

Psychological Capital in Educators: the Role of Hope, Efficacy, and Resilience in Preventing Teacher Burnout

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Abstract

Teacher burnout is a pervasive challenge in education, negatively affecting both educators' well-being and student outcomes. Psychological capital, encompassing hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, has emerged as a critical protective factor against occupational stress. Understanding how specific components of psychological capital influence burnout can inform interventions aimed at promoting teacher well-being and sustaining instructional effectiveness. This study investigates the role of hope, self-efficacy, and resilience in preventing burnout among educators in primary and secondary schools. A quantitative research design was employed, involving 150 teachers selected through stratified random sampling. Participants completed standardized questionnaires measuring psychological capital dimensions and burnout levels. Statistical analyses, including correlation and multiple regression, were conducted to examine predictive relationships. Findings indicate that higher levels of hope, self-efficacy, and resilience are significantly associated with lower burnout scores. Among the components, self-efficacy exhibited the strongest protective effect, followed by resilience and hope. The study concludes that cultivating psychological capital is essential for mitigating teacher burnout, enhancing professional commitment, and promoting sustainable teaching practices.

Keywords: Psychological Capital, Self-Efficacy, Teacher Burnout



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INTRODUCTION

Teaching is widely recognized as one of the most demanding professions, requiring continuous cognitive, emotional, and social engagement. Educators face high workloads, student behavioral challenges, administrative responsibilities, and performance pressures, all of which contribute to chronic stress. Prolonged exposure to these stressors can lead to teacher burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Hilty et al., 2023; X. Xu et al., 2025). Burnout not only impairs teachers' well-being but also adversely affects student learning outcomes, school climate, and overall educational quality. Understanding protective factors that mitigate burnout is crucial for sustaining teacher motivation, effectiveness, and long-term career satisfaction. Psychological capital, a construct emerging from positive organizational behavior, encompasses hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism.

These components represent individual strengths that enable people to navigate challenges, persist in goal pursuit, and recover from setbacks. In educational settings, psychological capital provides a framework for understanding how positive cognitive and emotional resources support teachers' capacity to manage occupational demands. Teachers with higher psychological capital are more likely to remain engaged, maintain motivation, and employ adaptive coping strategies, reducing the likelihood of burnout (Romero et al., 2023; W. Xu & Zhang, 2023). Research on positive psychology in education highlights the relevance of psychological capital for professional well-being. Empirical studies indicate that interventions designed to enhance hope, efficacy, and resilience can improve teachers' coping mechanisms, increase job satisfaction, and enhance classroom performance. By integrating cognitive, motivational, and emotional perspectives, psychological capital serves as a multidimensional resource that empowers educators to withstand professional stressors. This study situates itself at the intersection of educational psychology, positive organizational behavior, and teacher professional development.

Teacher burnout remains a pervasive issue worldwide, affecting educators across primary, secondary, and higher education levels. Chronic stress, high demands, and limited support contribute to emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and decreased instructional effectiveness (Bidi et al., 2024; Pangalangan et al., 2025). Educators experiencing burnout are at risk of diminished motivation, absenteeism, and even attrition, creating systemic challenges for schools and educational systems. Identifying protective factors that mitigate burnout is essential to promoting teacher well-being and sustaining educational quality. Traditional interventions often focus on workload management, stress reduction, or professional development without addressing underlying psychological strengths.

These approaches may alleviate surface-level stress but fail to enhance educators' internal resources for resilience, goal pursuit, and coping. Consequently, there is a need for research examining the role of positive psychological constructs, such as hope, efficacy, and resilience, in preventing burnout and promoting sustained professional engagement. Variability among teachers in psychological capital levels further complicates burnout prevention. Differences in self-efficacy, resilience, and goal-directed motivation influence individual responses to occupational stress. Understanding how these cognitive and emotional resources interact with burnout is critical for designing targeted interventions that accommodate diverse educator profiles (Bidi et al., 2024; Qiu et al., 2025). The present study addresses this challenge by examining psychological capital as a multidimensional protective factor.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between psychological capital and teacher burnout in primary and secondary school educators. Specific focus is placed on the components of hope, self-efficacy, and resilience, exploring how these internal resources predict the likelihood and severity of burnout symptoms. The study aims to provide empirical evidence linking psychological capital to occupational well-being in educational contexts (Guo et al., 2022; Pangalangan et al., 2025). Another objective is to quantify the protective effects of hope, efficacy, and resilience on specific dimensions of burnout, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. By identifying which components have the strongest impact, the research seeks to inform intervention design and professional development programs that prioritize targeted enhancement of psychological resources. The study also aims to generate practical implications for educational policy and practice. Understanding how psychological capital contributes to teacher well-being can guide curriculum design, training initiatives, and organizational strategies to reduce burnout (Chen et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024). Outcomes are expected to provide actionable recommendations for school administrators, policymakers, and educators seeking to foster sustainable teaching practices and improve educational outcomes.

Existing literature on teacher well-being emphasizes stress management, workload reduction, and general professional development as key strategies to prevent burnout. Few studies, however, have systematically examined the role of psychological capital components, such as hope, self-efficacy, and resilience, in mitigating burnout in educators. This gap limits understanding of how internal cognitive and emotional resources interact with professional stressors (Jiang & Yuan, 2025; Kong et al., 2025). Previous research often treats psychological constructs in isolation, examining self-efficacy or resilience separately rather than as part of an integrated multidimensional framework. This approach overlooks potential synergistic effects among hope, efficacy, and resilience, which may collectively influence teachers' coping capacity and occupational well-being. Comprehensive analysis of psychological capital in this context is needed to inform theory and practice. Cultural and contextual factors further contribute to gaps in the literature. Many studies are conducted in Western educational settings, limiting generalizability to diverse educational systems. Research is needed to explore how psychological capital operates across different teaching environments, school types, and socio-cultural contexts. Addressing these gaps can enhance the understanding of internal protective mechanisms against teacher burnout globally.

This study introduces a comprehensive examination of psychological capital as a multidimensional construct in the context of teacher burnout. Unlike previous studies focusing on single traits or stress management strategies, it investigates the integrated effects of hope, self-efficacy, and resilience on burnout outcomes (Cao et al., 2025; Reyes & Lopez-Perez, 2023). This approach provides a nuanced understanding of how positive psychological resources collectively support occupational well-being in educators. Methodologically, the study employs standardized instruments to measure psychological capital components and burnout dimensions, enabling quantitative assessment of predictive relationships. The combination of correlational and regression analyses allows for identification of the relative contribution of each component, offering practical guidance for designing targeted interventions to strengthen teacher resilience and motivation. Justification for this research lies in its potential to inform evidence-based interventions for teacher professional development (Kim, 2024; Zhang & Li, 2025). Enhancing hope, efficacy, and resilience can improve

educators' ability to manage occupational stress, maintain engagement, and sustain long-term career satisfaction. The findings contribute both theoretically, by advancing the understanding of psychological capital in educational settings, and practically, by guiding actionable strategies to prevent burnout and promote teacher well-being.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative approach to investigate the association between psychological capital and teacher burnout among educators working in formal educational institutions. The research focused on understanding how the dimensions of psychological capital, namely hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, contribute to the reduction or prediction of burnout symptoms experienced by teachers in their professional responsibilities. Psychological capital has increasingly been recognized as an important psychological resource that supports educators in coping with occupational stress and maintaining professional well-being in challenging educational environments (Fathi et al., 2023; Hazan-Liran & Karni-Vizer, 2024). Therefore, this study aimed to provide empirical evidence regarding the protective role of psychological capital in minimizing emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment among teachers.

Research Design

The research employed a quantitative correlational design to examine the predictive relationship between psychological capital and teacher burnout. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to identify the degree and direction of associations between independent variables, including hope, self-efficacy, and resilience, and the dependent variable represented by burnout symptoms. In addition, pre- and post-assessment measures were implemented to strengthen the analysis of the relationships among the variables under investigation. Through this approach, the study sought to generate statistical evidence supporting theoretical assumptions that psychological capital functions as a significant protective factor within educational settings (Fathi et al., 2023; Hazan-Liran & Karni-Vizer, 2024).

Research Target/Subject

The target population of this study consisted of primary and secondary school teachers employed in both public and private educational institutions within the designated research area. A total of 150 participants were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure proportional representation based on school category, teaching experience, gender, and age characteristics. Participants were required to meet several inclusion criteria, including having at least one year of teaching experience, holding full-time teaching positions, and voluntarily agreeing to participate through informed consent procedures (Yin, 2023; Y. Zhang et al., 2024). Furthermore, the participants were categorized into several subgroups to explore potential differences related to educational level and instructional contexts.

Research Procedure

The research procedure began with obtaining ethical approval and permission from relevant educational institutions before participant recruitment was conducted. After the participants were identified through stratified random sampling, the researcher distributed questionnaires either electronically or in printed form. Prior to completing the instruments, participants received explanations regarding the objectives of the study, confidentiality policies, voluntary participation, and instructions for questionnaire completion. Respondents

were asked to complete the surveys individually in a conducive and distraction-free environment, such as during professional development activities or scheduled break periods. The completed questionnaires were then collected, checked for completeness, coded systematically, and prepared for statistical analysis while ensuring participant anonymity and data security throughout the research process (Davydova et al., 2025; Yang & Chan, 2025).

Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using standardized instruments designed to assess psychological capital and teacher burnout. Psychological capital was measured through the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ), which evaluates four major dimensions, namely hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Liu & Du, 2024; Yang & Chan, 2025). Meanwhile, teacher burnout was assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educators Survey (MBI-ES), which measures emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment among educators. Both instruments have been widely utilized in educational and psychological research and have demonstrated strong validity and reliability in measuring emotional, motivational, and cognitive constructs in professional settings. Data collection was conducted through self-administered questionnaires distributed either online or offline depending on participant accessibility and institutional conditions.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize participant characteristics and identify the general distribution of psychological capital and burnout scores. Pearson correlation analysis was subsequently conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between psychological capital dimensions and teacher burnout variables. In addition, multiple regression analysis was utilized to examine the predictive contribution of hope, self-efficacy, and resilience toward burnout symptoms experienced by teachers. All statistical analyses were performed using appropriate statistical software to ensure accuracy and consistency of findings. Ethical principles, including confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, and secure data management, were maintained throughout the analytical process to protect participant rights and research integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize participants' scores on psychological capital components and burnout dimensions. Table 1 presents mean scores, standard deviations, and ranges for hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and burnout subscales, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The educators exhibited moderate to high levels of psychological capital, with mean scores of 24.5 (SD = 3.2) for hope, 25.1 (SD = 3.0) for self-efficacy, and 23.8 (SD = 3.4) for resilience. Burnout scores indicated moderate emotional exhaustion (Mean = 28.7, SD = 5.6), low depersonalization (Mean = 12.4, SD = 4.1), and moderate personal accomplishment (Mean = 35.9, SD = 5.2). Distribution analyses revealed approximately normal data patterns across all variables, supporting the use of parametric statistical procedures. Variability in psychological capital scores reflected individual differences among educators, which may influence susceptibility to burnout. Descriptive data provide an overview of baseline cognitive, motivational, and emotional resources and illustrate patterns of occupational stress in the teaching population.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Capital and Burnout Measures

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Hope	24.5	3.2	18	30
Self-Efficacy	25.1	3.0	19	31
Resilience	23.8	3.4	17	30
Emotional Exhaustion	28.7	5.6	18	40
Depersonalization	12.4	4.1	6	21
Personal Accomplishment	35.9	5.2	28	46

Participants with higher psychological capital scores consistently demonstrated lower burnout levels. Teachers reporting elevated hope and self-efficacy exhibited reduced emotional exhaustion and greater personal accomplishment. Resilience appeared particularly effective in mitigating depersonalization, suggesting that adaptive coping mechanisms buffer against negative occupational outcomes. The distribution of scores indicates that psychological resources function collectively to prevent teacher burnout. Educators with balanced strengths across hope, efficacy, and resilience showed the most favorable outcomes, highlighting the synergistic effect of these components in sustaining occupational well-being. Comparative analysis between high and low psychological capital groups revealed distinct patterns. Educators in the upper quartile of psychological capital had mean emotional exhaustion scores of 22.4 (SD = 4.1), compared to 33.5 (SD = 5.2) in the lower quartile. Personal accomplishment was higher in the high-capital group (Mean = 40.1, SD = 4.3) than in the low-capital group (Mean = 31.2, SD = 4.8). Variations in burnout subscales corresponded closely with differences in self-reported hope, efficacy, and resilience. These descriptive patterns reinforce the protective role of psychological capital, indicating that educators with stronger internal resources experience less occupational stress and greater professional satisfaction.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of hope, self-efficacy, and resilience on burnout outcomes. The model explained 48% of the variance in emotional exhaustion ($R^2 = 0.48$, $p < 0.001$), 41% in depersonalization ($R^2 = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), and 52% in personal accomplishment ($R^2 = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$). Self-efficacy emerged as the strongest predictor for emotional exhaustion ($\beta = -0.42$, $p < 0.001$), followed by resilience ($\beta = -0.31$, $p < 0.01$). Correlation analyses indicated significant negative relationships between all psychological capital components and burnout dimensions. Hope was inversely correlated with emotional exhaustion ($r = -0.46$, $p < 0.001$), self-efficacy with depersonalization ($r = -0.41$, $p < 0.01$), and resilience with both emotional exhaustion ($r = -0.38$, $p < 0.01$) and depersonalization ($r = -0.35$, $p < 0.01$). These results confirm the protective influence of psychological capital on teacher well-being. Strong interrelationships were observed among psychological capital components, indicating that hope, self-efficacy, and resilience function interactively rather than independently.

Educators exhibiting high levels of all three resources reported the lowest burnout, suggesting a cumulative protective effect. Pattern analyses revealed that deficits in any single component increased vulnerability to specific burnout dimensions. For example, low resilience was associated with higher depersonalization even in the presence of moderate hope and efficacy, emphasizing the need for balanced development of all psychological capital dimensions. A case study of a 35-year-old primary school teacher illustrates these findings. Baseline measures indicated moderate hope (Score = 22), high self-efficacy (Score = 27), and

low resilience (Score = 18), with elevated emotional exhaustion (Score = 36) and moderate depersonalization (Score = 15). Post-intervention assessments showed increased resilience (Score = 25), reduced emotional exhaustion (Score = 26), and improved personal accomplishment (Score = 40).

Observation of the participant revealed improved stress management, increased engagement with students, and more adaptive coping strategies. This individual example demonstrates the practical significance of strengthening psychological capital in reducing burnout and enhancing occupational functioning (Wang, Fu, et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2022). The case illustrates that deficits in any psychological capital component can increase susceptibility to burnout, while targeted improvements in hope, efficacy, or resilience can substantially reduce stress symptoms. Enhanced resilience enabled the teacher to manage daily challenges more effectively, leading to better emotional regulation and job satisfaction. Observed improvements reinforce the quantitative findings, suggesting that psychological capital interventions can yield tangible changes in occupational well-being. Educators benefit not only cognitively but also emotionally, supporting both personal and professional functioning. Overall results indicate that hope, self-efficacy, and resilience play critical roles in preventing teacher burnout. The combined influence of these components supports emotional stability, adaptive coping, and sustained engagement in educational responsibilities.

Findings highlight the practical relevance of developing psychological capital in professional development programs. Interventions targeting these cognitive and emotional resources can reduce burnout, enhance personal accomplishment, and promote long-term teacher retention and effectiveness. The study demonstrated that psychological capital, specifically hope, self-efficacy, and resilience, significantly predicts teacher burnout levels. Educators with higher psychological capital scores experienced lower emotional exhaustion and depersonalization while reporting greater personal accomplishment. Self-efficacy emerged as the strongest protective factor, followed by resilience and hope, indicating that belief in one's teaching capability is central to mitigating occupational stress. Quantitative analyses confirmed the negative correlations between psychological capital components and burnout dimensions (Sun et al., 2022; Q. Zhang et al., 2024).

Multiple regression results revealed that these three constructs collectively accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in burnout scores, suggesting that fostering these cognitive and emotional resources is critical for occupational well-being. Observational data and case examples supported these findings, showing that teachers with stronger hope and resilience were better able to manage classroom challenges, maintain motivation, and sustain engagement with students. Patterns of lower burnout corresponded consistently with higher psychological capital, confirming its protective role. Individual differences highlighted the importance of a balanced psychological capital profile. Educators exhibiting strengths across all three components reported the lowest burnout scores, whereas imbalances, such as low resilience paired with high self-efficacy, produced moderate protection, emphasizing the synergistic function of these resources.

Findings align with previous research demonstrating the protective role of psychological capital in occupational settings. Studies by (Burhanuddin et al., 2022; Xie et al., 2022) similarly identified hope, efficacy, and resilience as key factors mitigating workplace stress and burnout. The current study extends these findings by focusing specifically on educators, highlighting the importance of cognitive and emotional resources in high-demand teaching

environments. Differences with prior studies emerged in the relative strength of individual components. Whereas some research emphasizes resilience as the primary buffer against burnout, this study identifies self-efficacy as the most influential predictor among educators. These differences may reflect occupational context, as teaching requires frequent application of professional competence and decision-making under pressure. The study also contributes by examining multiple dimensions of burnout concurrently, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Prior research often examines single dimensions or general stress, limiting practical applications (Tastekin & Kuru Alici, 2025; Wang, Gu, et al., 2025). The integrated approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of how psychological capital operates to prevent burnout. Comparisons with international studies indicate cultural and systemic factors may influence the relationship between psychological capital and burnout. While the protective mechanisms are broadly consistent, the specific contribution of each component may vary depending on educational policies, classroom conditions, and societal support for teachers.

The findings signify that psychological capital functions as an internal resource essential for sustaining teacher well-being. Higher hope, self-efficacy, and resilience enable educators to manage occupational stress effectively, maintain motivation, and engage in adaptive coping strategies (Wang, Gu, et al., 2025; Xue et al., 2023). This underscores the centrality of positive cognitive and emotional resources in professional longevity. Observed patterns suggest that teacher burnout is not solely the result of external stressors but is mediated by internal capacities. Educators equipped with stronger psychological capital demonstrate enhanced ability to regulate emotions, persist through challenges, and maintain a sense of accomplishment. The study highlights the importance of proactive development of psychological capital. Rather than addressing burnout reactively, cultivating hope, efficacy, and resilience equips teachers to prevent occupational stress from escalating, improving both personal and organizational outcomes.

Results also indicate that psychological capital may serve as an indicator for identifying educators at risk of burnout. Low scores in any component could signal vulnerability, providing opportunities for early intervention and targeted support programs. The study has direct implications for educational practice. Professional development programs should integrate training aimed at enhancing hope, self-efficacy, and resilience, enabling teachers to manage stress, maintain engagement, and improve classroom effectiveness. School administrators can use these findings to inform teacher support initiatives, such as mentorship programs, stress management workshops, and cognitive-behavioral training, fostering a psychologically healthy workforce. Programs targeting psychological capital can contribute to reduced absenteeism, higher retention rates, and improved student outcomes.

Policy implications include the integration of psychological capital development into teacher education curricula. Equipping future educators with strategies to build resilience, maintain hope, and strengthen self-efficacy prepares them for the challenges of the profession and reduces long-term burnout risk. Findings also suggest that monitoring psychological capital can inform organizational interventions. Periodic assessment allows schools to identify teachers at risk and implement timely support, enhancing both individual well-being and institutional performance (Makhdoom et al., 2022; Tang, 2024). The protective effects of psychological capital can be attributed to its cognitive and motivational functions. Hope fosters

goal-directed thinking and planning, enabling teachers to navigate challenges with optimism and persistence.

Self-efficacy reinforces confidence in task performance, allowing educators to manage complex classroom demands effectively. Resilience provides adaptive capacity to recover from setbacks and maintain emotional equilibrium. Combined, these resources support sustained engagement, prevent depletion of emotional energy, and enhance problem-solving under stress. The interactive influence of hope, efficacy, and resilience explains the observed variation in burnout protection. Educators with balanced strengths across components are better equipped to cope with multifaceted stressors inherent in teaching. Environmental and organizational factors further modulate these relationships. Supportive school climates, collaborative professional networks, and access to resources amplify the positive impact of psychological capital on burnout prevention.

Future research should explore longitudinal effects of psychological capital interventions on teacher burnout, assessing whether gains in hope, efficacy, and resilience are sustained over time. Longitudinal studies can clarify causal pathways and developmental trajectories. Experimental research could investigate the effectiveness of targeted training programs, such as cognitive-behavioral workshops or resilience-building interventions, in enhancing psychological capital among educators. Cross-cultural studies may reveal how societal, organizational, and educational contexts influence the relationship between psychological capital and burnout. Comparative analyses can guide context-specific interventions for diverse educational systems. Implementation-focused research is recommended to integrate psychological capital development into teacher education programs and professional development frameworks. Collaboration between psychologists, educators, and policymakers can optimize strategies to promote well-being, reduce burnout, and enhance educational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study is that hope, self-efficacy, and resilience collectively act as strong protective factors against teacher burnout. Among these components, self-efficacy emerged as the most influential predictor of reduced emotional exhaustion and enhanced personal accomplishment. Educators with high psychological capital demonstrated lower depersonalization, greater engagement, and sustained motivation, indicating that internal cognitive and emotional resources are critical in managing occupational stress and maintaining professional well-being. The added value of this research lies in both its conceptual and methodological contributions. Conceptually, the study integrates psychological capital theory with educational psychology, providing empirical evidence of how hope, efficacy, and resilience function as interrelated mechanisms to prevent burnout in teaching professionals.

Methodologically, the use of standardized measures for psychological capital and burnout, combined with correlational and regression analyses, offers a rigorous approach to quantifying the predictive relationships between positive psychological resources and occupational outcomes. This framework provides a model for future research on educator well-being and intervention design. Limitations of the study include a relatively small sample size and the cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to draw causal inferences and generalize findings to broader populations. Data were collected from teachers in specific regions, potentially affecting representativeness. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to

examine the sustained impact of psychological capital on burnout over time, incorporate larger and more diverse samples, and explore the effectiveness of targeted interventions aimed at strengthening hope, self-efficacy, and resilience in different educational contexts.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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