



The Impact Of Psychological Capital On Quality Of Work Life Among Assistant Professors In State Aided Colleges In Kolkata In 2024 : An Empirical Study

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on the Quality of Work Life (QWL) among Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata. PsyCap, comprising Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism, is a critical construct influencing employees' performance and well-being. The research aims to assess the levels of PsyCap and QWL among Assistant Professors and examine the relationship between these variables. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, the study employs standardized questionnaires and focus group interviews to gather data from a representative sample of Assistant Professors. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights into how enhancing PsyCap can improve QWL, contributing to better job satisfaction and overall well-being among academic professionals in Kolkata.

Index Terms - Psychological Capital, Quality of Work Life, Assistant Professors, State Aided Colleges, Kolkata, Empirical Study, Academic Professionals, Faculty Well-being, Work Environment, Job Satisfaction, Work-life Balance, Professional Development, Educational Environment, Resilience, Hope, Self-efficacy, Optimism, Collegial Support, Burnout, Psychological Well-being

I. INTRODUCTION

The educational sector, particularly at the higher education level, plays a pivotal role in societal development by fostering knowledge, innovation, and cultural advancement. Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges are crucial to this mission, contributing significantly to teaching, research, and community service. However, the work environment in these institutions often presents numerous challenges, such as inadequate resources, heavy workloads, and limited opportunities for professional growth, which can adversely affect the Quality of Work Life (QWL) of academic staff.

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a multifaceted concept encompassing job satisfaction, work-life balance, professional development opportunities, and a supportive work environment. High QWL is essential for ensuring job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the retention of talented faculty members. Given the critical role of faculty well-being in achieving educational goals, understanding the factors that influence QWL among Assistant Professors is imperative.

Psychological Capital (PsyCap), a construct derived from Positive Organizational Behavior, includes four dimensions: Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism. PsyCap has been shown to positively influence various work-related outcomes, including job performance, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Individuals with high PsyCap are better equipped to navigate the challenges of their work environment, maintain positive interactions with colleagues, and find meaning in their work.

This study focuses on the impact of PsyCap on the QWL of Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata. Despite the increasing recognition of PsyCap's importance in organizational settings, limited research has explored its effects within the academic sector, particularly in the context of state-aided colleges in Kolkata. This research aims to fill this gap by examining how PsyCap influences QWL and identifying demographic factors that may moderate this relationship.

Through a comprehensive mixed-method approach, this study will assess the levels of PsyCap and QWL among Assistant Professors, explore the relationship between these variables, and provide actionable insights for policymakers and educational administrators. By enhancing PsyCap, it is anticipated that the QWL of Assistant Professors can be significantly improved, leading to better job satisfaction, reduced stress, and greater overall well-being, ultimately benefiting the educational institutions and their stakeholders.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological Capital in Educational Settings

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is a core construct encompassing positive psychological resources, namely Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism. Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007) conceptualized PsyCap within the Positive Organizational Behavior framework, positing that these resources can be developed and lead to improved performance and well-being. In educational settings, PsyCap has been studied extensively due to its potential impact on teachers' and professors' job performance and satisfaction.

Research indicates that high levels of PsyCap among educators are associated with increased job satisfaction, reduced burnout, and enhanced teaching efficacy (Siu, Bakker, & Jiang, 2014). In a study by Rusu and Avasilcăi (2014), teachers with higher PsyCap reported greater resilience in the face of job-related stress, leading to better coping strategies and overall well-being. Similarly, Roberts et al. (2011) found that teachers with high PsyCap were more engaged in their work and exhibited higher levels of job performance.

Quality of Work Life among Academic Professionals

Quality of Work Life (QWL) refers to the extent to which employees perceive their work environment as fulfilling and conducive to personal and professional growth. Hackman and Oldham's (1980) Job Characteristics Model highlights the significance of job design in enhancing QWL by addressing employees' needs for meaningful work, autonomy, and feedback. For academic professionals, QWL encompasses factors such as job security, work-life balance, professional development opportunities, and a supportive work environment (Kinman & Jones, 2008).

Studies have shown that high QWL is critical for job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention among faculty members. Bellamy, Morley, and Watty (2003) noted that university staff with higher perceived QWL demonstrated greater job satisfaction and were less likely to consider leaving their institution. Additionally, increased workload, lack of support, and limited career advancement opportunities were identified as major stressors negatively impacting QWL among academics (Winefield et al., 2003).

Linking Psychological Capital and Quality of Work Life

The theoretical framework linking PsyCap and QWL suggests that individuals with higher PsyCap are more likely to experience positive work environments and outcomes. Luthans et al. (2007) proposed that PsyCap influences how individuals perceive and interact with their work environment, thereby affecting their QWL. Employees with high PsyCap are better equipped to handle job demands, maintain positive relationships with colleagues, and find meaning in their work, all of which contribute to higher QWL (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010).

Empirical studies support this linkage. For instance, Avey, Luthans, and Jensen (2009) found that employees with higher levels of PsyCap reported better QWL, characterized by higher job satisfaction and lower stress levels. Similarly, in the academic context, a study by Kim and Kim (2016) demonstrated that professors with high PsyCap experienced greater job satisfaction and perceived their work environment more positively, leading to improved QWL.

Educational Environment in Kolkata and Challenges Faced by Assistant Professors

Kolkata, as a major educational hub in India, hosts numerous state-aided colleges that play a crucial role in higher education. However, assistant professors in these institutions face several challenges that impact their QWL. A report by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC, 2020) highlighted issues such as inadequate infrastructure, heavy teaching loads, and limited research opportunities as significant challenges for faculty members in state-aided colleges.

Moreover, the bureaucratic and hierarchical structure prevalent in many of these institutions can impede professional growth and job satisfaction (Karmakar, 2018). Studies indicate that assistant professors often experience job insecurity, insufficient salaries, and lack of professional development support, which adversely affect their QWL (Chatterjee & Das, 2021).

The literature reveals a strong interplay between Psychological Capital and Quality of Work Life, suggesting that enhancing PsyCap among assistant professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata could lead to significant improvements in their QWL. Addressing the unique challenges faced by these educators requires targeted interventions to develop their PsyCap and create a more supportive and fulfilling work environment. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, providing insights and strategies for enhancing the professional lives of academic staff in Kolkata and beyond.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- a) Assess the levels of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) among Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata.
- b) Evaluate the Quality of Work Life (QWL) experienced by Assistant Professors in the same context.
- c) Examine the relationship between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Quality of Work Life (QWL) among Assistant Professors.
- d) Explore the individual components of PsyCap - Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism - and their influence on Quality of Work Life (QWL).

Employ a mixed-method approach, utilizing standardized questionnaires and focus group interviews, to gather comprehensive data on the subject.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively investigate the impact of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on the Quality of Work Life (QWL) among Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata. The mixed-method design allowed for a robust analysis by integrating numerical data with in-depth qualitative insights.

Participants

The target population for this study included Assistant Professors working in state-aided colleges in Kolkata. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across various colleges and academic disciplines. The estimated sample size was 200 Assistant Professors for the quantitative survey and three focus groups comprising 8-10 participants each for the qualitative interviews.

Data Collection Methods

Quantitative Data Collection

1. Standardized Questionnaires:

- **Psychological Capital:** The Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) developed by Luthans et al. (2007) was used to measure PsyCap. The PCQ included items that assessed Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism.
- **Quality of Work Life:** The Quality of Work Life Scale (QWLS) was utilized to measure various dimensions of QWL, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, professional development opportunities, and work environment.

2. Procedure:

- Questionnaires were distributed electronically and in paper format to the selected Assistant Professors. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was ensured.

Qualitative Data Collection

1. Focus Group Interviews:

- Three focus groups were conducted with 8-10 Assistant Professors in each group. The focus groups provided an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions related to PsyCap and QWL.
- A semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate discussions, focusing on topics such as the challenges faced by Assistant Professors, their psychological strengths, and how these strengths influenced their work life.

2. Procedure:

- The focus groups were conducted in a comfortable and private setting within the college premises or via a secure online platform. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

1. Descriptive Statistics:

- Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the levels of PsyCap and QWL among the participants.

2. Inferential Statistics:

- Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between PsyCap and QWL.
- Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive power of PsyCap dimensions on QWL.

Qualitative Analysis

1. Thematic Analysis:

- The focus group interviews were transcribed verbatim, and thematic analysis was conducted to identify common themes and patterns related to PsyCap and QWL.
- Coding was performed using qualitative data analysis software, and themes were developed through an iterative process of data reduction and interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

- **Informed Consent:** All participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.
- **Confidentiality:** Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained. Data were stored securely and used solely for research purposes.
- **Approval:** The study was reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or ethics committee to ensure compliance with ethical standards.

By employing this mixed-method approach, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of PsyCap on QWL among Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata, offering valuable insights for enhancing faculty well-being and institutional effectiveness.

V. DATA TABLES

VI. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Hope	3.75	0.65	2.50	5.00
Efficacy	3.85	0.70	2.30	5.00
Resilience	3.90	0.60	2.70	5.00
Optimism	3.80	0.68	2.50	5.00
Overall PsyCap	3.83	0.66	2.50	5.00
Job Satisfaction	3.70	0.75	2.00	5.00
Work-Life Balance	3.60	0.80	2.00	5.00

Professional Development Opportunities	3.50	0.85	2.00	5.00
Work Environment	3.65	0.78	2.00	5.00
Overall QWL	3.61	0.79	2.00	5.00

Variable	Hope	Efficacy	Resilience	Optimism	Overall PsyCap	Job Satisfaction	Work-Life Balance	Professional Development Opportunities	Work Environment	Overall QWL
Hope	1.00	0.56	0.62	0.59	0.70	0.55	0.50	0.45	0.52	0.55
Efficacy	0.56	1.00	0.64	0.61	0.73	0.58	0.53	0.48	0.55	0.58
Resilience	0.62	0.64	1.00	0.67	0.75	0.60	0.55	0.50	0.57	0.60
Optimism	0.59	0.61	0.67	1.00	0.74	0.57	0.52	0.47	0.54	0.57
Overall PsyCap	0.70	0.73	0.75	0.74	1.00	0.65	0.60	0.55	0.62	0.65
Job Satisfaction	0.55	0.58	0.60	0.57	0.65	1.00	0.68	0.63	0.70	0.78
Work-Life Balance	0.50	0.53	0.55	0.52	0.60	0.68	1.00	0.58	0.65	0.75
Professional Development Opportunities	0.45	0.48	0.50	0.47	0.55	0.63	0.58	1.00	0.60	0.70
Work Environment	0.52	0.55	0.57	0.54	0.62	0.70	0.65	0.60	1.00	0.77
Overall QWL	0.55	0.58	0.60	0.57	0.65	0.78	0.75	0.70	0.77	1.00

VII. INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics reveal that Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata generally perceive themselves as having moderate to high levels of Psychological Capital (PsyCap). The mean scores for the dimensions of PsyCap—Hope ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.65$), Efficacy ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.70$), Resilience ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.60$), and Optimism ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.68$)—indicate a relatively positive self-assessment in these areas. The overall PsyCap mean score is 3.83 ($SD = 0.66$), suggesting a strong presence of these psychological resources among the respondents.

Similarly, the Quality of Work Life (QWL) dimensions—Job Satisfaction ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.75$), Work-Life Balance ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.80$), Professional Development Opportunities ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.85$), and Work Environment ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.78$)—show moderate to high levels of perceived QWL. The overall QWL mean score is 3.61 ($SD = 0.79$), reflecting a generally positive work experience among the Assistant Professors.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis demonstrates significant positive relationships between PsyCap dimensions and QWL dimensions. Specifically, the overall PsyCap score has a strong positive correlation with the overall QWL score ($r = 0.65$), indicating that higher levels of PsyCap are associated with better QWL. This finding aligns with existing literature suggesting that PsyCap enhances employees' perceptions of their work environment and their ability to cope with job demands (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007).

1. **Hope and QWL:** The correlation between Hope and overall QWL ($r = 0.55$) suggests that Assistant Professors who are more hopeful about their future and career prospects tend to experience better QWL. This is consistent with Snyder's (2002) theory that hope, involving goal-directed energy and planning, contributes to higher job satisfaction and work engagement.
2. **Efficacy and QWL:** Efficacy shows a strong positive correlation with overall QWL ($r = 0.58$), indicating that those who feel confident in their abilities to achieve work-related goals perceive their work life more positively. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory supports this, highlighting that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals and persist in the face of obstacles, leading to higher job satisfaction.
3. **Resilience and QWL:** The correlation between Resilience and overall QWL ($r = 0.60$) underscores the importance of resilience in coping with work-related stress and maintaining a positive work environment. This finding aligns with previous studies that have shown resilience to be a critical factor in reducing burnout and improving job satisfaction (Robertson, Cooper, Sarkar, & Curran, 2015).
4. **Optimism and QWL:** Optimism is positively correlated with overall QWL ($r = 0.57$), suggesting that optimistic individuals who expect positive outcomes are more likely to perceive their work life positively. Optimism has been linked to various positive work outcomes, including higher job satisfaction and lower levels of job stress (Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010).

Discussion of the findings :

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of PsyCap in enhancing the QWL of Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata. The strong correlations between PsyCap dimensions and QWL dimensions suggest that developing PsyCap can be a valuable strategy for improving faculty well-being and job satisfaction.

Implications for Practice: Educational institutions can benefit from implementing training and development programs aimed at enhancing PsyCap among faculty members. Interventions such as resilience training, positive psychology workshops, and coaching can help boost PsyCap and, consequently, improve QWL (Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008).

Policy Recommendations: Policymakers should consider incorporating PsyCap development into faculty development initiatives. Providing resources and support for professional development opportunities, work-life balance programs, and a positive work environment can further enhance QWL.

Findings from the Focus Group Interviews :

Focus Group Demographics:

- Three focus groups, each with 8-10 Assistant Professors, participated in the study.
- Participants were from various academic disciplines within state-aided colleges in Kolkata.
- Participants varied in age, gender, years of experience, and academic rank, ensuring diverse perspectives.

Themes Identified:

1. Challenges Faced by Assistant Professors:

- **Workload and Time Management:** Participants reported heavy teaching loads, administrative duties, and limited time for research activities.
- **Resource Constraints:** Many Assistant Professors highlighted the lack of adequate resources, including research funding, laboratory facilities, and access to academic journals.
- **Professional Development:** There were concerns about limited opportunities for professional growth and development, including attending conferences and workshops.

2. Psychological Strengths (PsyCap) and Their Influence on Work Life:

- **Hope:** Participants with high levels of hope expressed a clear vision for their career goals and felt motivated to overcome obstacles. They believed in the possibility of positive changes in their work environment.
- **Efficacy:** Those with strong self-efficacy felt confident in their ability to manage teaching and research responsibilities effectively. They were proactive in seeking solutions to problems.
- **Resilience:** Resilient participants demonstrated the ability to bounce back from setbacks, such as rejected research papers or failed grant applications. They maintained a positive outlook despite challenges.
- **Optimism:** Optimistic participants tended to expect positive outcomes and viewed challenges as opportunities for growth. They were more likely to engage in constructive problem-solving and maintain high morale.

3. Impact of PsyCap on Quality of Work Life (QWL):

- **Job Satisfaction:** High PsyCap participants reported greater job satisfaction, citing their ability to find meaning and purpose in their work. They felt valued and recognized by their peers and students.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Participants with higher PsyCap were better at balancing professional and personal responsibilities. They used coping strategies to manage stress and avoid burnout.
- **Professional Development Opportunities:** Those with higher PsyCap actively sought out and created opportunities for professional development. They networked with colleagues and engaged in continuous learning.
- **Work Environment:** Participants noted that a supportive work environment, characterized by collegiality and institutional support, enhanced their QWL. High PsyCap individuals contributed positively to this environment by fostering teamwork and collaboration.

Discussion of the findings of the focus group interviews :

1. Challenges Faced by Assistant Professors: The findings underscore the significant challenges that Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata encounter. Heavy workloads, resource constraints, and limited professional development opportunities are prevalent issues. These challenges can negatively impact job satisfaction and overall QWL if not addressed effectively (Kaur, 2017; Mukhopadhyay, 2018).

2. Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and Its Influence: The focus group discussions revealed that PsyCap plays a crucial role in how Assistant Professors perceive and navigate their work environment. Participants with higher levels of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism were better equipped to handle the demands of their job and maintain a positive outlook. This aligns with Luthans et al. (2007), who found that PsyCap positively influences job performance and well-being.

- **Hope:** Assistant Professors with high hope set clear career goals and remained motivated to achieve them despite obstacles. This reflects Snyder's (2002) assertion that hope involves goal-directed energy and planning to achieve those goals.
- **Efficacy:** Self-efficacy emerged as a critical factor in managing job responsibilities effectively. Bandura (1997) emphasized that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to persist in the face of challenges, which was evident in the focus group findings.
- **Resilience:** Resilience enabled participants to recover from professional setbacks, such as unsuccessful grant applications. Robertson et al. (2015) highlighted that resilience is essential for reducing burnout and enhancing job satisfaction.
- **Optimism:** Optimistic Assistant Professors were more likely to view challenges as opportunities and maintain high morale. Carver et al. (2010) found that optimism is associated with better coping strategies and lower stress levels.

3. Impact on Quality of Work Life (QWL): The positive impact of PsyCap on QWL was evident across various dimensions:

- **Job Satisfaction:** High PsyCap individuals reported greater job satisfaction, consistent with Avey et al. (2009), who found that PsyCap enhances employees' satisfaction with their jobs.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Participants with higher PsyCap managed to balance their professional and personal lives more effectively, using strategies to mitigate stress and prevent burnout. This supports the notion that PsyCap can buffer against the negative effects of job demands (Avey et al., 2010).
- **Professional Development:** Those with high PsyCap were proactive in seeking professional development opportunities, enhancing their skills and knowledge. Luthans et al. (2008) suggested that PsyCap encourages continuous learning and professional growth.
- **Work Environment:** High PsyCap individuals contributed to a positive work environment, fostering teamwork and collaboration. This finding aligns with research indicating that PsyCap can improve interpersonal relations and organizational climate (Luthans et al., 2007).

Implications for Practice and Policy: The study's findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to develop PsyCap among Assistant Professors. Educational institutions should consider implementing training programs focused on building hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Additionally, creating a supportive work environment and providing adequate resources can further enhance QWL.

Future Research: Future studies should explore the longitudinal effects of PsyCap on QWL and investigate specific interventions that can effectively enhance PsyCap in academic settings. Examining the role of institutional policies and support systems in fostering PsyCap and QWL would also provide valuable insights.

CONCLUSION : In conclusion, the findings from the focus group interviews reinforce the significant role of Psychological Capital in enhancing the Quality of Work Life among Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata. By investing in the development of PsyCap, educational institutions can create a more supportive and fulfilling work environment, ultimately benefiting both faculty members and the broader educational community.

The findings of both the questionnaire and focus group discussions provide valuable insights into the relationship between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and the Quality of Work Life (QWL) among Assistant Professors in state-aided colleges in Kolkata.

The questionnaire results revealed that Assistant Professors generally perceive themselves as possessing moderate to high levels of PsyCap, including hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. These psychological strengths are positively correlated with various dimensions of QWL, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, professional development opportunities, and the work environment. The focus group discussions further elucidated the impact of PsyCap on Assistant Professors' experiences and perceptions, highlighting the challenges they face and the role of PsyCap in navigating these challenges.

The findings collectively underscore the significance of PsyCap in fostering a positive work environment and enhancing QWL among Assistant Professors. Individuals with higher levels of PsyCap demonstrated greater job satisfaction, better work-life balance, proactive engagement in professional development, and contribution to a supportive work environment. These findings have implications for practice, suggesting the importance of developing PsyCap through targeted interventions and creating supportive institutional policies.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on PsyCap and QWL in educational settings, emphasizing the need for continued research and practical interventions to promote faculty well-being and enhance organizational effectiveness in academic institutions. By recognizing and nurturing the psychological strengths of Assistant Professors, educational institutions can foster a more positive and conducive work environment, ultimately benefiting both faculty members and the broader educational community.

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