



The University of Tehran Press

## The Effect of Psychological Capital Training on Students' Academic Engagement and Positive Emotions

Masoumeh Besharati Pour<sup>1</sup> , Alireza Hajiyakhchali<sup>2\*</sup> , Manigah Shehni Yailagh<sup>3</sup> ,  
Gholamhossien Maktabi<sup>4</sup> 

1. Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran. Email: [besharati@pnu.ac.ir](mailto:besharati@pnu.ac.ir)
2. Corresponding Author, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran. Email: [a.haji@scu.ac.ir](mailto:a.haji@scu.ac.ir)
3. Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran. Email: [m.shehniyailagh@scu.ac.ir](mailto:m.shehniyailagh@scu.ac.ir)
4. Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran. Email: [ghmaktabi@scu.ac.ir](mailto:ghmaktabi@scu.ac.ir)

### Extended Abstract

#### Aim

Educational systems continually seek factors that influence students' academic progress and ensure the academic success of future generations. Understanding these factors allows for effective educational planning that achieves optimal outcomes, both in terms of educational development and learner success (Gbollie & Keamu, 2017). According to research, one of the most significant factors is academic engagement, which plays a critical role in determining students' personal growth, learning, and academic progress (Wang & Kiefer, 2020; Romano, 2021; Saman & Wirawan, 2021; Carmona-Halty et al., 2021; Talan & Gulsecen, 2019). Academic engagement refers to the quality of effort students invest in targeted educational activities that directly contribute to achieving desired outcomes (Rodriguez & Boutakidis, 2013).

Moreover, research highlights the importance of examining academic emotions, as they significantly influence learners' readiness and motivation. Academic engagement and positive emotions can be influenced by various components, among which psychological capital is paramount. Psychological capital is a positive psychological state that promotes individual growth and development, comprising four key elements: hope, self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience (Datu & Valdez, 2016). Studies have shown that psychological capital is a crucial resource that enhances learners' ability to thrive in multiple areas. This is because psychological capital fosters cognitive evaluations of events and actions that help individuals focus on, interpret, and retain positive and constructive experiences that lead to success (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

The present study aims to investigate the effect of psychological capital training on academic engagement and positive emotions among junior high school male students.

#### Methodology

This experimental study employed a pretest-posttest control group design. The statistical population consisted of all male junior high school students in Bandar Imam Khomeini during the late 2022 to early 2023 academic term. Multistage random sampling was used to select participants based on inclusion criteria. A total of 60 students with below-average questionnaire scores were randomly assigned to either the experimental group or the control group, with 30 students in each group. The experimental group underwent a psychological capital intervention based on the protocol developed by Luthans et al. (2007), which involved ten 90-minute sessions held once a week. The control group did not receive any intervention.

The study utilized the Academic Engagement Scale (AES) (Fredricks et al., 2004) and the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (AEQ) (Pekrun et al., 2002). Data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing univariate and multivariate analyses of covariance (ANCOVA).

### **Findings**

The results indicated that psychological capital training had a significant effect on academic engagement factors ( $p < 0.001$ ). Specifically, the intervention improved students' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement by leveraging hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience techniques. Additionally, the training significantly impacted the total score of positive academic emotions ( $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that the intervention enhanced students' positive academic emotions. The study also found that psychological capital training significantly improved students' feelings of hope and pride ( $p < 0.001$ ). However, the intervention did not have a statistically significant effect on learning enjoyment ( $p > 0.152$ ) and failed to enhance this particular emotion.

### **Conclusion**

Psychological capital training can serve as an effective intervention to increase students' academic engagement by promoting hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience. As students learn and apply the strategies and skills from the training sessions, they gradually develop more positive attitudes toward the future and gain greater confidence in their abilities. This enables them to manage complex challenges, take initiative, and maintain consistent efforts. As a result, these students demonstrate improved academic abilities, greater engagement in their studies, and enhanced performance. Furthermore, psychological capital training fosters a sense of competence, independence, self-respect, satisfaction, and life purpose, leading to better relationships with others, more successful handling of challenges, and greater resilience to negative experiences. In sum, psychological capital training promotes optimism, self-efficacy, hope, and positive self-assessments in various domains, including academic environments.

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical standards, including obtaining informed consent, written consent from the students' parents, maintaining confidentiality of information, and allowing voluntary participation and withdrawal from the study.

**Keywords:** Academic Engagement, Academic Positive Emotions, Psychological Capital.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This article is based on the doctoral dissertation of the first author in the field of educational psychology at the Faculty of Education and Psychology, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz. Ethical principles were strictly followed during the study, including obtaining participant consent and ensuring the confidentiality of personal information. The results were presented without identifying individuals by name or other personal details.

### **Acknowledgments**

The researchers express their sincere gratitude to all the students who participated in this study, as well as to the principals and teachers of the junior high schools in Bandar Imam Khomeini for their cooperation in facilitating the research.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this study.

### **References**

- Carmona-Halty, M., Salanova, M., Lorens, S., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2021). Linking positive emotions and academic performance: The mediated role of academic psychological capital and academic engagement. *Current Psychology, 40*, 2938-2947. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00227-8>
- Datu, J. A. D., & Valdez, J. P. M. (2016). Psychological Capital Predicts Academic Engagement and Well-Being in Filipino High School Students. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 25*, 399-405. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-015-0254-1>

- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(1), 59-109. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059>
- Gbollie, C., & Keamu, H. P. (2017). Student academic performance: The role of motivation, strategies, and perceived factors hindering Liberian junior and senior high school students learning. *Education Research International, 2017*, Article ID: 1789084. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/1789084>
- Luthans, F., & Youssef-Morgan, C. M. (2017). Psychological capital: an evidence-based positive approach. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology & Organizational Behavior, 4*, 339-366. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113324>
- 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>
- Pekrun, R., Goetz, T., Titz, W., & Perry, R. P. (2002). Academic emotions in students' self-regulated learning and achievement: A program of qualitative and quantitative research. *Educational Psychologist, 37*(2), 91-105. [https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326985EP3702\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326985EP3702_4)
- Rodriguez, J. L., & Boutakidis, I. P. (2013). The association between school engagement and achievement across Three generations of Mexican American students. *Association of Mexican-American Educators (AMAE) Journal, 7*(1), 5-16. <https://amaejournal.utsa.edu/index.php/amae/article/view/124>
- Romano, L., Angelini, G., Consiglio, P., & Fiorilli, C. (2021). Academic resilience and engagement in high school students: the mediating role of perceived teacher emotional support. *European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology, and Education, 11*(2), 334-344. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ejihpe11020025>
- Saman, A., & Wirawan, H. (2021). Examining the impact of psychological capital on academic achievement and work performance: The roles of procrastination and conscientiousness. *Cogent Psychology, 8*(1), 1938853. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2021.1938853>
- Talan, T., & Gulsecen, S. (2019). The effect of a flipped classroom on students' achievements, academic engagement, and satisfaction levels. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education, 20*(4), 31-60. <https://doi.org/10.17718/tojde.640503>
- Wang, J. H., & Kiefer, S. M. (2020). Joint implications of teachers and classroom peers for adolescents' aggression and engagement. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 71*, 101199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2020.101199>

---

**Cite this article:** Besharati Pour, M., Hajiyakhchali, A., Shehni Yailagh, M., & Maktabi, Gh. (2024). The Effect of Psychological Capital Training on Students' Academic Engagement and Positive Emotions. *Journal of Applied Psychological Research, 15*(3), 139-159. doi: 10.22059/japr.2024.358495.644629.



**Publisher:** University of Tehran Press

© The Author(s).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22059/japr.2024.358495.644629>

---