

Workplace Mobbing and Spiritual Health Among Teachers in Pakistan: The Mediating Effect of Psychological Capital

Haleema Farid ^a Summaira Rehman ^b Shagufta Perveen ^c

Abstract: *This research has been done to find out the connection between psychological capital with workplace bullying (mobbing) and teachers' overall well-being. Besides, the study measured the effect of psychological capital on the association between health and mobbing. Furthermore, the research looked at demographic differences such as age in psychological capital, mobbing experiences, and health outcomes among teachers. The research used a targeted sample of 390 teachers (235 men and 155 women) from public colleges and universities in the Abbottabad and Mansehra regions. The researcher utilized the following instruments to collect data: Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PsyCap-Q), Mobbing Scale for Academicians (MS-A), Spiritual Health Assessment Scale (SHAS), and a demographic form. They followed a correlational research design. The results demonstrated the existence of significant positive relationships among psychological capital, mobbing, and health. The study found that psychological capital was the factor that connected the gap between mobbing and health. This emphasizes its pivotal role. The outcomes imply that interventions aimed at increasing psychological capital and fighting workplace bullying by which employees are bullied through increased awareness, can contribute to creating a healthier and more supportive environment for teachers. Later, this can elevate student achievement and strengthen the education system.*

Keywords: Psychological Capital, Mobbing, Mental Health, Teachers

Introduction

One of the concepts that arose from the field of positive psychology and has been a topic of interest in the organizational psychology and management by many researchers is psychological capital (PsyCap). It involves the positive mental state and the positive inner resources of the individual that enable him/her to cope with the situation effectively, to perform within his/her job better, and to be successful in different areas. These four components constitute PsyCap: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. In sum, these elements show the ability of a person to draw from his/her internal power and faith to find a way through the impasse, to keep up the brave spirit when the going is tough, and to achieve the goals.

Psychological capital refers to a person's positive mental characteristics. Among these is the person's ability to endure difficult situations, retain optimism for future successes, and bravely face challenges. The main elements of psychological capital are interdependent, as each one separately contributes to the overall concept of psychological capital (Fernandes & Machado, 2021).

Psychological capital often called PsyCap, shows how a person grows in a good way. It has four main mental resources: optimism, resilience, hope, and self-efficacy. (Avey et al. 2009; Dawkins et al. 2018; Luthans et al. 2007). Self-efficacy means you believe you can handle hard tasks well (Liao & Liu, 2016). Hope includes the drive to reach goals and the knack to find different paths to get there (Harms et al., 2018; Snyder et al. 2002). Optimism means you expect good things to happen (Ertosun et al. 2015). Resilience, as Luthans et al. (2014) put it, is the mental toughness that helps people face tests unclear times, and setbacks without giving up and by changing as needed.

Dawkins et al. (2013) expressed an idea that studies concerning psychological capital have mainly ignored the significance of the examination of individual psychological capital profiles. Consequently, the

^a Visiting Faculty, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan.

^b Lecturer, Hazara University Mansehra, Pakistan/ PhD Scholar, Shaanxi Normal University, Xian, China.

^c Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Hazara University, Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

study of Ferradás et al. (2019) has found a variety of psychological capital profiles of the different people, among which teachers, thus indicating different levels of PsyCap, were representatives of different groups.

Mobbing is a term that was first introduced by Leymann in his behavioral typology, and it is based on the English word "mob," which denotes an unruly or hostile crowd. In this instance, the term "mobbing" refers to a series of acts, including emotional harassment, psychological violence, intimidation, pressure, social exclusion, and unjustified accusations of psychological abuse. The situation implies that supervisors, colleagues, or subordinates harass a person whom they direct hostility towards, and they do it in a repeated and systematic way (Noa et al., 2002).

Mobbing in the workplace is, in general, a series of actions that are usually done by a person or a group and aimed at causing some kind of harm in professional surroundings (Commers & Vandekerckhove, 2003). According to Einarsen et al. (2011), the words harassment, bullying, and mobbing are used interchangeably in most cases to denote the same kind of repeated negative behavior in the workplace.

As the matter of a fact, academic mobbing is everywhere on college and university campuses, but the most common form of it is that the behaviors are subtle, non-violent, and look as if they come from polite people. If a faculty member wants to overthrow a colleague, then they might emotionally exhaust the one who is targeted by their acts. Among these behaviors are ejection, gossip, mockery, difficulties through bureaucracy, and the rejection of the recognition that is due (Westhues, 2006). Women faculty members who dare to raise their voices about ethical misconduct are the ones being targeted mostly as their rivals view their competence and professional achievements as the biggest threats to them (Stokes et al., 1998).

Usually bullies among the management will pick out targets to be employees that are more skilled and competent than them. The intention is to break down these employees' self-confidence and question their credibility. Consequently, this method assists to take the attention away from the supervisors' weaknesses. Behaving in such a manner is an excellent illustration of a wrong and insufficient way of dealing with issues originating from the authors' low self-esteem and feeling of professional inadequacy (Hoel, 2013).

Demographic factors such as age have been identified as an important factor; Studies by Leymann and Gustafsson (1996) were based on people aged 21 to 40, while Chappell and Di Martino (2006) looked at the population under 30, both concluding that young people are the most likely to be bullied. Parent-Thirion et al. (2007) have even more evidence for this by specifying that these younger age groups are the most susceptible to receiving offensive behaviors that may later escalate to mobbing. Moreover, Rayner (1997) found that younger workers were targeted by bullies more often than the older ones.

One ancient saying, "health is wealth" is an indicator of how important it is to maintain good health. Any deterioration can affect the whole body. The World Health Organization (2010) has stated that health depends on a mix of biological factors, as well as the physical and social environments in which people live and work. According to Hindu mythology health is the greatest material wealth, and it is often termed "Pahala Sukh," which means greatest happiness. Different scholars have been suggesting different definitions of health through various periods. In earlier concepts, health was mostly looked at from a negative side, being without any kind of diseases, likewise life is considered not to be death (Merriam-Webster, 2011).

One of the factors that determine health is acknowledged to be a person's background, lifestyle, and economic conditions. The influences that have an effect on health are called the determinants of health. In the paper entitled "Dimensions and Determinants of Health," Gaur and Sharma (2014) stated that "Spiritual health can be defined as growth in a way that enhances one's own development, a quest for the meaning and the purpose of life and an innate feeling of bliss. It indicates a harmonious relationship among the person's logical, physical, and spiritual aspects."

Literature Review

Psychological Capital and Mobbing

Vignery and Laurier (2020) hypothesized a possible connection between psychological capital (PsyCap) and the academic performance of students. Based on positive psychology, PsyCap has been associated with various attitudes, behaviors, and, eventually, different results, mostly in the context of organizations

(Avey, 2014; Luthans & Morgan, 2017; Newman et al., 2014). As a higher-order concept, it reflects the personal psychological development of the individual and, therefore, comprises the four psychological constructs of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience as its basic components (Ferradás et al., 2019; Luthans et al., 2007, 2010).

Psychological Capital and Health

A large number of studies have singled out psychological capital as the key factor to employees' psychological well-being. To put it, this factor alone can often have a stronger influence than the rest of the variables combined (Luthans et al., 2007). PsyCap has been associated with a wide range of positive workplace behaviors, contributions to job performance, and the expression of supportive attitudes (Luthans & Morgan, 2017). Being acknowledged as one of the positive personal characteristics, it is very much linked to self-evaluation and individual character traits (Luthans et al., 2015). Its significance has been proven in both the Western and non-Western cultural contexts as well (Sun et al., 2012).

Mobbing and Health

Various studies have identified workplace bullying as a major problem in the academic world (McKay et al., 2008; Keashly & Neuman, 2010; Zabrodska & Kveton, 2013). In their research, Björkqvist et al. (1994) pointed to the factors of envy and competition as the most influential causes of bullying in universities in Finland.

One of the major worldwide studies conducted recently by Brooks et al. (2018) revealed that there were statistically significant positive correlations between the various aspects of spiritual health and both the overall satisfaction with life and the self-rated health condition of the individuals considered as excellent.

It is a point that needs to be made clear first, that spirituality is different from religion. Spiritually one is more concerned with their own lived experiences and the connection they have with something beyond them, without this being the result of any particular rites, organization, or social framework. In contrast, religion is typically connected to specific practices, organizational affiliations, and social relationships (Tovar-Murray, 2011).

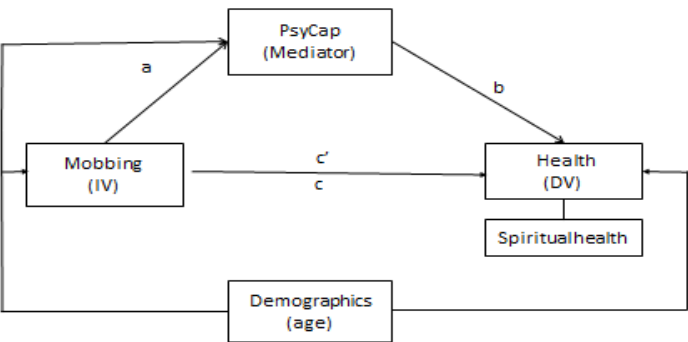
Research by (Kharitonov, 2012; Mueller et al., 2001; Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Unterrainer et al., 2014) consistently shows that spirituality positively influences health, contributing to greater well-being, better quality of life, stronger coping abilities, faster mental health recovery, and lower risks of addiction and suicide.

Hypotheses

- 1. Psychological capital will have a positive relationship with mobbing and health (spiritual), while mobbing will have a negative relationship with health among teachers.
- 2. Psychological capital will act as a mediator in the relationship between mobbing and health (spiritual) among teachers.
- 3. Age will have association on psychological capital, mobbing, and health among teachers.

Conceptual Model of the Study

Figure 1



Material and Methodology

Nature

The present study employed a correlational survey method within a quantitative research design framework.

Population

This research was carried out among teachers at colleges and universities.

Sample Size

The study includes a sample of 390 college and university teachers.

Sample Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed in this study.

Questionnaire and Tools

For data collection, four measurement scales were used along with an informed consent form.

PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ): The Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ), as per Luthans et al. (2007), is a 24-item measure that identifies the four key aspects of psychological capital, namely resilience, hope, optimism, and self-efficacy. The reactions are recorded on a six-point Likert scale, with 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The overall PsyCap score is the average score of all the facets. Few items are reverse-scored. The original version of the tool demonstrated good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .87 whereas the present study has obtained a reliability coefficient of .92 for the sample.

Mobbing Scale (MS-A): Mobbing Scale for Academicians (MS-A), by Yildiz (2019), is an instrument specifically aimed at identifying mobbing behaviors in higher education institutions. It is a five-point Likert-type scale, with response options ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always), where higher scores indicate higher levels of mobbing. The scale had a very good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .923. Here in this research, the scale has achieved a reliability coefficient of .85 for the sample.

Spiritual Health Assessment Scale (SHAS): The Spiritual Health Assessment Scale (SHAS) is a 21-item instrument measuring spiritual health, developed by Gaur and Sharma in 2014. It uses a five-point Likert scale with scores varying from 1 (never) to 5 (always). A higher score indicates a higher spiritual health. The scale showed good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .82. Here in this research, the scale has achieved a reliability coefficient of .91 for the sample.

Sampling Procedure

The sample for the present study was selected from educational institutions. We got informed consent from every participant before the participation. We delivered a sheet of instructions that explained the aim of the research and gave guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were informed that it was their voluntary decision to take part in the study and that they were free to withdraw from it at any time without any disadvantage. Information was collected using the Psychological Capital Questionnaire, Mobbing Scale, and Spiritual Health Assessment Scale. The participants were given the instruction to perform each question carefully. After the study, we acknowledged their cooperation with us and thanked them.

Data Analyses and Interpretation

The research depended on the extensive data analysis that was made easy with SPSS version 26. The work done was correlational analysis, inter-item correlation, and the use of the PROCESS macro.

Ethical Consideration

Also, before any data were collected, each participant gave informed consent. The participants got an instruction sheet that not only explained the research purpose but also promised them anonymity and confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Alpha Reliability Coefficient of the Scales (N = 390)

Scales	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's α
PsyCap-Q	96.45	29.15	24-144	.92
MS-A	24.93	10.63	10-50	.85
SHAS	72.65	20.62	21-105	.91

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; PsyCap-Q= Psychological Capital Scale; MS-A = Mobbing Scale; SHAS = Spiritual Health Assessment Scale.

Table 1 presents the psychological measurements of the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PsyCap-Q), the Mobbing Scale (MS-A), and the Spiritual Health Assessment Scale (SHAS) with the Cronbach's alpha values of .92, .85, .91, respectively. These alpha coefficients indicate good internal consistency for all the scales.

Table 2

Correlations among the Psychological Capital Scale, Mobbing Scale, Spiritual Health Assessment Scale, , as well as age (N = 390)

Scales	N	M	SD	1	2	3
PsyCap-Q	24	96.45	19.59	-	.13**	.69**
MS-A	10	24.93	7.66	-	-	.115*
SHAS	21	72.56	14.86	-	-	-
Age	-	35.53	7.80	.028	.024	-.131**

NoteN = Number of Items; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; PsyCap-Q = Psychological Capital Scale; MS-A = Mobbing Scale; SHAS = Spiritual Health Assessment Scale.

**p < .01.

Table 2 highlights significant relationships, showing a strong positive correlation of PsyCap-Q with MS-A, and SHAS. Additionally, MS-A is significantly positively correlated with SHAS. Age, however, is significantly negatively correlated with health.

Table 3

Summary of Mediation Analysis Results for Teachers' Health (N = 390)

DV	M	Effect of IV on M	Effect of M on DV	Direct Effects	Indirect Effect	Total Effects
SHAS	Psychological Capital	.3415**	.5283***	.044	.1804	.2248*

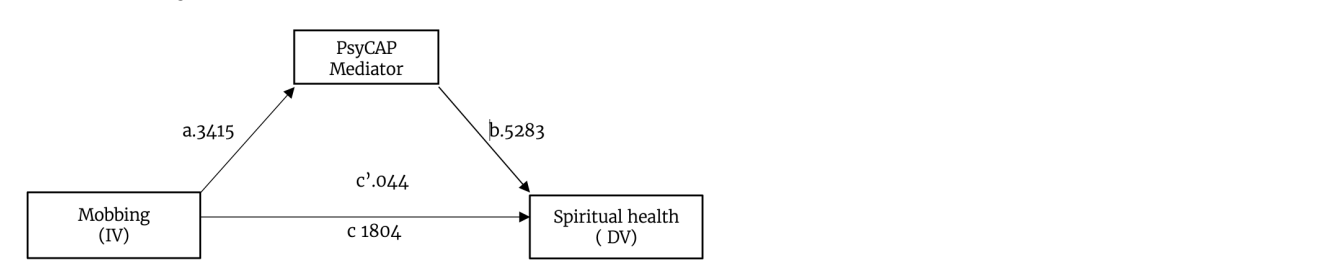
SHAS= Spiritual Health Assessment Scale

*p < .05, ***p < .001.

Table 3 presents the results indicating a significant relationship between mobbing and health (both spiritual and psychosomatic), with psychological capital acting as a mediator influencing this relationship

Figure 2

Mediation Analysis



The results of a simple mediation analysis, presented in Figure 2, suggest that psychological capital fully mediates the link between mobbing and spiritual health. A significant positive relationship was found between mobbing and psychological capital ($a = .3415$, $p < .01$). Additionally, psychological capital was significantly negatively associated with health ($b = .5283$, $p = .000$). Based on 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval, the mediated (indirect) effect ($ab = .1804$) was found to be statistically significant, as the confidence interval (.0043 to .1748) did not include zero. Additionally, after controlling for the indirect effect of psychological capital, the direct effect of mobbing on spiritual health was non-significant ($C' = .044$, $p > .05$). These findings indicate that psychological capital is a complete mediator between mobbing and spiritual health in the case of the study.

Discussion

The current study predicted that psychological capital would be positively correlated with both mobbing and health, and that mobbing would be negatively correlated with health in teachers. Nevertheless, the results do not entirely corroborate the primary hypothesis, as a considerable positive correlation was found between psychological capital, mobbing, and health. In addition, mobbing was also positively correlated with health. These findings align with the earlier studies (refer to Table 2) that suggest psychological capital as a positive source of spiritual, psychological, and social well-being. Shrestha and Chhetri (2021) have shown that psychological capital is a partial mediator in the relationship between workplace social capital (WPS) and an individual's spiritual, psychological, and social well-being.

Psychological capital refers to the four core self-evaluations of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. These traits help the individual's psychological health, improve work performance, and increase life satisfaction. Whereas mobbing is a set of hostile behaviors at work. One or more people harass a co-worker with insulting, abusive, or threatening behaviors for a long time.

Such a behavior deteriorates the perpetrator's mental health, his work satisfaction, and even the level of his performance at work. Taking these definitions into account, one could hardly argue that psychological capital is positively related to mobbing. Even though logically one could expect that people with higher psychological capital would be more vulnerable to mobbing, research shows that they usually cope with mobbing better and it affects them to a lesser extent. Psychologically strong people have the ability to raise their level of concentration and also to use mental "earplugs" in order to face or to ignore bullying and, therefore, the negative influences of such actions diminish.

Psychological capital is inversely proportional to the number of difficulties related to a mobbing attack that an individual can face in a workplace. Generally, persons endowed with high psychological capitals are better at dealing with bullying and mobbing. They are often found to have more resilience in difficult situations. A theory of positive association between psychological capital and mobbing is at odds with the existing psychological theories. Usually, higher psychological capital is correlated with better mental health, more resilience, and less probability of engaging in harmful behaviors such as mobbing. On the other hand, people with a high level of psychological capital most probably exhibit positive, constructive behaviors. Such behaviors are collaboration, successful conflict management, and positive social interaction.

The research examined how psychological capital mediates the impact of workplace mobbing on the health of teachers. It can be seen from the table 3 that psychological capital is the significant mediator between mobbing and spiritual health. So, the evidence of the second hypothesis is to be found confirming a psychological capital playing a mediating role in the interaction of the variables connecting mobbing and health. To compare, earlier studies have likewise investigated the mediating role of psychological capital with different variables, and in all cases, its mediating effect has been retained. Based on this evidence, the researcher incorporated psychological capital as a mediator in the current study.

A previous study of Shrestha and Chhetri (2021) found that psychological capital positively influences spiritual, psychological, and social well-being, and partially mediates the relationship between workplace spirituality (WPS) and these well-being dimensions.

The third hypothesis of this study suggested that age would have a significant impact on psychological capital, mobbing, and health among teachers. Table 2 shows a negative correlation between age and health, though it was not statistically significant. Age, marital status, employment, and college attendance did not show any significant relationship with overall health. In this sample (ages 18–30), age was not clearly linked to spirituality, health behaviors, or well-being. This may be due to the limited age range. Including more age groups such as teenagers and middle-aged adults could have shown more pronounced relationships. Several studies (Alexander et al., 1990; Zimmer et al., 2016) have found that the connection between age and spirituality is of moderate to strong intensity.

Conclusion

The research examined the correlations of psychological capital, workplace mobbing, and health in a sample of teachers. According to the data, a greater level of psychological capital corresponded to fewer instances of mobbing and better general health. Educators endowed with strong psychological resources, such as resilience and optimism, are thus more likely to handle work-related stress in a way that does not lead to a negative mobbing impact. The results suggest the possible benefits of interventions aimed at expanding psychological capital (e.g., resilience training, enhancing social support, and creating a positive school climate) to raise teacher well-being and decrease workplace bullying. However, it remains essential to realize that these linkage relationships are complex, and individuals' personalities may influence how psychological capital impacts the experience of mobbing and health. There is still a need for more research to fully understand these issues and to be able to implement different educational contexts accordingly.

Recommendation

1. The introduction into the educational system of such programs as stress management and conflict resolution training is a necessary condition for teachers to enhance their psychological resources.
2. One of the effects of psychological capital development can be a tool to stop workplace mobbing, e.g., by the creation of a respectful and collaborative climate.
3. The well-being of teachers has to be the core of educational settings as it is the key to a productive and healthy environment.
4. Extremely high levels of mobbing alongside teacher health decline that has been caused by a rise in turnover rates; therefore, psychological capital cultivation and the facing of mobbing are the two most important retention strategies for talented and experienced educators.
5. The teacher's well-being and job satisfaction are strong predictors of better student performance and overall educational outcomes.
6. Decreasing the incidence of mobbing and enhancing the mental health of teachers leads to the creation of a positive learning atmosphere for students.
7. While tackling the issue of mobbing, educational institutions also protect themselves from a range of potential legal and ethical issues.
8. Being aware of these factors is the way to healthier and more supportive work environments which are good for teachers, students, and the entire education system.

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