obstacles allowing them to view difficulties as challenges and not as threats. They tend to be more intrinsically motivated when faced with interesting tasks which can lead to a positive impact on the career development of individuals. There is a positive relationship between resiliency and proactive attitude which is significant at 0.01 level with proactive attitude which showed that they might have strong interpersonal skills making them good at working with teams, they might be more flexible to change, they maybe more accepting and even if they cannot change their circumstances they look forward for things to get better along the way. They might have higher intrapersonal awareness, making them more compassionate to themselves, leading to a better quality of life. Our findings were consistent with the findings of de la Fuente and his colleagues. They found two dimensions of resiliency, which is proactive resiliency and reactive resiliency. According to their research, individuals who have high proactive resiliency tend to engage more in proactive attitude. There is a positive relationship between optimism and proactive attitude which is significant at 0.01 level to proactive attitude which indicated that they might be able to manage stress efficiently in both academics and work life. Individuals who scored high in this dimension tend to have more gratitude for events happening in their lives including the little things in life, allowing them to have a positive outlook. Our findings were consistent with the findings of Michael Scheier and Charles Carver in 1985. In their study, there is evidence that optimism is associated with taking proactive steps to protect one's health. The theory suggests the relationship of proactive attitude with optimism which is the dispositional theory of

optimism. It states that optimism leads to positive consequences in life. Individuals who have high correlations between psychological capital and proactive attitude tend to overcome obstacles, manage stress, are more engaged, more productive at work and tends to be more content with their lives.

Conclusion

The objective of the study was to find the relationship between Psychological Capital and Proactive attitude among emerging adults. Dimensions of Psychological Capital were found to have a strong significant relationship with Proactive attitude. The main limitation of this study is the convenience sampling and its limited representativeness as it can't be applied to other groups. The choosing of participants was easily accessible which may result some variations in the sample [8-11].

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful for the participation of all those who assisted in the study and facilitated the research process. Although their names cannot be disclosed, their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated.

References

- [1]. Bekhter, A. A., & Filatova, O. A. (2022). Adaptation of R. Schwarzer's Proactive Attitudes Scale: Validation and Psychometric Testing on a Sample of Russian Youth. *RUDN Journal of Psychology and Pedagogics*, 19(1), 158–178. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-1683-2022-19-1-158-178>
- [2]. De La Fuente, J., Urien, B., Luis, E. O., González-Torres, M. C., Artuch-Garde, R., & Balaguer, A. (2022). The Proactive-Reactive Resilience as a Mediation Variable Between the Character Strength and the Flourishing in Undergraduate Students. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.856558>
- [3]. Kačmár, P., Baranyiová, D., & Zentková, L. (2023). Young adults in flux: The role of dimensions of emerging adulthood and psychological capital in the intention to remain in an organization. *Psychologie a Její Kontexty*, 13(2), 81–100. <https://doi.org/10.15452/psyx.2022.13.0012>
- [4]. Luthans, B. C., Luthans, K. W., & Avey, J. B. (2013). Building the Leaders of Tomorrow. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 21(2), 191–199. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051813517003>
- [5]. Luthans, F., Avolio, B. J., Avey, J. B., & Norman, S. M. (2007). Positive psychological capital: measurement and relationship with performance and satisfaction. *Personnel Psychology*, 60(3), 541–572. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2007.00083.x>
- [6]. Luthans, F., Avolio, B. J., Walumbwa, F. O., & Li, W. (2005). The Psychological Capital of Chinese Workers: Exploring the Relationship with Performance. *Management and Organization Review*, 1(02), 249–271. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-8784.2005.00011.x>
- [7]. Luthans, F., & Youssef, C. M. (2004). Human, social, and now positive psychological capital management: *Organizational Dynamics*, 33(2), 143–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2004.01.003>
- [8]. Nabeel, T., & Zafar, H. (2012). Parental Attachment and Proactive Attitude among Adolescents. *JPAIR Multidisciplinary Research*, 7(1), 281–301. <https://doi.org/10.7719/jpair.v7i1.165>
- [9]. Prasath, P. R., Mather, P. C., Bhat, C. S., & James, J. K. (2021). University Student Well-Being During COVID-19: The role of psychological capital and coping Strategies. *The Professional Counselor*, 11(1), 46–60. <https://doi.org/10.15241/prp.11.1.46>
- [10]. Sachs, J. (2003). Psychometric properties of the proactive attitude scale in students at the University of Hong Kong. *Psychological Reports*, 93(3), 805–815. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.2003.93.3.805>
- [11]. Siebert, J. U., Kunz, R. E., & Rolf, P. (2019). Effects of proactive decision making on life satisfaction. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 280(3), 1171–1187. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2019.08.011>