Psychological Capital, Mindfulness, and Mental Health: A Structural Equation Modeling Study

Yuan Xin

School of Humanities, University Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of psychological capital and mindfulness on mental health using a structural equation modelling (SEM) approach. Drawing upon positive psychology frameworks, psychological capital—comprising hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism—and mindfulness are conceptualized as protective factors that enhance psychological well-being. Data were collected from a diverse sample of participants using validated psychometric instruments. The SEM analysis revealed significant direct effects of both psychological capital and mindfulness on mental health outcomes, as well as a partial mediating role of mindfulness in the relationship between psychological capital and mental health. These findings underscore the importance of fostering psychological resources and mindfulness practices to promote mental health and inform the development of targeted interventions in clinical and organizational settings.

Keywords: psychological capital, mindfulness, mental health

INTRODUCTION

Mental health challenges have become increasingly prevalent worldwide, prompting researchers and practitioners to explore not only the causes of mental illness but also the internal psychological resources that contribute to mental well-being. Psychological capital (PsyCap) and mindfulness are two such constructs that have shown promise in fostering resilience, reducing stress, and promoting overall psychological health (Jain & Singh, 2021). However, the interplay between these constructs and their combined impact on mental health has yet to be fully elucidated, particularly through advanced modelling techniques that can account for complex relationships among latent variables.

Psychological capital, rooted in the field of positive organizational behaviour is defined as an individual's positive psychological state, comprising hope (goal-directed energy and planning to meet goals), efficacy (confidence in one's abilities), resilience (ability to bounce back from adversity), and optimism (a positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future). Numerous studies have demonstrated that high levels of PsyCap are associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and burnout, and with greater life satisfaction and emotional well-being (Wang, 2023). These components work synergistically to enable individuals to confront challenges with a constructive mindset, making PsyCap a critical factor in mental health promotion.

Mindfulness, on the other hand, involves maintaining non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. It has been widely researched as both a trait and a practice, with extensive evidence indicating its role in reducing symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression, while enhancing emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility. Mindfulness fosters a deeper connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, allowing individuals to

respond to stressors with greater clarity and reduced reactivity. This is consistent with Wang Yangming's concept of the unity of knowledge and action. Wang (1963) believed that human external behavior is governed by inner cognition, and what kind of cognition one has will lead to what kind of behavior, which is the unity of knowledge and action. To make good use of one's thoughts is mindfulness, which is a kind of life cultivation.

While both PsyCap and mindfulness individually contribute to positive mental health outcomes, their interrelationship remains underexplored. It is plausible that individuals with higher psychological capital may be more inclined toward mindfulness, as traits such as optimism and resilience could support greater presence and acceptance in daily life (Roche, 2014). Conversely, mindfulness may act as a psychological mechanism that enhances the impact of PsyCap by fostering adaptive coping strategies. This leads to an important theoretical question: Does mindfulness mediate the relationship between psychological capital and mental health?

To address this, the current study employs structural equation modelling (SEM)—a robust statistical technique that enables the testing of complex relationships between observed and latent variables. By applying SEM, we aim to test both direct effects of psychological capital and mindfulness on mental health and the indirect effect of psychological capital on mental health through mindfulness. Objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the direct influence of psychological capital on mental health.
2. To examine the direct influence of mindfulness on mental health.
3. To test whether mindfulness mediates the relationship between psychological capital and mental health.

Understanding these pathways not only contributes to theoretical knowledge in positive psychology and mental health research but also offers practical insights for designing interventions that leverage internal psychological resources to enhance well-being in educational, organizational, and clinical settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the determinants of mental health has become increasingly important as global mental health concerns continue to rise. In recent years, research has expanded beyond the traditional focus on psychopathology to examine positive psychological constructs that promote well-being and resilience. Two such constructs—psychological capital (PsyCap) and mindfulness—have shown consistent associations with improved mental health outcomes. This literature review provides an overview of empirical findings on the individual and combined roles of PsyCap and mindfulness in influencing mental health, and highlights the need for integrated models such as structural equation modelling to explore their interrelationships.

Psychological Capital and Mental Health

Psychological capital, a higher-order construct encompassing hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, has been widely recognized for its role in enhancing psychological functioning. According to (McElravy, 2014), PsyCap represents a state-like quality that can be developed and strengthened over time. Numerous studies have demonstrated its significant inverse relationship with symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress. For instance, Hansen (2015 found that employees with higher PsyCap reported better overall psychological well-being and lower burnout levels. Similarly, in student populations, PsyCap has been shown to buffer the effects of academic stress and enhance emotional adjustment.

Each component of PsyCap contributes uniquely to mental health. Hope and optimism are associated with positive future expectations, reducing the likelihood of ruminative thought patterns common in anxiety and depression (Herbert, 2011). Self-efficacy promotes a sense of control over life circumstances, and resilience

supports recovery from psychological setbacks. Together, these elements provide individuals with a toolkit to handle stress more effectively and maintain a positive mental state. Therefore, the hypotheses as following:

H1: Psychological Capital has positively significant related to Mental Health

Psychological Capital and mindfulness

Psychological Capital (PsyCap)—comprising hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism—is considered a core psychological resource that enables individuals to navigate challenges, maintain motivation, and sustain emotional balance. While traditionally studied in the context of performance, engagement, and well-being, emerging research suggests that PsyCap may also be closely associated with dispositional mindfulness (Malinowski, 2015). Mindfulness is defined as the capacity to attend to present-moment experiences with openness and non-judgment. This trait is known to enhance emotional regulation, self-awareness, and psychological flexibility. Individuals high in PsyCap are more likely to engage in adaptive coping strategies, demonstrate emotional stability, and remain hopeful and optimistic in the face of adversity—all of which may foster a natural inclination toward mindful awareness.

Theoretically, the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions supports this association. According to this theory, positive psychological resources such as optimism and resilience broaden an individual's thought-action repertoire, which in turn builds enduring personal resources like mindfulness. For example, optimism and hope may encourage individuals to remain grounded in the present while anticipating a positive future. Similarly, resilient individuals are more likely to demonstrate acceptance and cognitive flexibility—key features of a mindful disposition.

Empirical studies, though still limited, provide preliminary evidence for this relationship. Shikun (2021) suggested that individuals who possess strong internal psychological resources are more capable of engaging in mindful self-regulation and awareness. These findings imply that psychological capital may serve as a foundation for the cultivation of mindfulness by enhancing individuals' ability to remain calm, focused, and open in the present moment. Therefore, the hypotheses as following:

H2: Psychological Capital has positively significant related to mindfulness Mindfulness and Mental Health Mindfulness, defined as the non-judgmental awareness of the present moment, has emerged as a powerful predictor of psychological health. Research consistently demonstrates that mindfulness reduces symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress, while promoting emotional regulation, self-compassion, and cognitive flexibility (Dreyfus, 2013). Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), have been successfully implemented across diverse clinical and non-clinical populations with robust mental health benefits (Stephens, 2025).

Trait mindfulness is also linked to greater psychological resilience and improved coping strategies. Individuals who are more mindful are better able to observe their thoughts and emotions without over-identifying with them, thereby interrupting maladaptive thought cycles. This ability contributes to lower psychological distress and greater life satisfaction. Therefore, the hypotheses as following:

H3: mindfulness has positively significant related to Mental Health

Mindfulness as a mediator

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) has been widely recognized as a key internal resource that promotes mental health by enabling individuals to manage stress, adapt to change, and maintain psychological resilience.

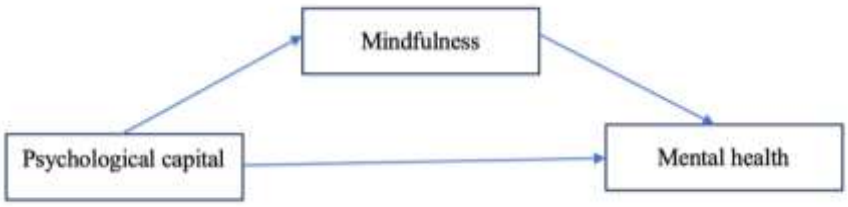
Individuals with high PsyCap tend to approach life with a sense of confidence (self-efficacy), a positive future outlook (hope and optimism), and the capacity to bounce back from setbacks (resilience). These attributes collectively contribute to better psychological well-being and reduced levels of distress. While PsyCap has a direct positive effect on mental health, recent theoretical developments and empirical findings suggest that mindfulness may act as a mechanism through which this relationship operates. Mindfulness, defined as the awareness that arises through paying attention to the present moment non-judgmentally, has consistently been linked to improved mental health outcomes, including lower levels of anxiety, depression, and stress.

Theoretically, the conservation of resources (COR) theory offers a compelling framework to explain this mediating role. According to COR theory, individuals seek to build and maintain psychological resources. PsyCap can be viewed as a precursor resource that facilitates the development or enhancement of other psychological assets such as mindfulness (Kotzé, 2018). For example, hopeful and resilient individuals are more likely to adopt a mindful approach to challenges—focusing on the present and accepting experiences non-reactively. This mindfulness, in turn, contributes to better emotional regulation, reduced rumination, and greater psychological stability—all of which are protective factors for mental health.

Empirical studies support this proposed pathway. Duan (2018) found that mindfulness mediated the relationship between psychological strengths and well-being. Yaghoobi (2019) demonstrated in a student sample that mindfulness partially mediated the relationship between PsyCap and psychological well-being. These findings highlight mindfulness not only as an outcome of positive psychological traits but also as a process through which such traits influence broader health outcomes. Thus, it is hypothesized that mindfulness mediates the relationship between psychological capital and mental health:

H4: Mindfulness mediates the relationship between Psychological Capital and Mental Health.

Figure 1 presents the research framework



METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a quantitative approach to investigate the relationship between psychological capital—which includes factors like self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and hope—and mental health outcomes in the workplace. Quantitative research was selected because it allows for the systematic measurement and analysis of variables through numerical data, enabling researchers to test hypotheses and establish statistical relationships. The study specifically targets middle-level managers in the IT industry in China. This group was chosen due to their dual exposure to upper management expectations and frontline operational challenges, making them ideal for exploring how psychological resources influence mental well-being. Their experience and professional insights are expected to provide reliable and relevant data for this inquiry. The research process began with a literature review to identify theoretical frameworks and prior findings, which helped formulate the study's hypotheses. Following this, data was collected using a structured online questionnaire. This method was selected to reduce interference with the participants' daily responsibilities and to ensure convenience and scalability of data collection. The questionnaire was distributed via email to employees in three major IT companies in China,

maximizing outreach while maintaining data privacy. The questions were designed using a five-point Likert scale, with options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." This allowed participants to express the intensity of their views on statements related to human resource management practices (HRM), job satisfaction, and staff retention. These dimensions were chosen as they are often linked to both psychological capital and mental health in organizational studies. To analyze the collected data, the study used PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) through the PLS-4 software. This tool is especially useful when the research aims to test complex models involving multiple variables, even with a relatively small sample size.

To determine how many responses were needed to achieve statistically reliable results, the researchers referred to Cohen's statistical power analysis (Cohen, 2002). The sample size calculation took into account several critical factors: the acceptable margin of error (significance level), the expected effect size (how strong the relationships are), the estimated variance in responses, and the desired level of power (the probability of detecting an effect if one exists).

For sampling, the study employed a convenience sampling method—selecting participants who were readily available and willing to take part. While this method has limitations in terms of generalizability, it was practical given the constraints of time and access, especially within the specific organizational context being studied.

FINDINGS

As outlined by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), composite reliability (CR) is a key indicator of a measurement model's internal consistency. A CR value ranging between 0.7 and 0.9 is generally considered good, while values below 0.6 indicate insufficient reliability. In this study, all constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency, with composite reliability scores exceeding 0.9, which surpasses the commonly accepted threshold for reliability. Specifically, the mental health construct achieved the highest CR score at 0.948, indicating highly reliable measurement. This was followed by mindfulness, which recorded a CR of 0.921, and psychological capital, which had a CR value of 0.915. These results confirm that the measurement items used for each construct are consistent and dependable in capturing the underlying concepts. (See Table 1 for full details.)

Table 1. Measurement models for all constructs.

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Psychological capital	0.820	0.915	0.679
Mindfulness	0.918	0.921	0.630
Mental health	0.936	0.948	0.708

Convergent Validity

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all reflective constructs in this study range from 0.578 to 0.708 (refer to Table 1), which confirms that the model meets the criteria for convergent validity. An AVE score above 0.50 indicates that the construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its observed indicators, which is the standard benchmark suggested by Hair et al. (2017). This means that the indicators used for each variable are sufficiently correlated with their underlying latent construct. As all AVE values for the key variables in this research—mental health, mindfulness, and psychological capital—exceed the 0.50 threshold, the reflective constructs can be considered reliable and valid measures for this analysis.

Discriminant Validity

To assess discriminant validity, the study followed the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion. According to this method, the AVE of a construct should be greater than the squared correlation between that construct and any other in the model. This ensures that each construct is more closely related to its own indicators than to those of other constructs. Supporting this approach, Henseler et al. (2012) emphasized that such a comparison helps establish the uniqueness of each construct.

Based on the data presented in Table 2, each construct's AVE exceeds the squared correlation it shares with any other latent variable, thereby confirming discriminant validity. In addition, Hair et al. (2017) noted that squared inter-construct correlations below 0.85 provide further evidence of discriminant validity. Since this condition is met in the current study, it can be concluded that the constructs are distinct from one another and not measuring overlapping concepts.

Table 2. Discriminant validity—Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Construct	Psychological capital	Mindfulness	Mental health
Psychological capital	0.780		
Mindfulness	0.597	0.729	
Mental health	0.629	0.583	0.741

To evaluate the predictive power of the structural model, this study calculated the R^2 (coefficient of determination) values for the endogenous constructs. The R^2 value indicates how much variance in a dependent (endogenous) variable is explained by its predictor(s). In other words, it reflects the degree to which the model can account for or predict outcomes based on the variables included. According to Hair et al. (2017), R^2 values can be interpreted as follows: values around 0.75 are considered substantial, values near 0.50 are moderate, and values close to 0.25 are weak. These thresholds provide a useful guideline for evaluating the explanatory strength of a model in academic research.

In this study, as shown in Table 3, the R^2 value for mental health is 0.453, indicating that the model explains approximately 45.3% of the variance in this construct. This suggests a moderate level of explanatory power. When focusing on the influence of psychological capital and mindfulness on mental health, the R^2 is 0.412, meaning these two predictors together account for 41.2% of the variation in mental health outcomes. Similarly, the R^2 value for mindfulness is 0.471, showing that the model explains about 47.1% of the variance in mindfulness. In this case, psychological capital is the predictor, and its effect on mindfulness also reflects a moderate level of prediction accuracy. Overall, the R^2 values of 0.412 and 0.471 demonstrate that the model provides a moderate explanation of both the dependent variable (mental health) and the mediating variable (mindfulness), supporting the model's relevance in this context.

Table 3. The level of R^2

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Mental health	0.453	0.449
Mindfulness	0.471	0.485

The path coefficients in a structural equation model represent the strength and direction of the relationships

between latent variables, based on the hypotheses proposed. These coefficients are a key output of the structural model, and they provide insight into how strongly one construct influences another within the model. In this study, bootstrapping—a resampling technique—was applied to assess the statistical significance of the path coefficients. This method involves repeatedly drawing samples from the data and recalculating the model estimates to build confidence intervals and determine whether the relationships are robust. Each path coefficient reflects the direct effect of one variable on another. A higher path coefficient indicates a stronger influence of the predictor variable on the outcome (endogenous) variable. When comparing multiple paths in the model, the path with the larger coefficient has a greater impact on the dependent variable. In reflective measurement models, these path coefficients are interpreted in a way similar to standardized beta coefficients in traditional regression analysis. This means they are scaled to allow for direct comparison across paths and can range from -1 to +1, where values closer to ±1 represent stronger relationships. The results of the bootstrapping procedure and the corresponding path coefficients are presented in Table 4, allowing for evaluation of which hypothesized paths are statistically significant and to what extent they contribute to the model.

Table 4. Path coefficients.

	Beta	Sample mean	Stdev	T value	P value
Psychological capital mental health	0.108	0.190	0.092	1.092	0.000
Psychological capital mindfulness	0.249	0.327	0.150	1.743	0.000
mindfulness mental health	0.371	0.259	0.128	1.946	0.000
Psychological capital→mindfulness→mental health	0.369	0.274	0.184	1.759	0.000

The findings of this study revealed a significant positive relationship between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Mental Health, supporting the first hypothesis and aligning with a growing body of literature emphasizing the role of positive psychological resources in promoting well-being. This result suggests that individuals with higher levels of PsyCap—characterized by greater hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism—are more likely to experience better mental health outcomes. This finding is consistent with previous studies (e.g., Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013), which have shown that PsyCap functions as a psychological buffer against stress, anxiety, and depression. Each component of PsyCap appears to contribute uniquely to mental well-being. For example, hope enables individuals to set and pursue meaningful goals, which fosters a sense of direction and purpose. Self-efficacy instills confidence in one's ability to handle life's challenges, reducing feelings of helplessness that often accompany poor mental health. Resilience allows for adaptive recovery from adversity, and optimism supports positive expectations for the future—both of which have been linked to reduced psychological distress. The positive influence of PsyCap on mental health may be explained through Fredrickson’s broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. This theory posits that positive psychological resources not only broaden individuals’ thought-action repertoires but also help build enduring personal and social resources. Individuals with higher PsyCap may, therefore, engage in more constructive coping strategies, maintain emotional balance, and show greater flexibility in the face of stressors—all of which contribute to enhanced mental health.

The results of the study indicate a significant positive relationship between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Mindfulness, supporting the proposed hypothesis and contributing new insight to the growing intersection between positive psychology and mindfulness research. This finding suggests that individuals who possess higher levels of PsyCap—characterized by hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism—are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of mindfulness, defined as present-moment awareness with an accepting and non-

judgmental attitude. This result aligns with existing theoretical perspectives and emerging empirical evidence suggesting that positive psychological resources may create a fertile internal environment for the cultivation of mindfulness. PsyCap's components inherently support mindful awareness. For instance, resilient individuals are better equipped to manage emotional discomfort and maintain balance during adversity—skills that overlap with mindfulness-based emotion regulation strategies. Similarly, optimism and hope promote a constructive orientation toward life, which can help individuals remain engaged and present in the moment rather than ruminating on past failures or worrying excessively about the future. The finding can also be interpreted through the lens of Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory (2001), which posits that positive emotions broaden an individual's momentary thought-action repertoire and build lasting psychological resources. PsyCap, as a source of positive affect and cognitive flexibility, may enhance one's capacity to be aware, accepting, and open to present experiences—hallmarks of mindfulness. Empirical studies have begun to identify such links. For example, Roche et al. (2014) found that individuals high in psychological capital reported greater mindfulness, and that the development of one construct could potentially reinforce the other. Mindful individuals are also more likely to be self-aware, reflective, and emotionally regulated—traits that can help further solidify their PsyCap through repeated adaptive responses.

The present study found a significant positive relationship between Mindfulness and Mental Health, reinforcing a large body of research that positions mindfulness as a key protective factor in psychological well-being. Individuals who demonstrated higher levels of mindfulness—defined as the ability to attend to the present moment with openness and non-judgment—also reported better mental health outcomes, including lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. This finding is consistent with previous empirical studies and meta-analyses (Baer et al., 2006; Keng et al., 2011; Khoury et al., 2013), which have shown that mindfulness is associated with a wide range of positive mental health indicators. Mindfulness facilitates enhanced emotional regulation, reduced rumination, and greater psychological flexibility, all of which are vital in maintaining mental balance and resilience in the face of life's challenges. By focusing attention on the present rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future, mindful individuals are better equipped to manage their thoughts and emotions effectively. One of the primary mechanisms through which mindfulness benefits mental health is by disrupting maladaptive cognitive patterns, such as catastrophizing, self-criticism, or over-identification with negative thoughts (Segal et al., 2002). Through mindful awareness, individuals can observe their thoughts and emotions without becoming overwhelmed by them, allowing for more adaptive responses and a reduction in emotional distress. Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) have been shown to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety and improve overall psychological functioning across diverse populations, including students, healthcare professionals, and individuals with clinical disorders (Kuyken et al., 2010). The current finding supports the notion that even trait mindfulness—a dispositional tendency to be mindful in daily life—is strongly associated with enhanced mental well-being.

One of the key findings of this study is that mindfulness mediates the relationship between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Mental Health, providing deeper insight into the underlying mechanism by which PsyCap influences psychological well-being. This mediation suggests that individuals with higher levels of PsyCap—comprising hope, self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience—are more likely to cultivate mindfulness, which in turn contributes to improved mental health outcomes. This result is theoretically grounded in the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which proposes that individuals strive to acquire and preserve valuable psychological resources. PsyCap, as a higher-order positive resource, may facilitate the development of mindfulness by promoting internal stability, confidence, and positive emotional states. These qualities can enhance one's capacity to remain present, non-judgmental, and emotionally regulated—all of which are hallmarks of mindfulness. In turn, mindfulness helps individuals manage stress, reduce negative thinking

patterns, and respond more adaptively to challenging situations, thereby supporting mental health. The mediation finding is also aligned with the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), which posits that positive emotional states broaden attention and thinking, enabling individuals to build lasting psychological resources. High PsyCap may encourage a broader awareness and openness to the present moment, enhancing mindfulness. This mindful awareness then serves as a mechanism through which the benefits of PsyCap are translated into better emotional and psychological outcomes. Empirical support for this pathway is emerging. For example, Donald et al. (2016) found that mindfulness partially mediated the relationship between psychological strengths and well-being, while Wang et al. (2020) highlighted the mediating role of mindfulness between PsyCap and life satisfaction in academic settings. The current study adds to this growing literature by confirming mindfulness as a key intermediary linking internal psychological resources with mental health in a structural equation modeling context. In conclusion, the mediating role of mindfulness underscores its central function in the positive psychology framework. By acting as a conduit between psychological strengths and mental health outcomes, mindfulness enhances our understanding of how internal resources translate into real-world psychological resilience and well-being.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study offers several important theoretical contributions to the fields of positive psychology and mental health research by examining the influence of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on Mental Health, with Mindfulness as a mediating variable. The findings enhance our understanding of how internal psychological strengths are transformed into well-being outcomes and contribute to a more integrated theoretical framework that bridges personal resources with psychological processes.

First, the study extends the theoretical scope of Psychological Capital beyond its traditional associations with work-related outcomes such as performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. By demonstrating a significant relationship between PsyCap and mental health, the study reinforces the idea that PsyCap is not only instrumental in goal achievement and professional development, but also plays a foundational role in promoting psychological well-being and emotional balance in broader life contexts. This supports Luthans et al.'s (2007) proposition that PsyCap is a state-like resource that can be cultivated to benefit multiple domains of functioning, including mental health.

Second, this research makes a novel theoretical contribution by identifying mindfulness as a key psychological mechanism that explains how and why PsyCap leads to improved mental health. While both PsyCap and mindfulness have individually been linked to well-being, their interaction has received limited theoretical exploration. By positioning mindfulness as a mediator, the study suggests that the positive effects of PsyCap are partially transmitted through enhanced mindful awareness. This finding enriches the conceptual understanding of how internal psychological traits interact with moment-to-moment cognitive processes to produce sustainable mental health outcomes.

Third, the findings contribute to resource-based theories of well-being, particularly the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001). The study supports the notion that PsyCap functions as a foundational resource that not only protects against psychological distress but also facilitates the acquisition of other beneficial resources—such as mindfulness. In this way, the study provides empirical backing for the idea that psychological resources are dynamic, mutually reinforcing, and capable of influencing downstream mental health through mediating mechanisms.

Additionally, by integrating constructs from positive psychology (PsyCap) and contemplative science (mindfulness), the study promotes a cross-disciplinary theoretical framework that captures both strengths-based traits and process-oriented cognitive strategies. This synthesis encourages future theoretical models to consider how stable internal resources interact with trainable attentional and emotional regulation skills to shape overall well-being.

Lastly, the identification of mindfulness as a mediator opens new avenues for theoretical exploration in areas such as self-regulation theory, emotion regulation models, and cognitive-behavioral frameworks. It encourages scholars to further investigate how psychological capital influences specific cognitive-affective processes (e.g., attention regulation, acceptance, non-reactivity), and how these in turn shape psychological outcomes across different populations and settings.

In summary, the study offers a richer and more nuanced theoretical understanding of the pathways through which psychological strengths impact mental health. It highlights the importance of integrating trait-like resources with cognitive-process mechanisms to build more comprehensive models of psychological resilience and well-being.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study carry important practical implications for individuals, organizations, educators, and mental health practitioners seeking to enhance psychological well-being through the development of internal psychological resources.

First, the positive relationship between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Mental Health suggests that targeted interventions aimed at enhancing PsyCap—specifically hope, self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience—can have substantial benefits for overall psychological well-being. These components of PsyCap are considered malleable and developable, making them ideal focal points for personal growth workshops, employee development programs, and student support services. Interventions such as solution-focused coaching, resilience training, and strengths-based counseling could be designed to systematically build these capacities, leading not only to better work or academic performance but also to improved mental health outcomes.

Second, by identifying Mindfulness as a significant mediator, this study highlights the added value of integrating mindfulness practices into PsyCap-building initiatives. Mindfulness serves as a bridge that connects internal strengths with actual emotional and psychological benefits. Therefore, training programs could adopt a dual-focus approach—simultaneously enhancing psychological capital and cultivating mindfulness. For instance, mindfulness meditation, breathing techniques, body scans, and mindful reflection could be embedded into leadership development, resilience training, or mental health promotion curricula to amplify their impact.

Third, for mental health professionals and counselors, these findings provide a framework for designing more holistic and personalized intervention strategies. Rather than focusing solely on symptom reduction, practitioners can foster positive psychological traits (e.g., optimism and self-efficacy) while also teaching clients how to be more present, aware, and accepting of their experiences. This can lead to more sustainable improvements in well-being and reduce relapse in individuals with recurring mental health challenges.

In organizational settings, especially in high-stress environments such as healthcare, education, or corporate sectors, investing in PsyCap and mindfulness training can support employee mental health and resilience, reduce burnout, and enhance job satisfaction. Organizations may consider offering ongoing workshops, access to mindfulness apps or guided meditations, and incorporating psychological capital assessments into employee development reviews.

In educational institutions, especially among students who often experience academic stress and emotional fluctuations, interventions that teach both mindfulness and positive psychology skills can lead to better coping strategies, academic engagement, and emotional regulation. These programs can be embedded into orientation sessions, mental health campaigns, or wellness centers.

Finally, the study suggests that preventive strategies are just as important as reactive mental health care. Building PsyCap and fostering mindfulness can serve as protective factors that help individuals manage challenges before they develop into clinical issues, contributing to long-term mental health sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on Mental Health, with Mindfulness serving as a mediating variable. The findings confirm that PsyCap—comprising hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy—is significantly and positively associated with better mental health outcomes. Furthermore, the results provide compelling evidence that Mindfulness partially mediates this relationship, indicating that PsyCap enhances individuals' capacity for mindful awareness, which in turn contributes to improved mental well-being.

These results contribute both theoretically and practically to the fields of positive psychology and mental health. Theoretically, the study supports and extends existing models such as the conservation of resources theory and the broaden-and-build theory, by demonstrating that internal psychological strengths not only serve as protective resources but also facilitate adaptive cognitive processes like mindfulness. Practically, the findings underscore the value of designing integrated interventions that target both psychological capital development and mindfulness training to support mental health in diverse populations.

In an increasingly stressful and uncertain world, understanding how internal strengths and cognitive awareness can work together to support mental health is both timely and essential. This study suggests that building psychological capital and cultivating mindfulness are powerful, complementary strategies for promoting psychological resilience and overall well-being. Future research is encouraged to explore these relationships in different cultural contexts, longitudinal designs, and through intervention-based approaches to further validate and expand upon these findings.

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