

Impact of Psychological Capital of Parents on English Language Proficiency of Students

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of parental psychological capital (PsyCap) on children's English language proficiency. PsyCap comprises four key components: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. While previous research highlighted the role of PsyCap in workplace performance and education, its influence on English language competency remains underexplored. This study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing the relationship between parental PsyCap and student English proficiency. A correlational quantitative research design was employed, treating parental PsyCap as the independent variable and English proficiency as the dependent variable. A random sample of 104 Grade 11 students and their parents participated. Parental PsyCap was assessed using a questionnaire based on the Compound PsyCap Scale (CPC 12), while student proficiency was measured through their last-term test scores, a specially designed test, and speaking and listening assessments. Data analysis, conducted using SPSS software, revealed a strong positive correlation between parental PsyCap and student English proficiency ($R = 0.862$). The R-squared value (0.743) indicated that 74.3% of the variance in students' proficiency is explained by parental PsyCap, demonstrating its strong predictive ability. Additionally, the unstandardized coefficient ($B = 1.356$, $p = 0.000$) suggested that for every one-unit increase in parental PsyCap, students' English proficiency improves by 1.356 units. The high t-value (17.155) further confirms the significant impact of parental PsyCap. In conclusion, this study highlights the critical role of parental psychological capital in shaping students' English language proficiency, emphasizing the need to consider parental mindset as a key factor in language development.

Key words: Compound PsyCap Scale (CPC 12); Proficiency; Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

Introduction

English language proficiency is a crucial determinant of one's life and career in Sri Lanka. Numerous research has been conducted to identify the overall factors influencing education. Psychological capital, which refers to an individual's positive psychological resources that allow him to succeed in a variety of areas of life, is one such component that has recently acquired popularity. Psychological Capital (PsyCap), which is made up of four sub-constructs – self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience – is defined as the state of one's positive psychology to overcome obstacles and persevere (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). This study focused on finding the relationship between the psychological capital of parents on the English language proficiency of children.

According to Ceka and Murati (2016), parents are the best role models for their children and have the most impact on them, as children always emulate the ideals and behavioral patterns of their parents. Blanka and Nada (2007)

found that the impact of the family's cultural and educational makeup, as well as the parents' proactive attitudes towards their children's education and success, leads to family stimulation. According to Luthans et al. (2007), parents with high psychological capital create a positive emotional climate at home, which fosters a supportive environment for learning, and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) suggested that parents who believe in their ability to support their children's education are more likely to seek and utilize resources. High psychological capital in parents correlates with proactive behaviors in finding and using educational resources. A study by Masten and Reed (2002) on resilience showed that parents who manage stress effectively can create a less stressful home environment. This reduced stress level positively impacts children's ability to focus and perform in school. Furthermore, according to Hill and Tyson (2009), parental involvement in education is strongly linked to academic achievement. Parents with high levels of psychological capital are more likely to be involved in their children's education, which leads to better academic outcomes.

The idea of parental psychological capital has been largely overlooked in Sri Lankan research on parental support and involvement, which has focused on material determinants like family income, parental education, and household resources (Sajitha, 2021). However, not enough research has been done on parents' emotional and psychological fortitude in the face of hardship. Investigating this area may provide valuable insights into the internal resources parents use to assist their children's education. While studies have been done on parental expectations and their involvement in school (Aunola et al., 2000), the precise influence of PsyCap on a parent's ability to provide emotional and intellectual support has been underexplored. This research aims to find whether there is any effect of parents' Psychological Capital on the English language fluency of students, and the main objective is to identify the effect of Parents' Psychological Capital on students' English proficiency. Thus, this study enhances our understanding of Psychological Capital in education and will also provide practical solutions to enhance English language learning in Sri Lanka.

Material and methods

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model illustrates the postulated relationships between parents' Psychological Capital (independent variable) and their children's English language competencies (dependent variable).

Participants and Sampling Methods

This study was conducted with 104 parent-student pairs. Of the 104 parents, 23 were fathers, and the rest were mothers. We used a systematic random sampling technique to select the sample and ensured that different school zones of Ratnapura were included.

The correlational quantitative research design enabled an objective analysis of the relationships between variables and was chosen as the most appropriate approach.

Data Sources and Data Collection Instruments

In this study, the secondary data sources (mark sheets from the school's formal records) were used to collect the students' marks, and the questionnaire for parents was used as the data collection tool.

Psychological Capital of Parents

To measure the Psychological Capital of the parents, the Compound PsyCap Scale (CPC 12) was used. This is a 12-item validated questionnaire that assesses four dimensions of Psychological Capital: Hope, Efficacy, Resilience and Optimism. Each item was rated on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To align it with the study's objectives, the questionnaire was modified to reflect parenting perspectives in relation to children's education following the major article selected (Khajavy et al., 2019.) Before implementation, the pilot test was done

and then the necessary changes in the questionnaire were made, following the previous research. Finally, after the reliability and validity confirmation, the questionnaire was given to the main sample.

The reliability results for the main survey (sample size: 104) revealed notable improvements in internal consistency for some variables compared to the pilot study. Optimism ($\alpha = 0.838$), self-efficacy ($\alpha = 0.918$), and English language education ($\alpha = 0.899$) exhibit particularly high reliability, indicating a strong level of consistency among the survey items. Comparing these results with the major article referred to (sample size: 317), the present study demonstrates higher reliability across all variables. The major article reports lower Cronbach's Alpha values, with resilience ($\alpha = 0.67$) and optimism ($\alpha = 0.68$) having the weakest reliability. Hope ($\alpha = 0.71$), self-efficacy ($\alpha = 0.72$), and English language education ($\alpha = 0.80$) show moderate internal consistency but remain lower than the values found in both the pilot and main surveys. This suggests that the questionnaire used in the current study may provide more reliable measurements.

English Language Proficiency of Students

The student's English language skills were tested using numerous measures for extensive evaluation:

Marks obtained on the last term test: Taken as a standard tool for testing English language proficiency.

Specially designed tests assessed the following:

- Reading and Writing Competencies: Assessed through comprehension reading passages and written responses.
- Listening Comprehension Skills: Assessed by conducting an auditory-based test.
- Oral Interaction Skills: Assessed through an oral proficiency test.

Measures to Ensure Validity and Reliability

To enhance the validity and reliability of the study, a series of reliability tests was conducted. The reliability tests were conducted on the pilot sample, the main sample, and for the main article that was used. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the CPC-12 scale, and standardized test scores yielded reliable measures of English proficiency. Content validity was established through expert review, and construct validity was investigated by factor analysis. Triangulation through multiple sources of data (self-reports, test scores) was used to minimize bias.

Pilot Testing

Before the major data collection, a pilot study was conducted among 25 parents to establish the reliability and the reliability of the CPC-12 questionnaire. A high reliability score (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.8) confirmed the questionnaire's consistency.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, employing various statistical techniques to examine the relationship between parental PsyCap and students' English language proficiency.

Justification of Hypotheses

The hypotheses drew on both Psychological Capital Theory and empirical research to associate positive psychological attributes of parents with academic achievement.

Results

Table 1

Model summary: overall model

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.862 ^a	.743	.740	.36943	

a. Predictors: (Constant), PC

Note. Data analysis outputs, 2025.

The R-value of 0.862 indicates a strong positive relationship between parental psychological capital (PC) and students' English language proficiency. The R-Square value of 0.743 suggests that 74.3% of the variance in students' English proficiency is explained by PC, demonstrating a strong predictive ability.

Table 2

Anova overall model

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40.163	1	40.163	294.283	.000 ^b
	Residual	13.921	102	.136		
	Total	54.084	103			

a. Dependent Variable: Education

b. Predictors: (Constant), PC

Note. Data analysis outputs, 2025.

The regression model is highly significant ($F = 294.283$, $p = 0.000$), confirming that PC significantly predicts students' English language proficiency. The low residual sum of squares (13.921) indicates that the model fits the data well.

Table 3

Coefficient overall model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.511	.342		-4.419	.000
	PC	1.356	.079	.862	17.155	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Education

Note. Data analysis outputs, 2025.

The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 1.356$, $p = 0.000$) suggests that for every one-unit increase in PC, students' English proficiency increases by 1.356 units. The high t -value (17.155) confirms the strong impact of PC on students' English language proficiency.

Discussion

The research was successful in responding to the primary research question of whether parental psychological capital influences students' English language ability, with statistical tests showing positive correlations between all four dimensions of psychological capital (hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy) and students' academic performance. The findings confirm that parents with higher levels of psychological capital have greater opportunities to positively impact their children's learning, such as their English ability. Moreover, the study aimed to investigate the deeper impact of the psychological capital of parents on students' educational development and postulated that developing these traits would lead to a better and more amicable learning environment. That is important for educators and policymakers as they should attempt to incorporate programs and interventions to help strengthen parental psychological capital to further promote students' educational development. This research suggests that increasing parents' hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy could create a more nurturing learning environment, allowing children to overcome learning challenges, particularly with language skills. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the necessity of considering the psychological attributes of parents when designing interventions or educational support systems with the aim of improving student achievement. For policymakers, the study suggests the inclusion of psychological capital training in national school programs, and for parents, the findings highlight the importance of proactively developing their own psychological capital so that they can support their children's learning.

The study lays the groundwork for future research, which can take more diverse cultural environments into account, examine different age groups, and investigate other influencing factors such as socioeconomic status and school climate. Longitudinal studies can even provide more clarity on the long-term effects of parental psychological capital on students' academic trajectories. Future research must consider other variables that may potentially influence English proficiency. For instance, socioeconomic status is a key determinant of access to educational resources and opportunities, and it may moderate or mediate the effect of parental psychological capital on students' school performance. However, there are a few constraints on this study. The 104-participant sample may not represent broader groups, so generalizability is limited. Only the four psychological capital scales – hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy – were explored; other factors potentially influencing them, such as socio-economic status or parent level of education, were not considered. Finally, cross-sectional research measures one point in time, limiting the ability to demonstrate causality.

Conclusion

This research confirmed that parental psychological capital influences students' English language ability, since the statistical tests showed positive correlations between all four dimensions of psychological capital – hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy – and the students' academic performance. The regression analysis also supported that parental psychological capital is among the determinants of students' English proficiency, emphasizing the importance of building these qualities among parents as a way of promoting academic achievement. The findings show that parents with strong psychological capital create a more learner-friendly atmosphere, which has a positive impact on their children's academic success. Finally, the parents' psychological capital can be used strategically to improve students' English language skills, which can be useful in policy formulation in English language education in Sri Lanka.

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