Evaluation of a psychological capital intervention aimed at improving flourishing of first year students at a selected university in the Western Cape

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Keywords

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Abstract

This study evaluates whether psychological capital can improve the flourishing of first-year students at a selected university in the Western Cape. The problem is that recently many students entering South African universities come from poor backgrounds where there is an extreme disparity in terms of schooling, classes, financial issues, and other resources. Despite efforts by the government to expand free education to ensure that more Black students enter universities and ensure equity, many of these students continue to drop-out of the university in the first-year of study. Existing research reveals that these dropout rates for first-year students are about 30%. This has emerged as a problem and to address this challenge this study would employ Psychological Capital (PsyCap), a construct proposed to influence academic performance, academic adjustment, flourishing, student engagement, happiness, and satisfaction with life. The study employed a quasi-experimental approach to evaluate whether a psychological capital intervention could enhance the flourishing of first-year students in a university by creating exercises that will develop their psychological resources. The study included 30 first-year students (experiment group) who took part in a two-hour online psychological capital training. In this study, data was collected using three questionnaires: a self-developed biographical questionnaire, the Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire (APCQ), and a Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) before and after the workshop session (i.e., approximately 4 weeks later). The measuring instruments were only completed concurrently by a control group (n = 33). The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences program was used to examine the data, which included repeated measurements of ANOVA. The results from the study indicate no statistically significant difference in pre and post-scores for the intervention and control groups. In the post-intervention measurement point, the participants that undertook the intervention showed a higher increase, although not statistically significant, in levels of psychological capital and flourishing than those in the control group. The recommendations from this study suggest that PsyCap development interventions need to be administered in the right environment that promotes positive thinking to improve the flourishing of first-year students in universities.

Declaration

Siyamthanda Ntlahla, declare that "Evaluation of a psychological capital intervention aimed at improving flourishing of first year students at a selected university in the Western Cape" is work done by myself. This work has not yet been submitted for any examination in other universities. All sources utlised in this thesis has been cited or quoted and acknowledged as complete references

Full name: Siyamthanda Ntlahla

Date: November 2022

Signed: _____

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1.1.Chapter One: Introduction

1.2. Introduction

Globally high university dropout rate is a challenge. In the Organisations of European Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries an average of 31% of students drop out of tertiary education in the first-year (OECD, 2010). Dyomfana (2022) agrees that this is also the case in South Africa, where Dr Blade Nzimande, the Minister of Higher Education and Training admits that the high rates of university dropout in the country are unacceptable as between 50-60% of first-year students' drop out. To reduce the dropout rate, emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing should be considered. These aspects of wellbeing are identified as crucial in students' first year at university, determining whether the students flourished or languished (Knoesen & Naudé, 2018). Despite the fact that students experience both flourishing and languishing during their period of study, it is clear that students are more prone to languishing at the start of their academic careers. Hence, it is crucial to introduce interventions that aim to increase flourishing of first year students with the intention to reduce the dropout rate and promote mental health. Flourishing is associated to a higher degree of performance-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance avoidance goals, independence, and social support system (Datu, Labarda, & Salanga, 2020; Knoesen & Naudé, 2018).

Interventions such as psychological capital are critical in post-apartheid South Africa to minimise the high percentages of university dropouts. The university students' dropout rates result in a waste of taxpayers' money, a lower proportion of undergraduates, a rise in unemployment and, consequently, a lower supply of graduates for employment opportunities in highly scarce skills and mission-critical roles (Banks & Dohy, 2019). This is critical in the current context, because Black South Africans were denied the chance to study at higher educational institutions under the Apartheid regime, which lasted from 1948 to 1990 (Naicker, 2006). According to the literature, the government is eager to enable many formerly underprivileged Black students to obtain higher education after the 1990s, but they face significant drop-out rates, particularly in the first year (Subotzky, 1997; Letseka & Breier, 2008; Badat, 2010; Mtshweni, 2022).

Reducing the drop-out rates is vital as South Africa is a third-world country and education globally is considered to be a vital tool for development (Moleli, 2005) and a central driver for upward economic mobility (Naidoo & McKay, 2018). Higher Education is in demand by almost every school learner who completes Matric (Moleli, 2005). According to Moleli (2005), it is the ambition of all developing countries, societies, guardians/parents, and young people to achieve high academic success in order to adapt to the modern world's difficulties. With this in mind a country like South Africa with

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approximately 26 universities that have a restricted enrolment plan that limit the number of qualifying students to enter higher education (Walker & Mkwananzi, 2015). This means that not all post-matriculants have the opportunity in accessing higher education and improve their livelihoods (Naidoo & McKay, 2018). Of those who were able to access university studies, they must deal with additional hurdles faced by first-year students at higher educational institutions. These hurdles are problems of writing, referencing, plagiarism, academic support (Sekonyela, 2021), English as a barrier and inability to use computers (Northall et al., 2016; Tanga & Maphosa, 2018). The exciting moment of being accepted into a South African university is short-lived as many first-year students encounter these overwhelming challenges (Moodley & Singh, 2015). Extant literature reveals that most first-year students find themselves in a completely new environment where they are required to find ways to manage the acquisition of knowledge in their academic program, social equity (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008), new interpersonal, and financial issues and take up additional and unfamiliar literacy practices (McKenna & Boughey, 2016). Additionally, most of these students have to manage their timetables, adapt to different classroom settings, mediums of communication, and teaching approaches, and deal with unfamiliar technology in the new social context (Modipane, 2011). This pressure on the new students who are entering higher education, diminishes levels of happiness and increasing mood disorders (Noddings, 2003) or different emotional responses (Bharuthram, 2018). These pressures result to high rate of drop-out of university students in their first-year.

Although researchers have placed the South African University dropout rate for first-year students at about 30%, a further 20%–30% drop out has been observed in the second or third years, and approximately 55 % of students who enroll do not graduate (Kruger, 2018; Letseka, 2010). Murray (2014) states that approximately 58% of students need an extra two years to complete a three-year bachelor's degree at a contact-based institution. In 2013 the Council for Higher Education released a report stating that only one in four students was able to graduate from contact-based universities within the minimum set period for that academic program (CHE, 2013). As universities are faced with such pressures there is a demand for early identification of strategic and innovative approaches to tackle student attrition (the challenges that students face at higher education) (Moodley & Singh, 2015) and student stress factors (Ngcobo & Pillay, 2010). Others like Demetriou and Schmitz-Sciborski (2011) postulate that studying the positive psychology movement, individual strength and optimism are areas to be researched in relation to student retention strategies.

According to Schroeder and West (2019), university student's mental health is crucial for academic success and learning. First year students are in the age cohort (15 – 24 years) of more likely to experience mental illness or substance abuse compared to other age group (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health,

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2020). Despite the adversities and developmental challenges first year encounters, flourishing or the state of feeling good (experiencing high levels of emotional wellbeing or hedonic wellbeing) and positive functioning (experiencing high levels of eudaimonic wellbeing) majority of the time is possible for this group (Volstad et al., 2020). Hence, the need to promote flourishing especially in the first year of university. Having high levels of emotional, psychological, and social functioning most of the time is referred to as flourishing. When students flourish, they are likely to do well academically (Antaramian, 2015; Howell, 2009), form part of socially supportive spaces, transition with ease, have sense of belonging, be socially engaged (Gokcen et al., 2012; Fink, 2014; Nicotera et al., 2015) and academically engaged and involved (Bowman et al., 2010; Low, 2011). Moreover, it is being productive that brings satisfaction and later being able to learn new things and grow (Nelson & Cooper, 2007).

A construct anticipated to enhance flourishing (Afzal et al., 2020; Datu & Valdez, 2015) and academic success is psychological capital (PsyCap) (Ortega-Maldonado & Salanova, 2018). PsyCap is defined as gaining confidence (self-efficacy) to start taking on and complete difficult activities; gaining positive expectation (optimism) to succeed in the present and future; retaining towards challenging tasks and redirecting paths to goals (hope) when necessary to succeed; and, when faced with adversities or difficulties, being able to sustain and recover quickly (resilience) to achieve the desired goal (Luthans & Youssef, 2007a). Moreover, PsyCap is a state-based positive psychological variable that influences performance outcomes and goal achievement. It is generally assumed that undergraduate students in their yearning for survival in unfamiliar university settings may use their PsyCap resources Ortega-Maldonado & Salanova, 2018). This can be done by completing tasks or reaching an academic program goal, as this is perceived to be a positive coping and adaptive mechanism (Ortega-Maldonado & Salanova, 2018). PsyCap consists of four dimensions which becomes important for a student to deal with the challenges they may face during the period of pursuing their qualification. PsyCap is recognised worldwide as an extension of human and social capital, where resources are invested and leveraged for future returns (Luthans et al., 2006). Furthermore, PsyCap goes further than human capital (what you are) and social capital (who you know), extends to who you are and becoming (Luthans et al., 2006).

According to Avey et al. (2011), the construct of psychological capital has been studied in many organisational settings and has been connected to many metrics of success. This comes from the meta-analysis of 51 studies by Avey et al. (2011), which found a statistically significant positive relationship between PsyCap and desirable employee attitudes, such as psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. Schulz et al. (2014) argue that the results of PsyCap showed a strong service-oriented approach in employees. Furthermore, persons with high PsyCap are enthusiastic about achieving positive results, have effective convictions that they can contribute to a beneficial outcome

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for their organisations, and possess the ability to rebound from failures (Selvaraj et al., 2018; Finch et al., 2020). Although much of the PsyCap studies has been done in an organisational context, there is evidence that PsyCap can be used in an educational setting (Selvaraj et al., 2018).

This research indicates that PsyCap influence academic performance (Luthans et al., 2012; Ortega-Maldonado & Salanova, 2018), academic adjustment (Hazan Liran & Miller, 2019), psychological flourishing (Nielsen et al., 2017), academic achievement and study engagement (Siu et al., 2014), flourishing, interdependent happiness, and positive affect (Datu & Valdez, 2015), and satisfaction with life (Riolli et al., 2012). It may be concluded that PsyCap is a beneficial tool that can be used to improve a person's psychological well-being (Selvaraj, 2015). PsyCap is also envisioned as an empowering tool that may offer children with mental fortitude they need to endure under adversity (Riolli et al., 2012). Furthermore, Riolli et al. (2012) argue that in a student-centered setting, PsyCap functions as a possible antidote to stress and provides a platform to build student immunity to stresses.

According to Van Zyl and Rothmann (2012b), who explains that interventions such as PsyCap intervention should be implemented at an early stage for young people, as it will provide them with the necessary competence, information, capabilities, and mindset to flourish (Seligman, 2011; Van Zyl & Rothmann, 2012a). In the academic context, research has shown a relationship between flourishing students and academic performance (Van Zyl & Rothmann, 2012a). Moreover, according to Howell (2009), flourishing students are less inclined to procrastinate because they are more confident in their ability to achieve their objectives, have greater self-control, and do better academically. Hence, the next paragraph will address flourishing in the context of the educational environment.

Higher levels of flourishing, according to Keyes (2006), have a positive association with happier life and work performance, which including higher levels of self-determination and higher levels of internal drive to be productive. A non-flourishing or languishing student, on the other hand, is disengaged from academic work, and withdraws socially (Gokcen et al., 2012). Higher educational institutions are under pressure to reduce student attrition, increase student throughput rate and improve academic performance (Letseka et al., 2008). As more student's experience low levels of overall happiness and higher levels of negative emotions (Noddings, 2003).

Flowing from these challenges, it stands to reason that there is a need for researchers to conduct studies on the first-year students' experiences (Kruger, 2018), and come up with retention strategies for first-year students (Noddings, 2003). This study aims to enhance flourishing of first year students to indirectly reduce dropout rate at university.

Nonetheless, most of the literature about academic performance in university is derived from upper-class income countries of the Western world and much of the research focuses on socio-demographic determinants of performance rather than mental health (de Clercq et al., 2013; Richardson et al., 2012). This low perceived overall happiness may be attributed to low study engagement, lower academic attainment, and higher student attrition rate (Howell, 2009; Ouweneel et al., 2011). Thus, this study seeks to add another layer of knowledge to the existing literature on how to prevent first-year students from dropping out by evaluating the effectiveness of a Psychological Capital intervention on the flourishing of these first-year students in a selected university in the Western Cape.

1.3. Background of the study

According to Pather and Chetty (2015), while having transitioned from an elite, racially divided educational system to one that is more democratic and representative of the country's demographics, South African universities continue to face several critical barriers to verified transformation. Pather et al., (2017) agree and point out that the past inequalities in South Africa's distribution of economic and social capital have established gaps and differences in how students enter and engage in higher education.

According to Lowe and Cook (2003), first-year students often find the transfer from high school to university difficult. This is resulting in poor graduation output and high attrition rates at many South African universities, which is causing worry among students, parents, school administrators, and government officials (Pather et al., 2017). In this perspective, there is minimal evidence to support the notion that student's success is connected with positive first-year experience (FYE) retention (Lekena & Bayaga, 2018). As a result, arguments on how universities might successfully maximise possibilities for a seamless transition from high school to university through the introduction of extracurricular programs and support services are insufficient (Baker, 2011; Lourens & Smit, 2004).

According to Upcraft (2005), first-year student success stems from a working framework with eight distinct aspects, showing the following:

• Advance cognitive reasoning and scholarly capacity;

• Create and sustain meaningful relations;

• Explore self identity;

• Realise career aspirations;

• Sustain health and wellbeing;

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- Consider spiritual and values to adopt in life ;

- Establish intercultural consciousness; and

- Establish a public obligation.

The framework above illustrates that first-year students who are successful, are those who can withstand the challenges from others and the community, still, they will take responsibility for their psychological well-being and will take ownership of their development (Leibowitz et al., 2009). This has accounted for their success to transit to the second year of their studies.

Walker (2006) explains that the success of the first-year is characterised by the combination of dispositions, attitudes, and strengths, to learn how to learn. Barnett (2007) defines this propensity toward first-year success as a readiness to learn and argues that student success should be created from the first moment of enrolment via the university's platforms to help them transition into the second year. This is aligned with the PsyCap framework as they both aim to increase the chances of the student to accomplish their academic goals. Thus, in the present study PsyCap is being evaluated to see its level of impact on first-year students.

1.4. Motivation for the research

To sustain psychological well-being, high performance, and reduce university dropout rate, students require high and adaptable levels of coping techniques (Gram et al., 2013; Meneghel, 2014). Students who are doing their undergraduate studies encounter a couple of stressors in their academic programs such as uncomfortable classrooms, intense and long days to studying, on-going assessments and difficult examinations, and high pressure to achieve the degree (Riolli et al., 2012). Students require higher and more adaptable levels of coping mechanisms in order to sustain psychological well-being and academic excellence (Meneghel, 2014).

As more problems arise in the South African educational system, a more innovative solution must be introduced to ensure that the future of South Africa is guaranteed to be left in the hands of educated youth. This research will assist universities in creating first-year student programs that will support individual self-development in the university. This study will also assist universities and the department of higher education and training to determine if PsyCap explains some of the variances in the flourishing of students at university.

1.5. Problem statement

The overarching problem this study seeks to address is the high rate of drop-out among the first-year students in South African universities. This is a problem as many of these students come from

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backgrounds where there is an extreme disparity in terms of schooling, classes, financial issues, and other resources (Pather & Chetty, 2015). This problem emerges amidst efforts by the South African government under the African National Congress to introduce educational reforms to ensure free education and to grant access to Higher Educational institutions for students from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds.

The overarching problem for many students, parents, educationists and policy experts, and governments is that despite these affirmative actions (AA) policies many first-year students drop-out because of poor program choice (career guidance), maladjustment, and social issues, poor health, and lack of adequate finances (Chetty et al., 2015). This is supported by Johnson et al. (2010) and Volstad et al. (2020) who explain that the sudden move from school and family (i.e., controlled environment) to university (i.e., uncontrolled environment), where the student is expected to be mature to take responsibility for both their academic and social environment is a drastic change.

On the downside, the university environment challenges student's coping mechanisms against high levels anxiety, stress and emotional stability (Bore et al., 2016; Prowse et al., 2021). This concurs with the study conducted by Lowe and Cook (2003) which states that first-year students find it difficult to changeover from high school to university.

Some students eventually cope with transition and others fail to reasonably transit to the academic and social demands of universities, which results in students underachieving and dropping out (Pather et al., 2017). The high attrition rate and low graduation output in South African universities are worrisome and have emerged as a problem. Additionally, the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa seem not to be adequately prepared to accommodate first-year students (Letseka et al., 2008). This places pressure on these institutions to increase student throughput, improve academic performance and decrease dropout rates (Letseka et al., 2008).

Students are experiencing low levels of overall happiness and an increase mental breakdowns as a result of the high pressure paired with some of the current harsh realities at the higher institutions (Noddings, 2003). The diminishing levels of perceived happiness and rise in mood disorder may tend to result in lower academic performance, increased dropout rates, and lower levels of student engagement (Howell, 2009; Ouweneel et al., 2011). Kim et al. (2017) concurs arguing that first-year student experience emotional instability such as the feeling of distress and anxiety due to uncertainties they experience in university.

 Pather and Dorasamy (2018) concur that South African universities need to be more assertive in acquiring a comprehensive understanding of first-year students' expectations and experiences, focusing

on academic engagement, social engagement, and seeking academic support. As a result, Lewin and Mawoyo (2014) argue that South African institutions not only lack comprehension of first-year students' experiences in order to satisfy the requirements of the students, but there is also a significant waste of students' potential.

Thus, it is pivotal to create interventions encouraging the flourishing of students, to develop a barrier against the beginning of these psychological disorders, and rather increase academic performance (Howell, 2009). Existing literature reveals that flourishing students are more inspired to take action, have lower levels of depression, show increased levels of general health and perform better in academics Seligman, 2011). Moreover, in previous years interventions were solving what is broken and reactive (Seligman, 2011; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009).

With the introduction of positive psychological interventions change occurred from preoccupation with restoring, dysfunctions, weaknesses, and pathologies of people in life to building positive qualities, strengths, and virtues of people (Seligman, 2011). PsyCap is derived from the literature of positive psychology, PsyCap is conceptualised as an enabling instrument that may offer students with the mental fortitude they need to endure under adversities (Riolli et al., 2012). It is this mental strength that this study seeks to highlight as a pathway to enable first-year students to continue their studies in South African universities.

Interestingly, previous studies have not interrogated whether PsyCap intervention can improve the flourishing of first-year students' in these universities. In this light, it is critical to evaluate the psychological capital intervention aimed at improving the flourishing of first-year students in a university. This will contribute to academic performance and reduce dropout rates. According to Riolli et al. (2012), in a setting with students, PsyCap functions as a possible antidote to impact stress and offer a platform to build student immunity to stresses. PsyCap comprises of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, has shown to have a predictive relationship towards flourishing (Avey et al., 2010).

Thus, the current study's research question tries to establish if a psychological capital intervention may increase the flourishing of first-year students at a certain university.

1.6. Research Aim and Questions

The main objective of this study is to evaluate whether PsyCap intervention can improve the flourishing of first-year students at a selected university in the Western Cape.

Ultimately, this study aims to address this question: "Does a standardised Psychological Capital Intervention have a positive effect on the flourishing of first-year students in a university in the Western Cape?" This leads to the posing of the following sub-research questions.

1. Can a psychological capital intervention improve the levels of the flourishing of first-year students in a selected university in the Western Cape?
2. How will a PsyCap intervention impact the levels of PsyCap and the flourishing of first-year students at a selected university in the Western Cape?
3. Does a relationship exist between PsyCap and flourishing?

1.7. Aims and Objectives of the study

The primary goal of this study is to evaluate a PsyCap intervention aimed at improving the flourishing of first-year students at a selected university in the Western Cape.

1.7.1. Specific objectives are as follows:

- To examine the efficacy of a psychological capital intervention in increasing the levels of the flourishing of first-year students in a university in the Western Cape.
- To determine how a PsyCap intervention will impact the levels of PsyCap and flourishing of first-year students at a selected university in the Western Cape.
- To determine the relationship between PsyCap and flourishing.

1.8. Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Levels of psychological capital (as indexed by Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ24) measures of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) will (a) statistically significantly increase from pre- to post-intervention in the Intervention group, but not in the Control group, and (b) be statistically significantly higher at post-intervention in the Intervention group than in the Control group.

Hypothesis 2: Levels of flourishing (as indexed by the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) will (a) statistically significantly increase from pre- to post-intervention in the Intervention group but not in the Control group, and (b) be statistically significantly higher at post-intervention in the Intervention group than in the Control group.

Hypothesis 3: The higher the levels of psychological capital dimensions determine the levels of flourishing both in the Intervention group and in the Control group

Hypothesis 4: In the Intervention group, but not in the Control group, there will be a statistically significant positive correlation between pre- to post-intervention changes in the psychological capital and pre- to post-intervention changes in flourishing.

1.9. Scope of Research

1.9.1. Delimitation

The measurement tools that were employed were limited to questionnaires (i.e. PCQ24 and MHC-SF14). This was to gain insights into the evaluation of Psychological Capital intervention aimed at improving the flourishing of first-year students at a university in the Western Cape. Moreover, this study evaluate sthe efficacy of a psychological capital intervention in increasing the levels of flourishing of first-year students in a university in the Western Cape.

1.9.2. Delineation

This study was conducted amongst first-year students in a selected university in the Western Cape. Only one cohort of first-year students were studied, which is the first-years of 2021. The PsyCap intervention was conducted online. Data were collected through questionnaires.

1.10.   An Overview of the study and the Organisation of the Thesis

The key argument of this Master's thesis is to evaluate whether psychological capital intervention can improve the flourishing of first-year students at one of the Western Cape university. Thus, the study started by examining the background to the research problem. Through the argument presented, a problem statement was framed.

This chapter examined the context of the research study, the justification for the study subject, the problem statement; the research question, the objectives of this research endeavor, the hypotheses, as well as the limitations that shaped the study's outcomes, and an breakdown of the chapters.

Chapter two presents the conceptual and theoretical framework for this study as it provides conceptual clarification and discussions on the theoretical framework of positive psychology and positive organisational behaviour. The study also focused on variables like psychological capital, dimensions that make up psychological capital, the theoretical background of flourishing, and the relationship between PsyCap and flourishing. Previous research on PsyCap interventions will be discussed.

Chapter three provides the research approach that was used to acquire the data, the study sample, the data collection procedures and the psychometric qualities of the chosen measurement instruments, and the statistical techniques employed in the study.

The fourth chapter includes an examination of the data collection's results/findings.

Chapter five focused on the significant outcomes that were deduced from the study's findings. The findings were constructed on the data collected and was contrasted to previous studies as well as this study's limitations. Furthermore, future research recommendations were made according to the results of this study.

2. Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review as it attempts to evaluate a PsyCap intervention aimed at improving the flourishing of first-year students at one of the selected Western Cape university. The chapter reviews the existing empirical and theoretical research on the two main constructs of the study, namely, psychological capital and flourishing. Psychological capital will be discussed based on theories that inform the construct and explore criticism towards it. Secondly, the dimensions that make up PsyCap will be discussed, namely, hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Each dimension is defined, followed by the history behind the dimensions and the consequences of the respective dimensions. Thirdly, a discussion of the PsyCap development interventions for each dimension will follow. Fourthly, the study would also explore flourishing as a outcome variable that will be explored in the study. Lastly, a review of the existing empirical evidence of the relationship between PsyCap and flourishing will be presented.

2.2. Positive Psychology as a domain of psychology

Positive Psychology stems from the work of Martin E.P. Seligman (past American Psychological Association (APA) president) and his colleagues (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The idea of positive psychology came from the gap in ordinary psychology that was preoccupied with the adverse parts of human functioning (Fowers et al., 2017). Positive psychology takes a view of people focusing on positive strengths, virtues of people's optimal functioning, flourishing, and reaching human potential (Luthans & Youssef, 2007a; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

This fueled the change in psychology from an exclusive preoccupation with restoring the weaknesses/inhibitors, dysfunctions, and pathologies of people in life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Psychology is concerned with more than only sickness or health. It also includes job, learning, affection, insights, entertainment, self-development, and it is the journey to what is best (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2009). Moreover, it is not wishful thinking, faith, fad, unvalidated feeling, or any hand-waving dependency, but it attempts to improve what is ordinary to its best form (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Thus, positive psychology could examie an average person with the goal of dertermining what works, what is right, and what needs improvement for effective human functioning (Sheldon & King, 2001).

As much as positive psychology has received great support, it has also been criticised. Peterson (2005) and Ruark (2009), explain that Positive Psychology is "old wine in new bottles" since many of its current topics have long been explored by psychologists. Seligman's proposal was not radical at all, just a

recycle of Abraham Maslow's notions of "self-actualisation" and "peak experiences", acknowledging that Positive Psychology material is intimately tied to past work. Mosak and Maniacci (1999) agree that individual psychology has affected modern psychology, however, this is not typically acknowledged in the Positive Psychology literature. Ruark (2009) argues that Martin Seligman's approach to Positive Psychology was too extreme, and he overstepped the confines of social science by attempting to be a philosopher.

Ruark (2009) also feels that Positive Psychology has not yet grown into a respectable scientific subject, and that publicity significantly outweighs scientific and empirical data. Furthermore, Ruark (2009) argues that the idea of optimism is exaggerated. Miller (2008) has also called into question the statements and premises that underpin Positive Psychology. Cowen and Kilmer (2002) agree that the literature of Positive Psychology is related to prior work. Some expressed that PP did not consider the contribution of existential and humanistic psychologies, of which both have contributed to the extension of the intent of human flourishing and constitute a great precursor to Positive Psychology (Friedman & Robbins, 2012; Medlock, 2012).

Positive psychology has developed over the years to counter criticisms (Wissing et al., 2018; Donaldson et al., 2021; Martín-del-Río et al., 2021). Wissing et al. (2018) and Lomas et al. (2021) argue that positive psychology is developing in its third wave as a growing field. The first wave is described as being focused on areas of strength, what people are good at (Wissing et al., 2018), and human nature's better qualities (Linley & Joseph, 2004). The first wave was criticised, and some of the concern that was raised on PP, appeared to focus on the positive and exclusive of anything associated with negativity (Lazarus, 2003), over-simplistic and misleading (Schneider, 2009).

Wong (2011) explains that some of the Positive Psychology qualities that were considered positive could result in negative results such as unrealistic optimism which is linked to an under-appreciation of risk for example gambling (Cummins et al., 2009) and smoking (Weinstein et al., 2005). Seligman (1990) adds that it is useful to consider the degree of cynicism to maintain a realistic view of life and find balance. Some suggested that the so-called adverse/ negative state can act as an instrumental tool in developing positive outcomes (Ivtzan et al., 2016). A classic example can be anger which can enable a catalyst to change a state that hurts a person's psychological well-being (Tavris, 1989). Thus, the attempt to separate positive and negative may result to be counter-productive and may yield to failure of appreciating some of the significant aspects of life often enabled by negative circumstances (Harvey & Pauwels, 2003).

These criticisms may have appeared to undermine the PP field, but they have been instrumental in new developments of the PP which is described as the second wave positive psychology (SWPP) (Ivtzan et al., 2015) or as positive psychology 2.0 (PP 2.0) (Wong, 2019). Ivtzan et al. (2016) state that Positive psychology (PP) in the first wave is commonly related to the research and theory of positive psychological entities, qualities, and positive parts of life. Although in its operation it considers some of the difficult, heartaches, and challenging experiences that are usually encountered in the duration of a person's life (Ivtzan et al., 2015).

Thus, there is a move from the first wave of only focusing on the positive qualities of life, but also considering some of the negative expectations that can yield individual flourishing. PP 2.0 is characterised to recognise both the positive and negative parts of an individual's life, focusing solely on positive aspects is considered to be hindering the insight and understanding of well-being (Wissing et al., 2018). Recently scholars like Wissing et al. (2018) argue that positive psychology is developing in its third wave as a growing field. The third wave is characterised as being in its inception stage where it is still in the thoughts and assumptions, there are signs of development of the third wave and the tendencies of the first and second waves are still on-going. The assumptions of the third wave are more concerned with integration, the complexity of models to interconnect, and cultural differences and the socio-ecological context in well-being (Wissing et al., 2018).

Luthans (2002) posit a notion of positive psychology in a working environment to examine and understand the positive strengths and virtues of employees. This provides employees with energy and focuses to face the challenges at work and maintain work performance. This new notion of positive strengths and virtues of employees in the workplace is known as positive organisational behaviour (POB). In the next section, positive organisational behaviour (POB) is discussed.

2.3. Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB)

2.3.1. Background and history of POB development

Luthans (2002a, 2002b) established the concept of Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB) to convey Positive Psychology principles in the workplace. According to Luthans (2002a), organisational behaviour (OB), like the field of psychology, focuses on deviant workplace behaviours such as stress, burnout, resistance to change, deficiencies and dysfunctions of managers compared to positive approaches such as stress, positive state, and the strengths and capacities of employees.

Positive psychology in the workplace provided new key concepts, perspectives and approaches such as hope, optimism, confidence, resiliency and happiness in the workplace (Luthans, 2002a). Hence, POB can be defined as the positive approaches to people's strengths and mental capacity that can be measured

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based on the theoretical framework, open to be trained and managed effectively to increase performance (Luthans, 2002a, 2002b; Luthans & Youssef, 2007). POB is different from positive psychology and positive organisational scholarship by its criteria in the definition, which need a psychological capacity to be measurable, open to development, and impactful on performance (Dawkins, 2014).

Additionally, in order to distinguish this definition of POB from other positive approaches findings in both academic and professional fields, the following criteria were established for incorporating constructs. The constructs should (1) be theoretically and empirically grounded; (2) have validity quantities; (3) be slightly different in the discipline of organisational behaviour; (4) be situational based, thus open to advancement and adjustment; and (5) have a favorable influence on individual performance and happiness at work (Luthans, 2002b; Luthans, 2007).

The five specific criteria conditions that differentiate POB from other theories on positive orientation in the field of OB are explained briefly below (Luthans, 2002b), namely:

I.   The first criterion suggests that variables should be grounded and contains extensive theory and research foundation. This means that there should be an adequate empirical study conducted on each variable to validate its relationship with other organizational variables.

II. The second criterion suggests that each variable should be valid and reliable.

III. The third criterion suggests that each chosen variable should be relatively unique, innovative and supported in the field of organisational behaviour.

IV. The fourth criterion suggests that the variable should be state-like, which means open to advancement and adjustment, instead of a trait which is more fixed and unchanging and less open advancement and adjustment.

V.   The fifth criterion suggests that the variable should have a significant and positive influence on the work performance of the employees (Dawkins, 2014). Hence, POB perceives a construct to require developmental potential and be considered malleable and state-like (Luthans, 2002b).

The state-like psychological strengths which have been assessed to meet the criteria of POB are hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Luthans, 2002a; Luthans et al., 2002). When these qualities are added together, they constitute what is known as Psychological Capital (PsyCap) (Luthans & Youssef, 2007b; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Although positive psychology is much broader and includes positive states, traits, and processes, both at the individual and institutional level (Roberts, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), POB focuses exclusively on the individual levels of positive states and not on the fixed traits and the organisational level positive processes. This link to the higher-order construct of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) which contain the four dimensions. Thus, in the POB theoretical

framework energy has been devoted to these state-like psychological resource capacities known as PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2007).

2.4. Psychological Capital

The concept of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) originated in the field of positive organisational behaviour (POB) (Luthans et al., 2007). Psychological capital is a critical psychological resource and an inherent quality of individuals in their self-actualisation process. This study uses the four psychological capital core constructs, which are hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2007). Hope means to persevere in the process of achieving a goal and when needed, to adjust the approach to succeed. Self-efficacy means having the assurance to tackle and put in the required efforts to achieve a desired and challenging outcome. Resilience means when faced with challenges and adversities being able to seek improvement to persevere and recover in order to achieve success. Lastly, Optimism refers to having a positive anticipation for the present and future. (Luthans et al., 2007).

These constructs are increasingly being used in organisational behaviour research. (Luthans et al., 2008). The four variables share few similar variances and they represent one of the psychological state-like strengths of an individual (Luthans & Youssef, 2007a). They are based on the psychology resource theory, which incorporates the constructs into PsyCap (Hobfoll, 2002). The cognitive resources (hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism) are drawn from the Conservation of resources (COR) theory and are expressly stated as being relevant and consistent with current COR theory developments (Hobfoll, 2002). Additionally, employee motivation to acquire, retain, and cultivate the necessary resources, found in psychological capital, to achieve good performance outcomes, may be explained from COR theory (Hobfoll, 2004). PsyCap foundation and explanatory mechanisms are from COR theory, which focuses on psychological resource theory (Avey et al., 2011). The section below will discuss the PsyCap dimensions in detail.

2.4.1. Hope as a Psychological Construct

According to Snyder et al. (2005), in the 1950s and 1960s, hope was viewed as a goal that could be attained by intellectual discipline. Hope has historically been examined in a number of ways in the social sciences (Yotsidi et al., 2018), however, the most recent literature on hope occurs in positive psychology. Snyder and colleagues created the hope theory (Snyder et al., 2005).

Snyder felt that the theory of hope was not properly capturing the idea of hopeful goal-directed thinking after evaluating the work of earlier researchers. Snyder's study found that people maintained mentioning pathways to achieve their objectives and their motivation to use the chosen pathways; this research

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resulted in a new Hope theory (Snyder et al., 2005). Hope is defined by scholars as a positive motivational condition based on two interaction components: agency (goal-directed energy) and pathways (planning to achieve objectives) (Snyder et al., 1991). The agency aspect is defined as a sense of accomplishment in the past, present, and future.

The sense of effective agency in relation to goal achievement is fuelled by hope. The capacity to establish strategies to achieve goals might be defined as the pathways aspect. This indicates that the perceived availability of effective choices or pathways to achieve the goals influences hope (Snyder, et al., 1991). According to Grobler and Joubert (2018), hope in PsyCap may be described as will power, which is to have optimistic expectations and ambitions. Secondly, strength is demonstrated by having many paths available to deal with these expectations in the event that things do not go as planned. Furthermore, hope is made up of three main components: the objective, the pathway, and the agency.

Goals Pursuit

The assumption is that goal-directed behaviour is triggered by individuals. Goals are the targets of mental action sequences and are viewed as a state-like cognitive process that anchors hope theory (Snyder et al., 1999). Furthermore, objectives might be short-term or long-term, they must be relevant and feasible, they must include some degree of ambiguity, and they must be of high importance to be retained in conscious thinking (Snyder et al., 2005).

Pathway thinking

Pathway thinking is the process through which people feel themselves to be capable of devising feasible paths to their desired outcomes (Snyder et al., 2005). Snyder et al. (1998) define pathways thinking as affirming mental statements such as "I'll find a way to get this done." Pathways highlight an individual's impacts on achieving their goals and involve ideas of being able to develop at least one, and frequently more, useful path to a desired goal (Snyder, 2002). When dealing with obstacles, it is critical to create many paths.

Pathway thinking also demonstrates progress in achieving your objective (Snyder, 2002). Individuals with high hope, as opposed to low hope, are more resolute and convicted towards their generated paths to achieve their goals (Yotsidi et al., 2018). Way-power, also known as alternative pathways can be developed by observing others and improving based on cause and effect lessons (Snyder, 2002).

Agency thinking

Agency thinking demonstrates cognitive power, which translates into a "I can do" attitude related to people's belief in their abilities to achieve valued goals (Snyder et al., 2005). The motivating aspect in

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hope theory is agency, which represents a person's perceived ability to use their paths to achieve their desired objectives (Snyder et al., 1998, 2005). Agency thinking demonstrates the self-referential thought of a person who may start moving down a pathway and continue to advance along that track (Snyder et al, 2005). Individuals with high hopes, according to Snyder et al. (1998), use self-talk agency statements such as "I can accomplish this" and "I am not going to be stopped."

When individuals face obstructions, agency thinking is critical, as it is in all goal-directed ideas. Furthermore, when individuals encounter roadblocks, the agency aids them in applying the required incentive to their best-chosen course (Snyder et al., 1991). As a result, optimistic reasoning is objective based and indicates state-like and trait-like intellectual processing, with emotions playing an essential role (Snyder, 2002). Herbert (2011) supports this by stating that hope has been hypothesized as a state-like cognitive process, where persons with attitudinal hope may use it in a different context.

Although many other perspectives have classified hope as an emotion, the hope theory focuses on mental processes. This suggests that good emotions are derived from views of successful goal attainment (Snyder, 2002). Perception of successfully achieving a goal may stem from the conviction that nothing will stand in the way of the individual's intended aims, or it may reflect that the individual has successfully conquered similar/ hurdle in the past (Snyder, 2002). Negative feelings, on the other hand, are the outcome of failing to achieve an objective. According to Snyder (2002), the feeling of failure to achieve a goal stems from insufficient agency and/or pathway thinking or the inability to overcome an obstacle. According to Herbert (2011), persons have dispositional hope that may be used in a variety of situations and moments.

In POB, hope is seen as state-like and open to growth (Avey et al., 2010). Several workplace Hope training programs began to develop (Luthans et al., 2008b), and training intervention efforts have been successful in proving and strengthening people's Hope (Snyder et al., 1999). For example, clinical psychology applied research has shown that hope may be learnt by actively focusing on solution-based/goal-based framework training treatments (Snyder et al., 1991). Luthans et al. (2008b) discovered that a correctly planned web-based training intervention may foster hope in members of an organisation.

Although hope has demonstrated its conceptual independence and measurement discriminant validity, it shares certain characteristics with other conceptions that also fit the POB requirements of being not only positive, but also theoretically and empirically grounded, having valid measurements, and being accessible to development and improvement of performance (Luthans, 2002a, 2002b; Luthans & Jensen, 2002). Furthermore, (Luthans et al., 2007) suggest that a realistic method to building hope includes

establishing challenging/big ambitious "stretch" goals, contingency planning, and adjusting the goal if required, to avoid deceiving hope. Thus, hope fits the POB eligibility criterion (Avey et al., 2010).

2.4.1.1. Psychological Capital of Hope outcomes

Hope is that element that supports an individual's desire for positivity and keeps them feeling good that their aspiration in life will come through (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015). Motivated individuals are diligent and will stretch themselves to their limits because hope gives them motivation (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015). Hope acts as an instrument to encourage people to persist to perform in their duties at work. When encountering challenges employees who are highly hopeful, proactively set up contingency plans than just succumb to discouraging predicaments, these employees play a pivotal role in being contributors in the organisation to pursue its goals and values (Kim et al., 2017). According to Snyder et al. (1999), research has shown that hope is positively associated to educational environment, sports, psychological wellbeing, physiological wellbeing, and the capacity to deal with adversity and distress and health performance outcomes when measured using a goal-based methodology.

When hopeful individuals fail to achieve their goals, they become more energized and inspired to find solutions to overcome obstacles (Rego et al., 2009). Hopeful employees are typically eager to achieve (Rego et al., 2009). Hope has been demonstrated to minimize the impact of suffering in challenging circumstances as a psychological resource (Haleem et al., 2017). Yotsidi et al. (2018) discovered that hope has a direct influence on students' proactive career behaviours such as career planning, determinedness, and students' life satisfaction and self-efficacy in higher education.

Furthermore, hope has a positive association with work performance and an inverse relationship with employees who want to resign (Valero et al., 2015). A study of students with learning disabilities discovered that hopeful thinking has a positive impact on students with learning disabilities and their online avoidance coping (Sharabi et al., 2016). Hope was found to have a favourable correlation with psychological well-being in a study on psychological capital and the mental health of rescue personnel (Haleem et al., 2017).

2.4.2. Self-efficacy as a Psychological Construct

White (1959), Bandura (1977), and Miller et al., 1966) developed the concept of self-efficacy. According to White (1959), certain acts and outcomes are motivated not by human/animal instinct/gut feeling, but rather by a sense of efficacy gained through a successful encounter with the environment. Bandura (1977) expands on this notion, which served as the foundation for Bandura's social learning theory of behaviour modification, renamed social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy,

according to Bandura (1995), is dependent on how individuals feel, perceive, and respond, as well as how they inspire themselves. People who lack self-efficacy experience tension, despair, anxiety, powerlessness, low self-esteem, and become negative about their successes and personal progress (Bandura, 1995; Zulkosky, 2009).

Thinking in self-efficacy is a strong sensation that is aided by intellectual processes and achievements in many contexts, such as decision-making quality and educational success (Zulkosky, 2009). Self-efficacy behaviour refers to how people make decisions in various tasks. Motivation in self-efficacy refers to a person's ability to self-regulate their motivation, which means that people establish ideas about what they can achieve and predict possible results of activities (Bandura, 1995). A person's degree of self-efficacy impacts their level of motivation, which is evident in the effort they are willing to exert in a scenario and the length of time they will endure in times of difficulties (Bandura, 1989).

In the context of PsyCap, self-efficacy relates to a person's belief in their capacity to engage cognitive resources, devise a plan of action, and obtain the motivation necessary to complete the job at hand (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Self-efficacy is acknowledged to have a state-like quality, which fits well with the definition of POB (Luthans, 2002a). Leaders and employees can acquire self-efficacy to accomplish certain jobs in specified environments (Luthans, 2002). Individuals with high self-efficacy are more eager and capable of facing problems, can prolong their efforts, and are motivated to achieve goals (Dawkins, 2014). According to Luthans and Youssef (2007), persons who have a high levels of self-efficacy value five attributes, namely,

I.   Set ambitious targets for themselves and choose demanding projects for themselves.
II. Accept and flourishing in the face of adversity
III. Are self-motivated
IV. Putting out the required effort to achieve goals
V.   Persevering to overcome obstacles.

Self-efficacy and its supporting cognitive processes, according to Bandura (1977), may be fostered and nourished through mastery experiences or performance successes, vicarious learning/experiencing and modeling, social persuasion, and psychological and physiological arousal. Furthermore, according to Stajkovic and Luthans (1998), Self-efficacy is shown in the form of self-set demanding objectives, self-selection into tough tasks, self-motivation, willingness to work hard, engage towards performance mastery, goal achievement, and endurance in the face of challenges. Below are futher explanation on the cognitive processes that could assist one to achieve high self-efficacy.

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Performance achievement refers to a person doing things successfully frequently (Zulkosky, 2009). This boosts a person's effectiveness, which is obtained from the source of information (Crain, 2000). When a person fails, their feeling of self-efficacy falls. However, as a person continues to complete tasks, their feeling of self-efficacy grows and is less impacted by barriers (Crain, 2000).

Vicarious experiences relate to people who see others complete a task gain confidence in their own ability to complete the same tasks successfully. If the observer feels that they have the same ability to do the activity, the person's self-efficacy will grow (Zulkosky, 2009).

Verbal persuasion is the process of convincing another individual that they are capable of doing a specific task. This might be in the form of a pep talk. According to Crain (2000), people can persuade others that they will be able to perform an activity. This motivation is beneficial because success is often determined by the amount of effort put into an activity rather than any innate ability (Crain, 2000). Finally, physiological cues refer to bodily signs such as fidgeting and tension. Because people differ, they may perceive physiological cues differently, which may impact the task's outcome (Crain, 2000).

2.4.2.1. Psychological Capital of Self-efficacy Outcomes

In a study in the hotel industry, it was found that employees that were satisfied in the workplace showed greater levels of self-efficacy and are goal-driven (Karatepe & Karadas, 2015). Luthans and Youssef-Morgan (2017), self-efficacy is frequently recognised in several studies as being associated to performance and well-being. Self-efficacy and job satisfaction have a strong and positive association, according to Aliyev and Tunc (2015). A study also found a substantial and inverse association between self-efficacy and exhaustion. In their study, Sameer et al. (2019) discovered that self-efficacy predicts performance.

Self-efficacy is described as an important resource to possess to access a network, attract partners, and maintains social and positive relationship (Baluku et al., 2018). Martínez et al. (2019) postulate that self-efficacy promotes vigour, dedication and absorption because a student that have high levels of efficacy believe in their abilities, are energised, and are persistent when faced with challenging goals. Self-efficacy assists people to persevere when they encounter obstacles that may yield to them giving up (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

Self-efficacy was shown to be one of the most important tools in effectively acquiring a language in a learning setting (Lin et al., 2020). According to Parker and Liao (2016), persons with high levels of self-efficacy are not passive; they do not wait for demanding objectives; rather, they are initiators who generate their own challenging goals. Nafees and Jahan (2017), posit those with lower levels of self-

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efficacy may avoid finishing a task, but those with confidence in their skills may gladly participate in completing the activity.

Those with greater levels of efficacy will work harder and endure longer than those who lack confidence in their talents, especially when faced with difficulties. Thus, enhancing student efficacy may result in improved academic performance and accomplishment (Nafees & Jahan, 2017). According to studies, students with high levels of self-efficacy are more hopeful because they think they can solve issues, overcome adversity, and take charge of the situation. Hsieh et al. (2019) discovered that among nurses, self-efficacy has a strong and positive association with mental health and an inverse link with the desire to quit. Positive effects of self-efficacy include a sense of purpose and increased psychological well-being (Görgens-Ekermans & Steyn, 2016).

2.4.3. Resilience as a Psychological Construct

According to Rutter (1987), resilience is an individual's capacity to successfully regulate their surroundings in order to shield themselves from unfavorable conditions and the repercussions of unpleasant events. Positive Psychology and POB view resilience as a learnable quality that can be acquired by many ordinary individuals and quantified as a condition (Luthans et al., 2007). In PsyCap, resilience is charaterised as a person's capacity to recover after being affected by obstacles and difficulties in order to achieve a goal (Luthans et al., 2007). There are theoretical and empirical literature that supports the inclusion of resilience in the PsyCap construct, which is developed from clinical psychology intervention research linked to personal asset development and risk factor reduction (Dawkins, 2014). In the context of a workplace, resilience may be regarded as a protective factor utilised to reduce risk in a person's surroundings (Masten, 2001).

Protective factors, often known as 'resilience assets', are measurable attributes that predict future outcomes or the ability to adjust to difficult conditions (Masten & Reed, 2002). Spirituality, emotional stability, a sense of humour, temperament, an optimistic attitude on life, and cognitive capacity are examples of protective factors/resilient assets (Dawkins, 2014). On the other hand, the resilient risk factor may result in poor adjustment or bad outcomes, as well as stress and burnout (Dawkins, 2014). Risk factors for resilience are observable features that indicate unfavorable outcomes or the incapacity to adjust to difficult conditions. Stress and burnout, a lack of information and training, and unemployment are all risk factors (Dawkins, 2014).

Furthermore, both clinical and positive psychology have proven that resilience is a trait-like and dispositional attribute. It is also clear that resilience is state-like and malleable (Coutu, 2002). Thus, human resource development assists employees in increasing their resilience via workplace training

inventions (Luthans et al., 2006). Furthermore, according to Luthans (2002b), personal assets and pure risk are an extension of human and social capital by expanding employees' access to information, skills, and talents or by extending the social network, resulting in risks dropping and personal assets growing. Resilience shares some commonalities with other dimensions of PsyCap such as perseverance which relates to self-efficacy. Adaptive processes are common to hope and resilience. These internal and external resources have a meeting point between the resilience and optimism dimensions of PsyCap (Youssef & Luthans, 2011).

Luthans et al. (2007), resilience should be revealed as more than just an unusual case study who can withstand the intensity of misfortune. Coutu (2002), resilient individuals are pragmatic, accept the status of their surroundings, hold strong to significant, stable values and beliefs, can successfully adapt, and allowing them to be flexible to improve in response to unforeseen events. Luthans et al. (2007), adds that resilience is a learnable skill that may be cultivated in many ordinary individuals.

2.4.3.1. Psychological Capital of Resilience Outcomes

In a study on psychological capital in sports organisations, resilience was found to be an important tool to be able to conquer a highly stressful and fast-paced environment. Within these difficult situations, what determines success is how employees on a sports team can bounce back from setbacks and learn from that experience (Kim et al., 2017). According to Adeel et al. (2019), resilience assists employees to be able to manage any adverse feedback that may prompt them to resign, rather than keep on being in a job and craft things to be better than before.

Resilience is needed for employees to be steadfast to targets at work, irrespective of the difficulties encountered (Johnson et al., 2018). Resilience has been linked timelessly to positive emotions that activate the willingness to adapt. The employees that build their resilience will not only be able cope with stress that is brought on by work, but will also assist employees to acquire a higher level of life satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2018). Resilience gives a bounce-back spirit, taking into account its environmentally conscious capacity and enables stand a against hindrances. Thus, resilience gives the capability to provide quality work that is done timeously in a sustainable manner (Johnson et al., 2018).

Resilience was identified as a key element in motivation, success expectation, perseverance, higher odds of success, and goal achievement in a study on resilience and emotional intelligence (Magnano et al., 2016). Resilience, according to Datu and Valdez (2019), is an useful psychological and human resource that can help students in higher education sustain engagement when faced with hurdles or academic task demands. Furthermore, it can stimulate participation, which increases vitality and determination (Datu & Valdez, 2019). When students with resilience face difficulties, they may utilize their tenacity to regain

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confidence and try again (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010). Resilience has therefore been connected to coping processes and behaviours that promote growth and development (Simons & Buitendach, 2013).

2.4.4. Optimism as a Psychological Construct

Optimism is defined as the psychological aim and anticipation for the greatest possible and good consequences, which may have a favorable impact on a person's mental and physical health. (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015). Additionally, this allows individuals to have the possibility to make their life easier, be stress-free, and be distant from depression and hopelessness (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015). Realistic and flexible optimism, which may be learnt and cultivated through known ways such as forbearance in the past, appreciation for the moment, and opportunity-seeking for the future, are especially pertinent to POB (Luthans, et al., 2006; Peterson, 2000; Schneider, 2009).

The concept of optimism draws from the theory and research of Seligman, Positive psychology is more closely associated with optimism than the other dimensions. (Luthans et al., 2004). Optimism is a term that is commonly used by people. Seligman (2002) argues that the concept of optimism is based on the attribution theory, which emphasizes two components of a person's explanation approach for happy and negative occurrences. Permanence and pervasiveness are the two dimensions. The degree of permanence, for example, relates to favorable conditions viewed as permanent and unpleasant situations perceived as ephemeral. (Dawkins, 2014). Luthans et al. (2004, p4.) Optimists regard terrible occurrences as transient (e.g., "I'm fatigued"), but pessimists perceive negative events as permanent (e.g., "I'm all washed up"). Furthermore, in positive situations, optimists employ permanent attribution such as "I am gifted," but pessimists use transitory attribution such as "I worked really hard on this one." (Hobfoll, 2002).

Second, pervasiveness refers to good reasons that are believed to be significant in all scenarios as well as negative causes that are thought to be relevant in certain situations. (Dawkins, 2014). Luthans et al. (2004) add that pervasiveness is closely associated with space. This means that optimists perceive negative situations and assign particular blame, such as "I had a difficulty with this computer software." Pessimists evaluate adverse circumstances and assign general explanations such as "I'm just a computer illiterate." For positive occurrences, an optimist may say, "I am a computer specialist," but a pessimist might say, "I know Excel." (Luthans et al., 2004).

Peterson (2000) asserts that optimism is a learnt and evolved construct that is realistic, adaptable, and fluid. Furthermore, optimistic people see setbacks as challenges and opportunities to succeed. (Luthans et al., 2005). They endure in the face of adversity. (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Youssef and Luthans (2007) assert that in the workplace, optimistic people are better able to analyse external, transitory, and

situational conditions. Furthermore, persons with high levels of optimism assign personal credit for favorable occurrences, resulting in increased feelings of self-confidence. As a result, these people will withdraw from less favorable settings in order to protect themselves from feelings of despair, remorse, and self-blame. (Luthans & Youssef, 2007b).

2.4.4.1. Psychological Capital of Optimism outcomes

Rothmann and Essenko (2007) revealed in a South African study that optimism has a direct good influence on employees who may be exhausted and cynical in a higher education institution. Some optimism research indicates a favorable relationship with employee attitudes such as higher work satisfaction and organizational engagement (Luthans et al., 2008). Furthermore, persons who are optimistic plan to overcome hurdles that may hinder their aims and demonstrate confidence despite significant barriers that will persist in reaching their goals (Luthans et al., 2008). According to Bailis and Chipperfield (2012), optimism is generally long-lasting and beneficial in how people tackle a wide range of situations. Optimism has been linked to good outcomes such as increased motivation and psychological engagement (Gota, 2017).

According to Luthans et al. (2004), optimists are readily inspired to work harder, are more fulfilled, and frequently feel stronger both psychologically and physically. They have greater levels of morale, resilience when faced with hardship, and see personal challenges as transient (Solomon, 2014). Furthermore, Solomon (2014) claims that these descriptions imply that pathways and agency-like perspectives are grounded in optimism. This was clear in Simons and Buitendach (2013)'s study, which found optimism to be critical resource quality for employees in call centre. Optimism has been proven to be a significant predictor of Psychological Wellbeing (PWB), with optimism having the greatest association more than there other constructs of PsyCap (Gibson & Hicks, 2018).

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2.5. Psychological Capital as a higher order factor

HOPE
Strongminded to achieve and willing to alter course when required in order to succeed
- Future in mind
- Provides motivation and aspirations for achievement

SELF-EFFICACY
Possessing the confidence to exert the necessary effort and do so in order to successfully tackle obstacles:
- Concentrate on the present and the future
- Being open to difficulties and prepared to put in the effort necessary to find success

PSYCAP
The individual's positive psychological state of growth characterised by optimism, self-efficacy, resilience and hope:
- Measurable
- Unique
- Development
- Impactful on performance

RESILIENCE
Overcoming challenges and difficulties as they arise in order to continue working toward goals:
- Concentrate on the past and present
- Maintains the status quo through recovering from negative stressors and events

OPTIMISM
To prosper today and in the future, strive for favorable attributes.:
- Focus on future
- protects against the impact of unfavorable experiences and hopes for the future
- increases the beneficial impact of favorable occurrences

Source: Retrieved from Dawkins (2014), an overview of each PsyCap component and their contribution to the overall PsyCap construct.

Figure 1: Overview of PsyCap

As illustrated in Figure 1, PsyCap is defined as an individual's positive psychological state of development, characterized by self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience" (Luthans, Youssef et al., 2007, p. 3). PsyCap is positioned as a higher-order core construct that combines the four psychological resources synergistically rather than just as the sum of its individual parts. Grounded on the description above, the four dimensions that constitute PsyCap have been shown to have theoretical independence and empirically based discriminant validity. The four dimensions have demonstrated a reciprocal relationship, resulting in a higher-order factor, psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2007). Theoretical and empirical studies support the proposed higher-order factor. According to Luthans et al. (2008), PsyCap is separate from intellectual resources ('how much you know'), social currency ('type of people you know'), and economic capital ('how much you possess') and may be understood as 'who you really are' and 'self-actualisation in terms of growth'.

A few research on PsyCap and its influence on the workplace and academia have been undertaken in South Africa. PsyCap's function in the relationship between authentic leadership and job engagement

was investigated by Du Plessis and Boshoff (2018). According to the findings, PsyCap can be used as an alternative or supplement to leadership in the development of employee job engagement. Roemer and Harris (2018) studied 159 South African employees to see if psychological capital (PsyCap) mediates the link between perceived organizational support (POS) and well-being. According to the findings, organisational support was insufficient to increase well-being. Organisations must recognise the value of PsyCap in their workers in order for them to be well-equipped to face difficulties while maintaining healthy levels of well-being in the workplace. The notion of psychological capital, as well as its influence on the student's context and workplace personnel was discussed. A discussion of psychological capital and its relationship to the possible influence on students' flourishing in a higher institution setting will follow.

2.6. Psychological capital in the educational/academic field

In recent years, there has been a surge in interest in positive psychology and its use in the classroom (Stiglbauer et al., 2013). The majority of the focus has been on pleasant emotions that influence academic participation and achievement (Linnenbrink-Garcia & Pekrun, 2011). Furthermore, some academic psychologists have claimed that psychological capital (PsyCap) may be more relevant and appropriate in the function of assisting students to flourish in university (Carmona–Halty et al., 2019). University students employ psychological capital resources to accomplish and achieve their academic achievement (Ortega-Maldonado & Salanova, 2018). This can help students avoid dropping out and enhance wellbeing during their first year of university.

Students confront challenges in the educational system, where they must have a great self-efficacy to apply the required action to complete an activity. Optimism assists students to feel and generate optimistic assumptions about their academic performance and achievement of their goals. Hope encourages students to be patient and tenacious in achieving academic goals in the face of adversity. Finally, resilience assists students in sustaining and rebounding from hardship and obstacles in order to achieve their academic goals.

According to Luthans et al. (2007), the combination of the Psycap dimensions have a synergistic impact. Burhanuddin et al. (2019) did a systematic review to review literature published on PsyCap from 2008 to 2018. The findings demonstrated that PsyCap research in the education sector is still in its infancy. The majority of research employed quantitative approaches to examine the results of PsyCap. Furthermore, the review revealed that PsyCap has been studied as a predictor in the educational environment for student engagement, accomplishment, motivation, performance, and educator attitude and performance (Burhanuddin et al., 2019). As a result, further research is needed to widen and strengthen psychological resources inside the academic setting.

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2.7. Development of Psychological Capital

Luthans and Youssef-Morgan (2017) indicate that the factors that distinguish POB criteria and the characteristics of Psycap are its malleability or plasticity, and the openness to development and change. Avey et al. (2010) and Luthans et al. (2013), support this indicating that a longitudinal study concurs that PsyCap changes over a period. Additionally, experimental studies provide the same results that PsyCap change and develops by taking a short training intervention (Russo & Stoykova, 2015; Ertosun et al., 2015) and can be done through a web-based intervention (Luthans, 2007). Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) state that some interventions utilised in positive clinical psychology, which develop PsyCap indicate a predictive relationship with alleviating negativity, increasing positivity, and improving levels of well-being.

A study of the theory of building PsyCap by Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2007), indicates that circumstances such as location, income, age, and appearance contribute only about 10% to one's level of happiness and positivity. The study indicated that 40% is dependent on the person and the person should purposely develop and shape their subjective well-being. This goes along with some of the agentic and conative mechanisms of PsyCap (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013). This supports the notion that position each PsyCap dimension as being able to be potentially developed to improve the level of flourishing. This would reduce the drop-out rate in the first-year.

Hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism are the greatest fit for the PsyCap criteria and the operational definition (Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans, 2007). Luthans et al. (2006b) proposed and developed a PsyCap micro-intervention, naming the intervention a Psychological Capital Intervention (PCI). The PCI is a high output-oriented and short training session that consists of split exercises that will develop levels hope, self-efficacy, resilient and optimism. PCI aims to develop these resources together, rather than one at a time (Luthans et al., 2006). This "shotgun" method has been proven to be more successful in positive psychology intervention in general (Seligman et al., 2005; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). The next section will discuss each PsyCap dimension when being developed in a micro-intervention, according to the framework of PCI.

2.7.1. Hope Development

Hope, like a Psycap construct, is impacted and modified by objectives, paths, and agency (Snyder & Lopez, 2009). In the workshop the facilitator provides guidance on how to create valuable goals while avoiding unrealistic aims. Facilitators ask participants to practice developing work-related objectives that have a clear current state to desired state progression, are personally meaningful, and are appropriately demanding. Throughout the workshop, participants will refer to the goals. When a person creates objectives with the above criteria, it increases the participant's agency and provides long-term

incentive to achieve the goals established. Snyder et al. (1999) explain that it is important to break down big goals into sub-goals or manageable goals. Establishing and attaining the sub-goals motivates the participant to achieve the major goal like not dropping out in the first year in the university.

After participants have generated the desired goals, the facilitator encourages the participants to create many possible pathways to achieve their desired goals, irrespective of the practical utility and any situational factors (Snyder et al., 2005). The scholars add that there are always stumbling blocks to any goal. Hence, it is imperative to identify stumbling blocks to meaningful goals and identify ways to overcome them. In the session, participants will identify stumbling blocks that they may come across. After each participant has performed the exercise independently, they are grouped to receive extra or alternate paths that may be used and obstacles that could be encountered; unrealistic pathways are deleted (Luthans et al., 2013; Luthans & Youssef, 2007b; Youssef-Morgan & Dahms, 2017). This activity improves each participant's ability to build routes for identifying and planning for difficulties, reducing the negative effect of hindrances on the agency (Luthans et al., 2006b). The facilitator's purpose in the session will be to create a safe environment for partcipants to feel free to positively express their views and to promote the relevance of the exercise in the educational setting.

2.7.2. Self-efficacy Development

Task mastery, vicarious learning or modeling, social persuasion, and psychological or physiological arousal are all factors of efficacy development, according to Bandura (1995). Because it includes direct information about achievement, task mastery, also known as Mastery experiences or performance attainments, is viewed as probably the most powerful strategy for generating efficacy. Although accomplishments alone do not directly promote confidence, the combination of situational processing (task difficulty) and cognitive processing (judgment of and individual's ability) will impact the development of efficacy. Luthans et al. (2004) reinforce this by noting that mastery experiences earned through perseverance and learning ability generate a strong and enduring sense of confidence.

During the workshop, the facilitator trains participants on how to develop step-by-step strategies for achieving their aspirations. The participants are divided into groups to describe each sub-goal (each stage) to the group and to answer questions about how each would be completed. As a result, task mastery for goal design and pursuit will be completed. Vicarious learning occurs when each participant observes their peers working toward their goals and hears success stories about how others achieved their goals. Furthermore, optimistic expectations of completing goals, as well as social persuasion by the facilitator and group members through validating plans and timeframes, affect psychological and physiological arousal (Luthans et al., 2006b). Each source of efficacy may be viewed as a technique for

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use in a web-based training intervention in which participants can learn to be efficient in the job at hand, or in domain-specific applications (Luthans et al., 2008b).

2.7.3. Resilience Development

According to Masten (2001), developing resilience is the result of the interplay of three components: asset factors, risk factors, and integrative process. An asset element refers to the factors that contribute to resilience, such as a secure upbringing and proper education. A lack of mentors and variable environmental circumstances are examples of risk factors that restrict the development of resilience (Luthans et al., 2006). As a result, Gota (2017) asserts that it is critical to reduce variables that limit resilience while promoting ones that improve resilience..

Furthermore, the ideal technique for developing resilience is to promote asset characteristics while decreasing risk ones. Resilience is developed in the intervention by increasing awareness of personal assets, which might be individual abilities, skills, or social networks (Luthans et al., 2006). Participants are asked to identify resources that they may use to attain their objectives. When the participants have completed their resource list, the facilitator and group members aid by finding other resources that the participants did not include on their list. The facilitator encourages participants to make use of the resources that have been identified (Gota, 2017). The similar approach, or planning, is applied to obstacles, where participants must construct hurdles that will be stumbling blocks in their progress ahead of time.

This technique varies from the hope exercise in that it focuses on developing strategies for overcoming these hurdles. The goal of this exercise is to generate strategies to side-step barriers and avoid them from being real fears (Gota, 2017). Lastly, the effect process occurs when each individual recognizes and becomes aware of their early thoughts and sentiments when confronted with adversity, and is then able to focus on resilient ideas that consider their recognized resources and alternatives to conquer the obstacles (Luthans et al., 2006). \

2.7.4. Optimism Development

According to Luthans et al. (2006b), when developing self-efficacy through creating pathways and coming up with mitigation plans to overcome hurdles, consequently, individuals established a general favourable expectancy. This indicates that when participants are confident in their ability to detect and plan for barriers, their expectations of achieving their intended goals are increased. Additionally, having alternative pathways towards a goal can diminish any negative assumptions and increase the level of expectation to reach the goal (Luthans et al., 2008a). Gota (2017), postulates that pessimistic way of perceiving the circumstance is overridden when one recognizes what they want to be, finds strategies to

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prepare for probable hurdles, and creates, develops a strategy to overcome barriers. Optimism may be learned by substituting a pessimistic explanation of occurrences with an optimistic explanation of happenings.

During the workshop, participants would be divided into groups, observe how other participants expect and plan for success. Individual participants' positive expectations would rise as a result. Individual and collective optimism grew as participants' expectations of success increased. Schneider (2009) suggests a three-pronged approach to optimism that emphasizes forgiveness for the past, appreciation for the present, and looking for chances in the future.

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2.8. Psychological Capital Intervention (PCI)
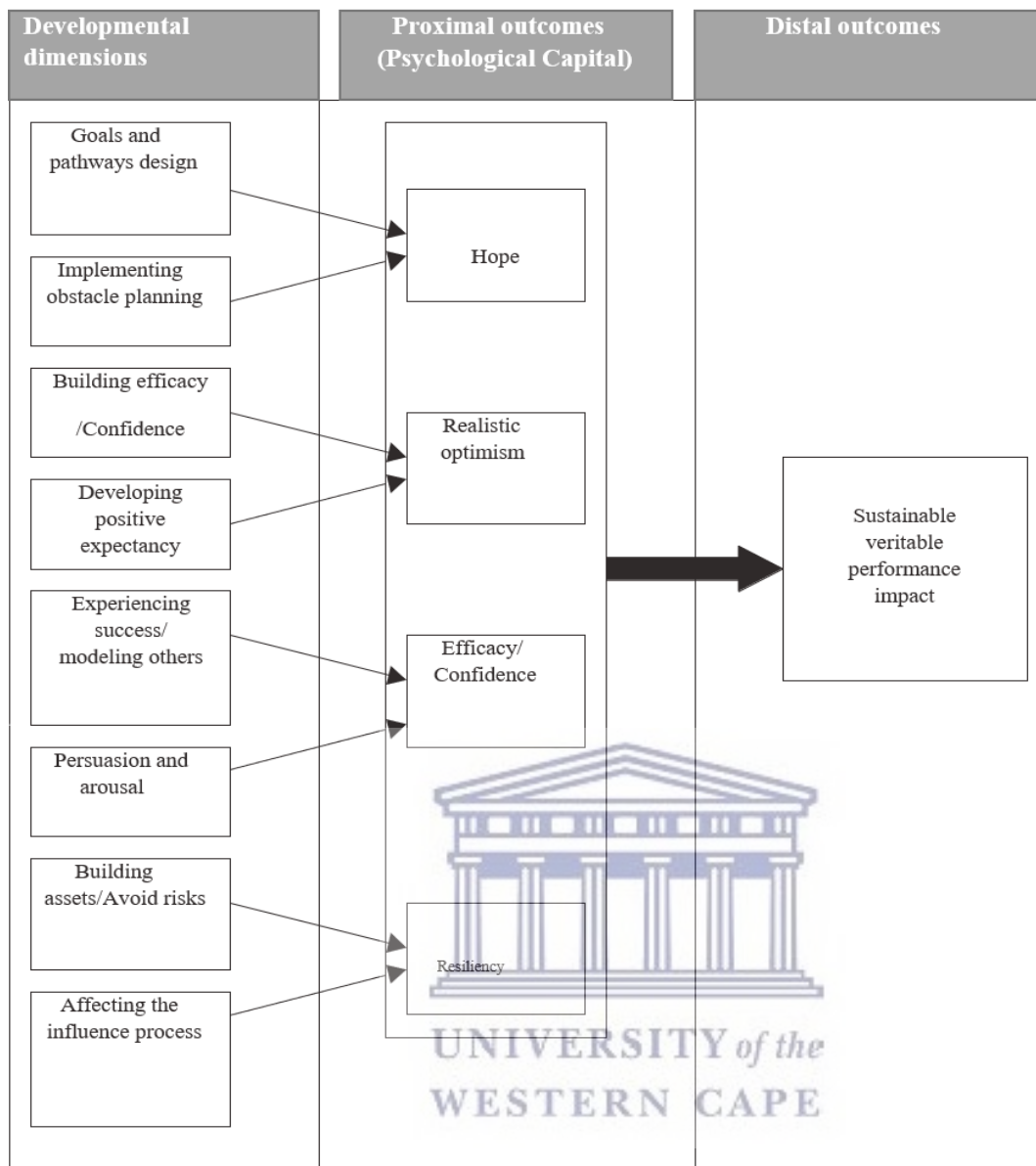
Source: Adapted from Luthans et al. (2010), Figure 2 represent the intended effect of each developmental state and contribution towards the overall level of psychological capital for performance impact

Figure 2: PsyCap Development Interventions.

2.9.Flourishing

2.9.1.   Conceptualisation of flourishing

Flourishing has evolved into an inclusive theory that integrates numerous theories and methodologies into a metrics approach to understanding and producing high-level happiness (Dunn & Dougherty, 2008; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Van Zyl & Rothmann, 2012a). According to Van Zyl and Stander (2013), flourishing is classified as living in an optimal range of human functioning, a life filled with goodness, developing a sense, personal growth, and endurance. Human flourishing, according to Keyes (2005), is a condition pertaining to an individual's subjective well-being with higher levels of feeling good (emotional well-being) and positive functioning (psychological and social well-being). Furthermore, flourishing refers to the sense of things going well in life, which is a combination of feeling better and operating successfully (Huppert & So, 2013). Finally, flourishing is connected with a high degree of mental well-being and represents the pinnacle of emotional stability (Huppert & So, 2013).

Flourishing is derived from Aristotle's virtue ethics, which emphasized collective flourishing as an ideal condition of community in which members of that society might fulfill their innate nature to behave honorably (Mesurado et al., 2018). This view is reinforced by Marxist ideology of a jointly flourishing ideal state. Recently, the emphasis has shifted from communal to individual flourishing, and from philosophical to empirical studies of thriving (Seligman, 2002). Flourishing is defined by one's spirituality, development, economic condition, achievement, accomplishment, or substantial contribution to the community (Gokcen et al., 2012).

The evaluation of flourishing has evolved into a critical notion in the lives of every individual, group, community, and organization (Mesurado et al., 2018). Adults who are languishing (as opposed to thriving) have more physical diseases and chronic disease, lose more days of work, consume more health care, are more prone to acquire mental illness, and are more likely to die prematurely, according to Keyes (2010). Everyone wants to be happy and have a prosperous life, thus promoting individual well-being should be a goal for every organization and government that has the potential to make it happen (Keyes, 2010). As a result, having the right methods to assess flourishing is essential (Mesurado et al., 2018).

According to Seligman (2011), the primary purpose of a positive psychology proposal is to foster a flourishing existence. Seligman stated that thriving focuses on developing and preserving the PERMA model's components. The PERMA model examines five factors with the goal of describing what leads to a sense of thriving. Positive feelings (P) (i.e., the experience of joy and contentment), engagement (E) (i.e., the state of feeling excited and interested in things), positive relationships (R) (i.e., cultivating and retaining quality relationships), meaning (M) (i.e., being purpose-aligned), and accomplishment (A)

(i.e., goal-driven) are the four components (Seligman, 2011). The PERMA theoretical model holds that developing these five components will be of critical support in increasing a person's sense of happiness and motivation (Mesurado et al., 2018).

Positive psychology study into the underlying processes and determinants of flourishing is an essential component. An investigation of how this information might be transmitted to others and implemented in real-life situations is also essential. In this way, educational institutions are well positioned to encourage flourishing in a wide range of audiences, making a significant difference in people's lives (Seligman et al., 2009). Thus, flourishing is the result being measured in this study.

2.9.2. Dimensions of flourishing and evaluation of measurements

Keyes (2007) defined flourishing as optimum well-being with three dimensions: emotional, psychological, and social well-being. The first two dimensions (emotional and psychological well-being) were theoretically supported by the work of (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Diener, 2009; Ryff, 1989; Seligman, 2011).

Based on the theoretical justifications, emotional wellbeing is described as the presence of positive emotions, a sensation of an individual being satisfied with life and balancing positive and negative feelings (Diedericks, 2012). In contrast to emotional well-being, psychological well-being is described as positive self-evaluations about one's feeling of satisfaction after achievements, having a sense of meaning in life and growth as an individual (Diedericks, 2012; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Keyes had been following the work of Ryff's and Diener theoretical model which focused on emotional well-being and psychological well-being (Mesurado et al., 2018). Years later, Keyes added a component that is now deemed essential: social well-being (Keyes, 2002; Mesurado et al., 2018). Individuals' happiness with their cultural and social surroundings determines their social well-being (Keyes, 2002). It considers factors other than personal content with oneself, one's future, or one's present resources, and emphasizes on the perceived quality of the society in which the individual lives (Keyes, 2002). As a result, Keye's method to flourishing is applied in this investigation.

2.10. Flourishing within the academic context

Progressing in life enables an opportunity to develop, advance and change, but this progression can at times lead to low self-esteem, adopting self-sabotaging habits, and disappointments (Hicks & Heastie, 2008). This is not unique to first-year students who transition from high school into higher education which exposes the students to different academic and social experiences, and various expectations (Chikte & Brand, 1996; Fraser & Killen, 2003). This can either lead a first-year student to flourish or languish within the first-year at university (Knoesen & Naudé, 2018).

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As much as the transition might be challenging, first-year students are most likely to experience positive emotions as they are beginning their university careers (Knoesen & Naudé, 2018). The new environment gives them the freedom to be independent, exposed to diverse situations, and exposed to unique opinions of other students, which can positively contribute to their cognitive development and lead to higher chances for learning (Gurin et al., 2002; Habibah et al., 2010). These pleasant emotions, personal progress, and positive cognition are related to emotional and psychological well-being and are indicative of flourishing people (Keyes, 2002).

On the contrary, the transition can be daunting as well, because of the unknown and new experiences, the separation from family, and the expectations (Perry & Allard, 2003). This can lead to emotional and personal issues like psychological distress, anxiousness, self-doubt, and even worse depression (Cooke et al., 2006; Hicks & Heastie, 2008). This also impacts academic performance (Howell, 2009). These emotional, psychological, and societal challenges might likely negatively impact first-year students' capacity to flourish in higher education (Knoesen & Naude, 2018) and achieve optimum well-being (Parker et al., 2005). Additionally, many South African students tend to experience financial difficulties which are stressful (Bojuwoye, 2002). Hence, it is pivotal for students to manage their negative affect/emotions adequately to be able to improve their quality of life and flourish (Knoesen & Naudé, 2018). The failure to handle this stress can lead to unhealthy behaviours and have an impact on student's mental health (Bland et al., 2012), both of which may place students at risk for dropping out from university (Alarcon & Edwards, 2013). In Thorley (2017), students report that they frequently miss academic commitment due to their mental health and those that are languishing are likely to dropout of university. As the first year is crucial to students' performance at university, encouraging mental health at this time might help ensure that students have successful academic experiences (Knoesen & Naude, 2017).

2.11.   PsyCap Intervention in relations to level of flourishing of first year students

According to Krasikova et al. (2015), a vast body of information on PsyCap as a concept has been demonstrated to predict a range of work-connected behavioural and mindset outcomes. PsyCap has been related to work performance, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, citizenship behaviours within organisations (Avey et al., 2011a), mastery orientation and innovative thinking (Luthans et al., 2011), psychological well-being (Avey et al., 2010a), happiness (Culbertson et al., 2010), and perceived employability (Culbertson et al., 2010). Furthermore, PsyCap has been shown to have a negative impact on undesired organisational phenomena such as skepticism, intention to quit, work stress, anxiousness, disobedience (Avey et al., 2011a), and unproductive work behaviours (Avey et al., 2010b)

PsyCap has the ability to alter mental health and drug addiction behaviours in a variety of ways (Krasikova et al., 2015). According to Luthans et al. (2013), PsyCap may have substantial consequences for life domains such as personal relationships and health that are not related to work. Previous worldwide and South African research on workplace PsyCap shown it to be a major predictor of psychological well-being (Kotze & Massyn, 2019).

Diehl et al. (2011) explain that individuals can flourish when the positive effect is proportionally greater than the negative effect. Positive emotions are often associated with transformative outcomes such as inventiveness, endurance, and connectedness (Tuck & Anderson, 2014). Psycap, according to Erkutlu (2014), has a modest influence on the link between narcissism and psychological well-being.

PsyCap was studied as a stress buffer for students, with PsyCap being utilized to minimize the association between stress and bad outcomes. The study's findings suggested PsyCap to be a mediator between stress and indicators of psychological and physical well-being (Riolli et al., 2012). Culbertson et al. (2010) investigated the relationship between PsyCap and the mental health of employees in organizations, as well as the conceptualization of mental health as hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. When examined over time, the study's findings revealed that the connection between PsyCap and hedonic well-being was mediated by eudaimonic well-being.

According to Avey et al. (2010); Singh and Mansi (2009), there is evidence of a beneficial association between PsyCap and well-being, namely psychological well-being. It may be concluded that PsyCap is a beneficial tool that can be used to improve a person's psychological well-being (Selvaraj, 2015). PsyCap is also envisioned as an empowering tool that may offer children with the mental fortitude they need to endure under adversity (Riolli et al., 2012). Furthermore, Riolli et al. (2012) claim that in a student setting, PsyCap acts as a possible antidote to impact stress and provides a platform to build student immunity to stresses.

There is evidence of a connection between PsyCap and flourishing (Avey et al., 2010). According to Ortega-Maldonado and Salanova (2018), authors such as Nielsen, Riolli, Savicki, Richards, Datu and Valdez, agree that PsyCap positively predicts mental well-being, undergraduate contentment with life, student's educational engagement, accomplishment, and satisfaction. According to Ortega-Maldonado and Salanova (2018), students may flourish and be satisfied when they use their psychological capital to complete a task, especially if they are self-motivated (intrinsic), discover authenticity, and personal significance despite adversity. PsyCap is defined, theorised, and operationalised using theoretical methods derived from psychological resources (Ortega-Maldonado & Salanova, 2018).

PsyCap increases the potential value of seeing situations or circumstances in more optimistic, opportunistic, adaptable, and promotion/ approach-focused ways, so improving their well-being (Avey et al., 2010a). It is possible that psychological capital intervention might provide first-year students with a flourishing experience. Furthermore, little research has been conducted on the influence of PsyCap on university students' well-being (flourishing). Thus, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of a PsyCap intervention on first-year students flourishing at a university in Cape Town, Western Cape.

2.12. Conclusion

This chapter concentrated on the inquiry's core constructs, which are psychological capital (hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy) and flourishing (hedonic and eudaimonic). The chapter specifically mentioned past research and studies on these constructs. The next chapter will discuss the research technique employed in the current study, as well as the many measuring equipment used to collect data.

3. Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter developed the study's literature review. To accomplish this purpose, the chapter defined certain crucial terms and presented the study's theories. The goal of this chapter is to go over the study approach that was used to collect data on whether psychological capital intervention may increase the flourishing of first-year students at a specific Western Cape institution. A quantitative method was employed to offer a complete description of tools, settings, events, people, and interactions in order to attain this purpose. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the study's methodological approach, as well as an explanation of the research design, methodologies, and sampling strategy. The sample techniques and difficulties related to the sampling procedures are described, followed by the data gathering methods. It will also include data collection, and the statistical analysis utilized to evaluate the hypotheses suggested in this investigation, as well as the ethical issues pertinent to the research project. Lastly, the data analysis techniques, research constraints, validity, reliability, and ethical considerations are all discussed.

3.2. Research Design

A research design is a blueprint for a research study used as a guide to outline how a study will shift from the research objectives or questions to the research results (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). The research design process involves a thorough planning process that will indicate how the data was collected and analysed to improve the level of understanding of a study (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). A quantitative research design was utilised to accomplish the research objective. This method is seemed most appropriate for this research as is it aims to examine and consult quantitative instruments. Additionally, the benefit of using this method it offers an objective perspective while reducing the risk associated with subjective attitudes and consequences.

Being a quantitative research design, the researcher opted for a positivism paradigm that is rooted in the natural sciences approach of the study. Within that broad definition, quantitative research designs are categorised to be either non-experimental or experimental (Sousa et al., 2007). This study will employ an experimental design, which includes random assignment, modification of the independent variable, and stringent controls (Sousa et al., 2007). There are three elements of the experimental design study, namely (1) measures the result of participants before (pre-test), and after the participants have undertook the intervention (post-test), (2) then compare against the group of participants that did not underttake the intervention. In this study, the participants that are exposed to the intervention are referred as the experimental group and the group of participants that was not exposed to the intervention are referred

to as the control group. Lastly (3) conducted random assignment for the participants to be in any of the two groups (random assignment) (Sousa et al., 2007).

The experimental design might be carried out as a true experiment or as a quasi-experimental. A quasi-experimental research investigates cause-and-effect correlations in regard to, or between, independent and dependent variables in the present study. However, one of the elements that true experiment design usually lacks, and is random assignment of participants to groups. Quasi-experimental designs are beneficial when measuring the effectiveness of an intervention toward participants.

The study was conducted using a quantitative quasi-experimental research design. The control group consist of n=33 participants and the intervention group consist of n=30 participants from another group. The intervention involved a workshop with personal exercises. The data points of the study will be measured in two phases, namely before the PsyCap Intervention (Pre-intervention) is conducted and after the intervention is finished (Post-intervention).

The psychological capital intervention (PCI) is an online-based training program that includes four activities centered on hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy (Luthans et al., 2008b). The results are measured using self-report measurements that were completed pre-intervention and post-intervention.

3.3. Population and Sample

3.3.1. *Population*

The term population refers to a group of individuals who share one or more traits that the researcher is interested in (Asiamah et al., 2017). As a result, the target audience consisted of first-year students from a Western Cape institution. The institution has a significant number of first-year placements, thus using a subset of the population makes sense. Furthermore, the name of the university is not disclosed in this study for reasons of confidentiality.

3.3.2. Sample

A sample refers to the finite part of a subset of individuals that are identified from the target population (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016). The term sampling refers to the process that individuals or sampling units are identified from the target population (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016). It involves a process where a sample of a unit is selected from a set of data to measure the commonality and different characteristics of beliefs, attributes, attitudes, and characteristics of individuals (Rahi, 2017). In the context of this study, the sample group was drawn from the population of first-year university students. The intervention and control groups were drawn from the same university. Furthermore, a sample size was established based on the experimental studies' rule of thumb sampling strategy, which is a moderate to

large size (n 25). (Tipton, 2014). The sample size in this study was n=30 for the intervention group and n=33 for the control group.

3.3.3. Sample Characteristics

This study was carried out at a university in the Western Cape Province. The chosen university is significant for this research since it tackles the issues of students' low levels of wellbeing. There are roughly 4290 first-year students at the university. The university is noted for having a diverse population of pupils from underserved neighbourhoods. Some are from rural areas, townships, informal settlements, overseas nations, schools, and other communities in the surrounding area.

The researcher used 63 participants as the convenience sample. 30 participants in the experimental group was exposed to the PsyCap intervention and another 33 participants which is the control group were not exposed to the intervention. The participants were first-year university students who have recently entered the university.

3.4. Measurement Instruments

The Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire (A-PCQ - 24) and the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF -14) were used in this study.

3.4.1. Biographical questionnaire

This measurement gathered demographic information such gender, age, home language, province of matriculation, etc. Additionally, the questionnaire about the particulars of the participant's academic programmme enrolled such as Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science. The entire information gathered was employed strictly for statistical purposes.

3.4.2. Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire (APCQ-24)

In this study, the Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire was derived from the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) which was developed by (Avey et al., 2011b; Luthans et al., 2005, Luthans & Avolio, 2014; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). The PCQ was developed for the workplace and the APCQ is used in the academic environment.

3.4.2.1. Nature and composition

The PsyCap questionnaire is widely regarded as the gold standard for measuring PsyCap (Lorenz et al., 2016). The measure is made up of 24 items divided into four subscales: hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. An example item measuring the hope subscale is "At the moment, I am accomplishing the goals I set for myself.". An example item measuring self-efficacy is "I feel confident analysing a long-term problem to find a solution". An example item used to assess resilience is "I can get through

difficult circumstances since I've been through them before." An example question used to assess optimism is "I'm enthusiastic about what will happen to me in terms of academic success in the future." The components of the instrument were somewhat adjusted to be contextually relevant in the setting of this research study and the type of the participants engaged. An example is one of the item stated "When I have a setback at work, I have problems rebounding from it and moving on," was rephrased as "When I have a setback in class, I have difficulties recovering from it and going on." Each subscale consists of six items taken from the four dimensions, with responses on Six Point Likert-like scales. On a scale of one (1) strongly disagree to six (6) strongly agree.

3.4.2.2. Reliability of the Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire (APCQ)

Souza et al. (2017) explain that reliability can be defined as the stability, internal consistency, and equivalence of an instrument. Chakrabartty (2013) concurs, stating that reliability measures the consistency, repeatability, precision, and trustworthiness of a study. Several studies have indicated the reliability of the PCQ to be above the minimum acceptable reliability alphas of 0.70. In a study by Beal et al. (2013) on 97 employees from a government organisation, the PCQ revealed a strong internal consistency of 0.91 for the full scale. Additionally, Avey et al. (2010) state that the overall internal consistency across a variety of occupations and organisations reported the alpha coefficient of 0.95 for the PCQ. In a sample of 300 university students, PCQ showed an internal consistency of 0.80 (Adil & Ghayas, 2019). Lastly, PCQ demonstrated an excellent internal consistency of 0.91 in a study of 500 teachers in a university (Adil & Kamal, 2020).

An adequate internal consistency was reported for the PCQ instrument (Luthans et al., 2006). The overall reliability of PCQ ranges around $\alpha = .93$, for subscales ranges around hope $\alpha = .87$, efficacy $\alpha = .87$, resilience $\alpha = .72$, and optimism $\alpha = .7$ (Avey et al., 2010). The four subscales of psychological capital have been individually tested for reliability. From four samples the internal consistency for hope reported 0.72, 0.75, 0.80, 0.76; self-efficacy reported 0.75, 0.84, 0.85, 0.75; resilience reported 0.71, 0.71, 0.66, 0.72; optimism reported 0.74, 0.69, 0.76, 0.79 and the PCQ full scale reported 0.88, 0.89, 0.89, 0.89 (Luthans et al., 2007). Although some of the subscales like the optimism scale and the resilience scale reported slightly below in one of the samples, the reliability of the overall PsyCap measure in all four samples was consistently above acceptable standards.

In a study by Beal et al. (2013), the internal consistency for hope was 0.86; optimism was 0.72; resilience was 0.80; self-efficacy was 0.88 and the overall PCQ was 0.91. In a study by Adil and Kamal (2020), PCQ demonstrated a Cronbach's coefficient for each subscale where resilience reported 0.83, self-efficacy reported 0.92, hope reported 0.87, optimism reported 0.78 and overall PCQ reported 0.91. In the context of South Africa, the internal consistency received for Hope ($\alpha = 0.81$) and self-efficacy

(α = 0.83) were higher than the cut-off, and Optimism: α = 0.67; Resilience: α = 0.69 missed the cut-off (0.70) (Gorgens-Ekermans & Herbert, 2013). Furthermore, in a meta-analysis review using 29 studies, the instrument reported by 28 of the 29 studies indicated that the overall internal consistency reliability was above the minimum acceptable coefficient of 0.70 (Dawkins et al., 2013).

3.4.2.3. Validity of the Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire

Souza et al. (2017) define validity as an examination of an instrument to discover if it measures exactly what it is designed to measure and how effectively that instrument measures the specified subject. The four psychological capital subscales were chosen based on their shown validity with defined standard in relation to working environment and high institutions of learning (Luthans et al., 2007). Gorgens-Ekermans and Herbert (2013) validated the PCQ in the setting of South Africa.

3.4.3. Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF)

The Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) was employed in this study, which was created by (Keyes et al., 2008).

3.4.3.1. Nature and composition

The MHC-SF was evolved from the MHC-Long form, which had 40 questions and now has 14 questions. The MHC-SF assesses good mental health by portraying diverse sensations of well-being. It considers three aspects: emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being (Keyes, 2014). This instrument distinguishes between optimum mental health (flourishing), mediocre mental health, and languishing mental health (low mental health). As a result, the MHC-SF answer choice assesses the frequency with which respondents encounter indications of mental health within a week or month.

"How often did you feel cheerful in the last month?" is an example item for emotional well-being. "How often did you feel that you enjoyed most features of your personality during the last month?" is an example item for psychological well-being. "How often did you feel that you had something meaningful to give to society in the last month?" is an example of a social well-being item. Participants in this instrument score each item's frequency of every sensation in the previous month on a six-point Likert scale ranging from one (1) meaning "never" to six (6) indicating "every day."

Participants must score low or high on at least seven items on the entire scale in order to be classified as languishing or flourishing. Participants are said to be flourishing if they experience one of the three emotional wellbeing items "every day" or "nearly every day" and six of the eleven psychological wellbeing items "every day" or "almost every day" in the previous month. On the contrary, individuals are identified as languishing when one of the three emotional wellbeing items is perceived "never" or

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"once or twice a month" and six of the eleven psychological wellbeing items are viewed "never" or "once or twice a month" in the previous month. "Moderately mentally healthy" participants are those who are neither languishing nor flourishing (Guo et al., 2015).

3.4.3.2. Reliability of the Mental Health Continuum

These aspects of MHC-SF are consistent with Martin Seligman's wellbeing theory, which combines emotional well-being and positive functioning (Selvaraj, 2015). Keyes (2002) and Keyes et al. (2008) concur that the MHC-SF has demonstrated acceptable internal consistency and discriminant validity (.80 and above) in teenagers (ages 12-18) and adults in the United States, the Netherlands, and South Africa. The test-retest reliability averaged 0.68 during three consecutive three-month periods, while the nine-month test-retest reliability was 0.65.

3.5. Research Procedure

The researcher presented the study to the lecturers and asked for permission to make use of the students as participants in the study. Further received permission from the Deputy Registrar of the selected university to access first year student database. The researcher sent a Google form of the informed consent and a biographical questionnaire to participants. Participants in both the control and intervention groups were asked to complete the PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ) and the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) prior to the intervention (T1).

3.6.Procedures for the intervention group

In this study, the intervention that was used is taken from positive psychology and psychological capital from the work of Luthans et al. (2006a). The name of the micro-intervention that was used is called PsyCap Intervention (PCI). Luthans et al. (2006a) defines the PCI as having three goal-oriented conceptual model areas: goal design, pathway construction, and overcoming hurdles.

Participants in the training session were invited to identify personal valuable goals that they would use during the session. When participants had finished entering their aspirations, the facilitator discussed the best design for their goals, which was led by willpower (motivation) in PsyCap. First, goals must be specific and lead to achievement; second, use an approach framework rather than an avoidance framework (this is intended to motivate participants to positively move toward goal attainment rather than avoid it). Third, to emphasize the need of creating sub-goals in order to reap the rewards of minor victories that will aid in the achievement of the larger goals.

Following that, participants are asked to create paths to their valuable goals. Participants were instructed to create a list of all conceivable paths, regardless of their likelihood of occurring. Soon after, participants were urged to create small groups to hear from others and contribute to others about

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alternative paths to their goals that other participants had not considered. Other participants who were unable to attend the live event were urged to check Google or talk with their closest friends about the feasibility of their paths.

The last level of the inventory paths needs an evaluation of the resources required to pursue each track. After careful examination, the unworkable paths are eliminated, leaving only a few viable options. Luthans et al. (2006a), contends that there will be roadblocks to practically any endeavor. These stumbling hurdles might discourage a person from achieving their goals. As a result, the last stage input into the PCI is the development of the participants' goal-setting processes and anticipatory capacities in order to predict, plan for, and overcome difficulties (Luthans, 2006).

At this stage, participants are given time to deliberate on possible obstacles or what could potentially stop them from accomplishing their goals. After each participant has gathered their potential obstacles, the facilitator grouped the participants. In the small group, they discuss possible hindrances and how they plan to conquer the hindrances. The facilitator going around the small groups to verify identified hindrances and provoke thoughts of participants to think of alternate pathway to avoid pathway obstruction (Luthans, 2006a).

Participants had set goals to demonstrate ownership at the end of the course, were prepared for hurdles (stumbling blocks), and had multiple/inventory paths as contingency plans. Throughout the session, the facilitator acknowledged and promoted good self-talk over negative self-talk. The facilitator emphasized goal formulation, pathway creation, and overcoming roadblocks as an approach that could and should be applied to all of the participants' aims at the university. The micro-intervention session lasted around 2-3 hours. The surveys were then sent to both groups four weeks after the intervention (T2). The questionnaire will be distributed electronically using Google Forms, and participants filled it out using their student email address.

Table 1: Evaluation of PsyCap intervention towards the flourishing of first year's student's time frame

Group	Pre-measure	Intervention	Post-measure
	Week 1	Week 2-5	Week 6
Intervention group	PCQ24 MHC	Yes	PCQ24 MHC
Control group	PCQ24 MHC	No	PCQ24 MHC

3.7. Procedures for the control group

All the participants that were selected to be in the control group did not have any interaction with the researcher and were not exposed to any positive psychology intervention, between the pre- and post - test stages.

3.8. Data Management and Statistical Analysis

The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse data gathered in this study. The research study first made use of descriptive statistics to analyse the data. Through descriptive statistics the minimum and maximum scores of each questionnaire were obtained, the standard deviation, mean, kurtosis and skewness values were calculated. Inferential statistics arise from the usage of these statistical analysis methods. Inferential statistics are used in studies to compare raw data and the connection between constructs. A series of chi-square tests of independence were used to evaluate between-group differences in each significant biodemographic and educational variable. A sequence of two repeated-measures ANOVAs (Time: pre-intervention, Post-intervention) x two (Group: Intervention, Control). A series of bivariate correlational analyses (using Pearson's r correlation coefficient) were performed to determine the degree of the associations between PCQ and MHC pre- and post-intervention change ratings.

SPSS statistical software, version 24.0 (IBM Corporation, 2016) was used for every analyses in the study, with the statistical significance (α) level set at.05 unless otherwise specified.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

3.9.1. Consent and confidentiality

Throughout the research procedure in this study, ethical precautions were adopted. During the course of this research, the researcher sought and received ethical approval from the University. All participants were asked to provide informed consent from the outset, which told them that their participation was entirely optional and that they may opt out at any moment.

Participants were also told about the goal of the study and the methods involved. Because the purpose of this study is to investigate the students' psychosocial experiences, the researcher created rapport and assured the participants' safety, such as confidentiality. The information provided by the participants was rigorously kept secret, and the individuals' identities were not revealed. Participants who have requested feedback on the study will get it.

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3.9.2. Risks and benefits

In this study, the was no threats or risks relating tp psychological, social and physical for all participants. Additionally, participants volunteered, no participants were compensated for undertaking the study which meant there would be no direct and immediate benefits for participation.

3.10. Conclusion

This chapter offered a full overview of the present study's research methods. The chapter began with a discussion of the study design, followed by an explanation of the sampling procedures and the characteristics of the population from which the sample was drawn. This was followed by a detailed examination of the psychometric qualities and a comprehensive description of the measuring instruments. In addition, an explanation of the statistical analysis was provided. The final section of this chapter finished with the ethical issues that regulated the data collection procedure.

4. Chapter Four: Findings and Results of the Study

4.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter investigated the study methods used to collect data on whether psychological capital intervention may promote the flourishing of first-year students at a specific university in the Western Cape Province. This chapter's major objective is to offer the statistical analysis used to assess the hypotheses. The first section will provide a sample socio-demographics data, followed by research data produced from measuring instruments employed, and finally, an analysis per hypothesis investigated.

4.2. Sample Demographic Characteristics

Data presented in the table demonstrates the demographic characteristics of two groups of subsets of a targeted population. There are two groups: an intervention group and a control group. A statistical analysis on the sample demographics was employed to determine if there are significant differences between both groups. This is important to assist this study to quantify whether the group differences have a great impact on the factor of interest. The investigation found no statistically significant differences between groups in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, or province of matriculation. However, a statistically significant difference was found in school type, i.e., between students who attended public and private schools. Participants in the control group ($n = 32$) attended public school more than those in the intervention group ($n = 24$).
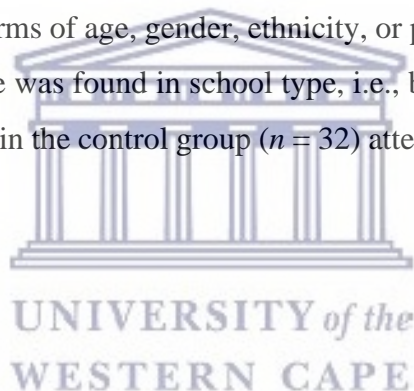
Table 2: Sample Socio-demographic Characteristics ($N = 63$)

Variable	Group Intervention ($n = 30$)	Control ($n = 33$)	χ^2	p	*ESE*
Age (years)*			.277	.599	
19 or below	26	27			
20 or more years of	4	6			
Gender			3.635	.057	.240
Male	2	8			
Female	28	25			
Ethnicity			7.457	.059	.344
African	25	19			
Coloured	4	13			
White	0	1			
Other	1	0			
Matric Province			7.689	.566	.349
Western Cape	10	17			
Northern Cape	1	1			
KwaZulu Natal	4	4			
Eastern Cape	4	2			
Mpumalanga	2	1			
Northwest	0	1			
Gauteng	5	5			
Free State	3	0			
Limpopo	1	1			
Other	0	1			
School Type			4.582	.032	.270
Public	24	32			
Private	6	1			

Note. The data provided are raw counts. Statistical analyses are presented for those younger than 19 years versus those 20 or older. ESE = effect size estimate (in this case, Cramer's V). $p < .05$. All p-values are two-tailed. Study type was measured, and all participants indicated that they are full-time.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics: APC and MHC

Table 3 gives descriptive data for the study's two key measures, broken down by group. These were the data that were utilized in the analyses detailed in the next parts of this chapter. The entire academic PsyCap score will be examined further.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Study's two Major Measures (N = 63)

	Group			
	Intervention ($n = 30$)		Control ($n = 33$)	
Scale / Subscale	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Academic Psychological Capital	4.11 (0.80)	4.40 (0.67)	4.14 (0.76)	4.32 (0.77)
Efficacy	4.13 (0.96)	4.47 (0.78)	4.15 (0.97)	4.32 (0.93)
Hope	4.12 (1.02)	4.47 (0.83)	4.22 (0.99)	4.36 (0.99)
Resilience	4.14 (0.78)	4.43 (0.78)	4.24 (0.78)	4.43 (0.77)
Optimism	4.03 (1.00)	4.24 (0.66)	3.93 (0.93)	4.18 (0.84)
Mental Health Continuum	3.29 (1.27)	3.51 (1.00)	3.15 (1.08)	3.45 (1.01)

Note. Data are means, with standard deviations in brackets.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

4.4.1.   Hypothesis 1:

This hypothesis stated that levels of psychological capital will:

(a) statistically significant increase from pre- to post-intervention in the Intervention group but not in the Control group, and

(b) be statistically significantly higher at post-intervention in the Intervention group than in the Control group.

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Table 4: Repeated-measures ANOVA: Change in APC scores from pre- to post-intervention in the two groups ($N = 63$)

Subscale / Effect	F	p	ESE Squared
APC			
Time	10.136	.002**	.142
Group	.023	.880	.000
Time Group	.468	.497	.008

Note. APCQ24= Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire, 24-item version; ESE = effect size estimate (in this case, partial eta squared, ηp2). Degrees of freedom were (1, 61) for each test. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. All p-values are two-tailed.

As Table 4 shows, a repeated measures ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction showed that the mean for the sample differed significantly between time points ($F(1, 61) = 10.136$, $p = 0.002$). However, this is true for both groups as no significant changes were detected between groups. Whilst the mean scores for PsyCap (see Table 4) indicate a higher increase in the results of participants in the intervention group than the Control group, it was not statistically significant. This is also displayed in Figure 3 Thus, hypothesis 1 is rejected.
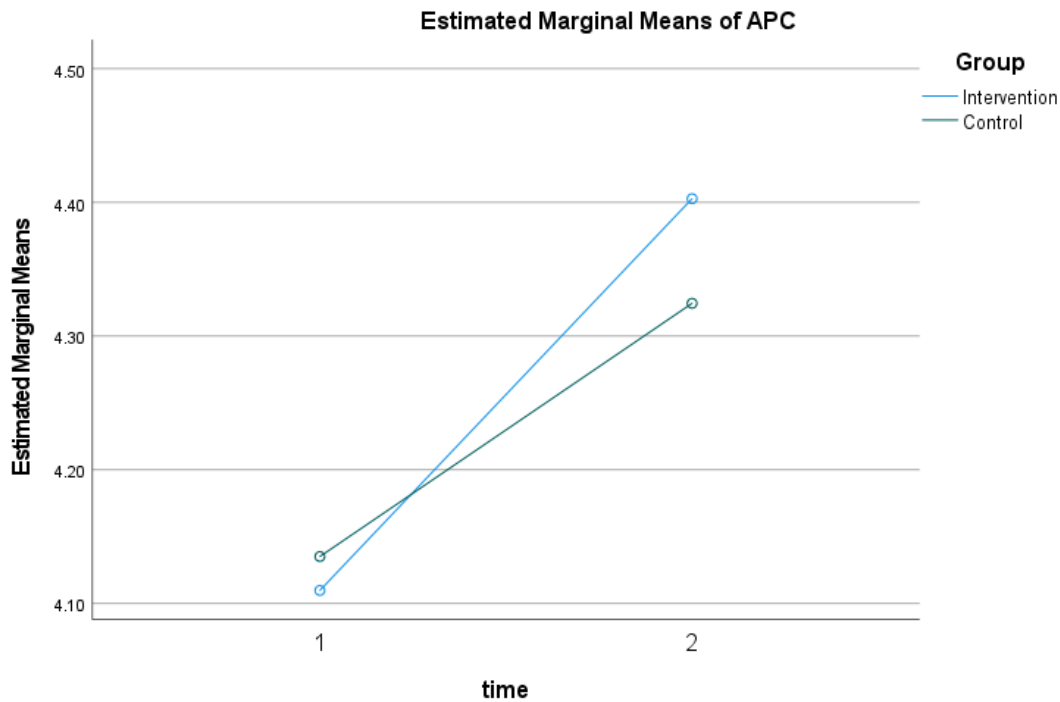
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Figure 3: Estimated marginal means of APC for two groups over two-time measurements

The second part of this hypothesis was also rejected as the -post-intervention scores for the intervention group increased, as well as the control group, $t(61) = .428$, $p = .335$.

4.4.2. Hypothesis 2:

This hypothesis stated that levels of flourishing (as indexed by the MHC) will:

(a) statistically significant increase from pre- to post-intervention in the Intervention group, but not in the Control group, and

(b) be statistically significantly higher at post-intervention in the Intervention group than in the Control group.

Table 5: Repeated-Measures ANOVA: Change in MHCSF (Flourishing) scores from pre- to post-intervention in the two groups (N = 63)

Subscale / Effect	*F*	*p*	Partial Eta Squared
MHCSF			
Time	5.392	.024	.081
Group	.150	.700	.002
Time Group	.119	.731	.002

Note. MHCSF= Mental Health Continuum Short Form, 14-item version; ESE = effect size estimate is 0.081 (in this case, partial eta squared). Degrees of freedom were (1, 000) for each test. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. All p-values are two-tailed.

As Table 5 shows, analyses detected a significant Time (pre-intervention, post-intervention), which indicates that levels of flourishing after the intervention increased. A repeated measures ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction showed that the mean for MHCSF participants differed significantly between time points ($F(1, 61) = 5.392$, $p = 0.024$). The mean scores for flourishing (see Table 5) indicate a higher increase in the results of participants in the intervention group than the Control group, however, these increases were not found to be statistically significant, $F(1,61) = .150$, $p = .70$. Figure 2 provides a visual display of the increase in scores from time 1 to time 2 for the intervention and control group.
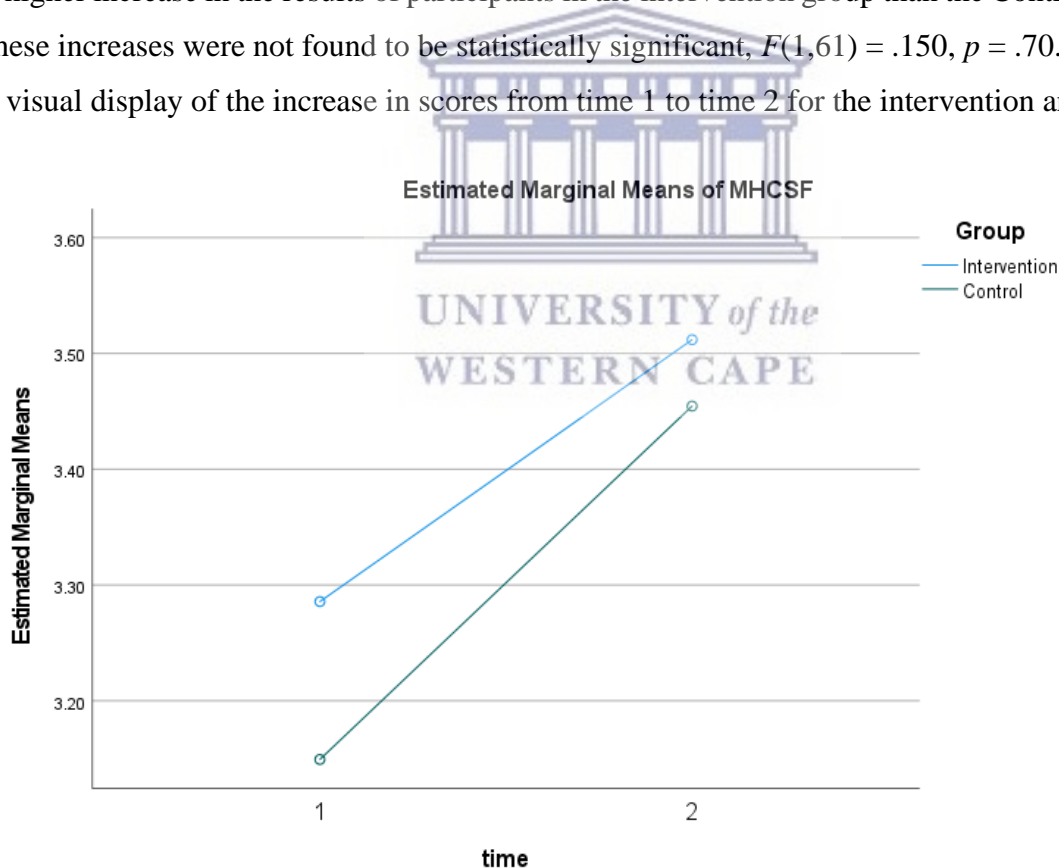

Figure 4: Estimated marginal means of MHCSF for two groups over two-time measurements

This finding also informs hypothesis 2b as no significant differences were found between the intervention and control groups post-test scores on the MHC-SF, $t(61) = .227$, $p = .410$. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is rejected.

4.4.3. Hypothesis 3:

The levels of psychological capital dimensions determine the levels of flourishing both in the Intervention group and in the Control group

For this analysis, the post scores for both groups were entered into a linear regression to determine the amount of variance explained in flourishing by academic PsyCap.

For the intervention group, analysis indicated that 44.9% of the variance in flourishing is explained by PsyCap, $R^2 = .449$, $F(1,27) = 21.961$, $p < .001$. In the case of the control group, 28.4% of the variance in flourishing was explained by academic PsyCap, $R^2 = .284$, $F(1,31) = 12.283$, $p = .001$. Based on the significant findings, hypothesis 3 was accepted.

4.4.4. Hypothesis 4:

In the Intervention group, but not in the Control group, there will be a statistically significant positive correlation between pre- to post-intervention changes in psychological capital and pre- to post-intervention changes in flourishing.

The analyses indicated a significant correlation beween APC and MHC for the intervention group, $r = .539$, $p < 0.01$; as well as a significant correlation for the control group, $r = .657$, $p < .001$.

Therefore, as the result for both groups indicates a significant correlation between pre- to post-intervention changes in psychological capital and flourishing, hypothesis 4 is rejected.

Table 6: Summary table of the hypothesis

Number	Hypothesis	Findings
H1	This hypothesis stated that levels of psychological capital will: (a) statistically significantly increase from pre- to post-intervention in the Intervention group but not in the Control group, and (b) be statistically significantly higher at post-intervention in the Intervention group than in the Control group.	Rejected
H2	This hypothesis stated that levels of flourishing (as indexed by the MHC) will:	Rejected

	(a) statistically significantly increase from pre- to post-intervention in the Intervention group but not in the Control group, and (b) be statistically significantly higher at post-intervention in the Intervention group than in the Control group.	
H3	The levels of psychological capital dimensions determine the levels of flourishing both in the Intervention group and in the Control group	Accepted
H4	In the Intervention group, but not in the Control group, there will be a statistically significant positive correlation between pre- to post-intervention changes in psychological capital and pre- to post-intervention changes in flourishing.	Rejected

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter presented an impartial evaluation of the study's findings based on statistical analysis of the data collected. To explain the results, descriptive and inferential statistical analysis were performed. By evaluating the four hypotheses, the analyses enabled the researcher to uncover the statistical link between the study's components. This enabled the researcher to draw conclusions regarding the efficacy of the academic psychological capital intervention. The following chapter will describe the findings and make comparisons to past relevant research.
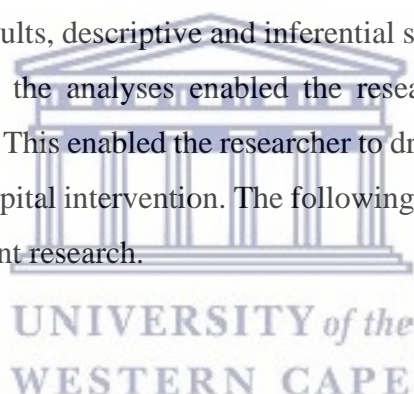
5. Chapter Five: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter outlined and analysed data from this study to determine whether psychological capital intervention can improve the flourishing of first-year students at a specific university in the Western Cape Province. This chapter tries to summarize and critically examine the findings of this study, as detailed in Chapter 4. Each hypothesis will be given, and then a summary of how these study findings compare to past studies will be provided. This is followed by a sub-section devoted to a thorough examination of the study's findings. The emphasis was on how the current results relate to past academic psychological capital intervention research, as well as accounting for any gaps in the findings between the current study and earlier studies. Finally, this chapter will discuss the study's shortcomings and make recommendations for further research.

5.2. Discussion of the results per hypothesis

The overarching goal of this study was to assess the effectiveness of psychological capital intervention in promoting first-year student flourishing. The study used a quantitative quasi-experimental research method to attain this purpose. Participants were drawn from a first-year student pool at a university in the Western Cape Province (Intervention group n = 33, Control group n = 30). Before and after the intervention, the participants performed the measuring instruments (Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire (A-PCQ) and Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF). The intervention consisted of a training workshop that included four activities, namely the hope exercise, the optimism exercise, the self-efficacy exercise, and the resilience exercise, as specified by (Luthans, 2007).

ANOVA was used in the early phases of data analysis to ensure equivalence between the two groups included in the study, namely the intervention and control groups. This was done to see whether the groups were comparable and to see if there were any sample disparities depending on demographic variables. Except for school type, the data analysis revealed no variations in the sample demographic features between the experimental and control groups. Specifically, more individuals in the control groups attended public schools ($\chi 2$ = 4.582, p < .032, ESE = .270).

The present findings of this study are consistent with non-experimental and experimental studies that show a relationship between PsyCap and flourishing (Avey et al., 2011a; Avey et al., 2010a; Selvaraj & Bhat, 2018) The higher the levels of psychological capital the higher impact they have on flourishing (Selvaraj & Bhat, 2018; Avey et al. 2011). More precisely, the current study adds to the growing body of literature indicating that a web-based micro-intervention may be utilised to promote levels of

flourishing in the context of higher education (Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019; Luthans et al., 2006b; Luthans & Avolio, 2014; Luthans et al., 2006a; Youssef-Morgan & Dahms, 2017).

The finding of this study indicated an increase in psychological capital levels and flourishing levels from pre-test to post-test in both experimental and control groups. This is contrary to the quasi-experiment body of literature, which indicates that the control group PsyCap does not significantly increase from the pretest – post-test as the experimental group (Alipor et al., 2013; Luthans & Avolio, 2014). More details are discussed in each hypothesis below.

5.2.1. Hypothesis 1

The first part of this hypothesis stated that levels of psychological capital will statistically significantly increase from pre- to post-intervention in the Intervention group but not in the Control group. This part of the hypothesis was rejected. The analysis detected no significant changes between the intervention groups and control groups as both groups showed an increase post-intervention. The increase in both groups is contrary to the quasi-experiment body of literature, which indicates that the control group PsyCap does not significantly increase from the pretest - posttest as the experimental groups (Alipor et al., 2013; Luthans & Avolio, 2014). The increase in psychological capital in the experimental group after the intervention support that psychological capital in an educational environment can be developed through a short online training intervention (Avey et al., 2010a; Gautam et al., 2019; Luthans et al., 2008b).

The second part of this hypothesis stated that the levels of psychological capital will be statistically significantly higher at post-intervention in the Intervention group than in the Control group. This part of the hypothesis was rejected even though the mean score (4.40 (0.67)) for PsyCap in the intervention group, indicates a higher increase in the results of participants than in the control group, but it was not statistically significant. This result is consistent with a study that investigated the impact of a psychological capital intervention on college student well-being, which found no significant group differences in the total psychological well-being scores as a result of the intervention (Bauman, 2014). On the contrary, the present results are inconsistent with a study on the academic PsyCap of business students, which was significantly higher post- intervention compared to the control group (Luthans et al., 2014)

In the present study, the increase in the control group could be attributed to factors such as spillover, response expectation/social desirability, and test-retest (Angelucci & Di Maro, 2016; King & Bruner, 2000; Salinsky et al., 2001). The spillover factor might be because the control group was informed about the research study before participating in the study which might have contributed to them having

increased levels of PsyCap and flourishing (Angelucci & Di Maro, 2016). Additionally, the participant's posttest was conducted after the third term recess. During this time the students would have received their term test results and might have passed, which might have contributed to their increase in PsyCap and flourishing. Another factor that might have contributed would be social desirability, the participants were aware of the purpose of the study, and this might have contributed to them presenting themselves with increased levels of PsyCap and flourishing (King & Bruner, 2000). Lastly, this current study only had two test points which did not test for longer retention (Salinsky et al., 2001).

In future research studies, the control group should not be informed about the purpose of the study. This may mitigate the risk of desiring to present the best state of yourself. The period of conducting the intervention should be done during the first month when first year student have begun their academic year. During this time students are experiencing mixed emotions as they are not certain on what to expect. Moreover, there should be three or more test points to measure the long-term retention of flourishing after a PsyCap intervention.

5.2.2. Hypothesis 2

The first part of Hypothesis 2 stated that levels of flourishing (as indexed by the MHC-SF) will statistically significantly increase from pre- to post-intervention in the Intervention group but not in the Control group. This part of the hypothesis was rejected. Although the analyses detected (pre-intervention, post-intervention) that levels of flourishing after the intervention increased. However, the increase in the intervention group was not found to be statistically significant than the control group. This result is inconsistent with the study on the impact of psychological capital towards flourishing of business school, which found a student who develops their PsyCap will show a significant increase in levels of flourishing (Gautam et al,, 2019). This is supported by studies that investigated the effect of psychological capital on workplace flourishing which showed significant effect of PsyCap on flourishing at the workplace (Afzal et al., 2020; Avey et al., 2010a; Chen et al., 2019).

The second part of this hypothesis stated that the levels of flourishing will be statistically significant higher at post-intervention in the Intervention group than in the Control group. This part of the hypothesis were also rejected even though the mean score for flourishing indicated a higher increase in the results of participants in the intervention group than in the Control group, but it was not statistically significant. This result is consistent with a study that investigated the impact of a psychological capital intervention on college student well-being, which found no significant group differences in total psychological well-being scores as a result of the intervention (Bauman, 2014). Although this is contrary, to a meta-analysis study that investigated positive psychological intervention in effects on

well-being. The results indicated that positive psychological interventions such as psychological capital can effectively enhance of subjective and psychological well-being (Bolier et al., 2013).

5.2.3. Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3, part 1 stated that levels of psychological capital dimensions determine the levels of flourishing both in the Intervention group and in the Control group. This part of the hypothesis was accepted. Both groups were entered into a linear regression to determine the amount of variance explained in flourishing by academic PsyCap. The analysis detected significant findings in both (intervention and control) groups in the post-scores.

This finding supports earlier research that found a substantial significant relationship between greater academic PsyCap intervention activities and higher levels of flourishing (Avey et al., 2010a; Culbertson et al., 2010; Krasikova et al., 2015; Müller et al., 2016; Nafees & Jahan, 2017). Selvaraj and Bhat (2018), found a statistically significant relationship between all PsyCap components and mental health variables in their examination of the relationship and predictions that exist between levels of mental health in college students and psychological capital (PsyCap). This is congruent with Finch et al. (2020) 's study on the association between PsyCap and mental health symptoms and well-being in school-aged adolescents. According to the findings of the study, PsyCap is a strong predictor of increased levels of student flourishing and lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms. A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of psychological capital interventions in improving well-being and performance also discovered a significant relationship (Lupșa et al., 2020).

5.2.4. Hypothesis 4

Part one of this hypothesis stated that in the intervention group, but not in the Control group, there will be a statistically significant positive correlation between pre- to post-intervention changes in psychological capital and pre- to post-intervention changes in flourishing. This part of the hypothesis was rejected. The analysis indicated a significant relationship between APC and MHC in the intervention group as well as a significant correlation for the control group. This result is consistent with a study on PsyCap and well-being which indicated a significant correlation at Time 1 and Time 2 (Avey et al., 2010)

This result is consistent with previous studies describing a strong positive relationship between APC and MHC (Gautam et al., 2019; Nafees & Jahan, 2017; Selvaraj & Bhat, 2018). Although, the results of this study are contrary to many quasi-experiment studies which reveal a significant difference between the scores of the experimental group and control group (Alipor et al., 2013; Avey et al., 2010a; Luthans & Avolio, 2014). In the present study, both the experiment and control groups have indicated an increase

from pre-test to post-test. This is might due to the control group being previously exposed to psychological capital resources and might have started to meditate once they completed the questionnaire from the pretest. Furthermore, they might have inflated their scores on the post-test because it was the second time completing the questionnaire and participants might have not desired to be seen as not improving. Lastly, it is possible that some of the participants from the experimental group shared the PCI process and content with the participants from the control group. This might be a possibility because both groups are from the first-year students cohort

5.3. Reflection on the applied PsyCap Intervention

These results reflect the online micro-intervention conducted in the study and how they align with the existing literature. Firstly, the researcher's experience was that the experimental group may have been more motivated to take part in the intervention due to their emotional needs. At the beginning of the first session of the training with the intervention group, the researcher used a poll to ask how the participants felt. This was to gauge the emotional state of the participants. The results of the poll showed negative emotions from majority of the participants.

Secondly, in the intervention participants were shy and a bit skeptical to share with their peers. This made it difficult for the participants to engage with each other as the nature of this intervention is interactive. This might be due to unfamiliarity with engaging/ interacting in online sessions, which makes it difficult to see the other participants' emotions. The gap created by the lack of face-to-face interactions (as a result of social distancing measures during the Covid-19 pandemic) was visible because many were not able to put their cameras on. Even when the researcher asked participants to switch on their cameras they were willing to switch their cameras on for only a few minutes because of the need for a stronger bandwidth. With that being said, the extroverted participants were able to assist to increase the interaction within the group which worked and other participants started warming up after hearing their peers sharing their own goals, action plans, and psychological resources.

Thirdly, the connectivity was a challenge for such an online-based intervention because home environments were at times disruptive towards participants (e.g., being called by parents or siblings barging into their rooms), load-shedding for other participants, and online/screen fatigue. This made other participants drop off due to these challenges. Lastly, one should consider the influence of the intervention presenter, as the researcher found it difficult to connect with participants' emotional states to create rapport and to easily encourage and identify any participants lagging.

5.4. Recommendations for future interventions

This study sets out to evaluate whether psychological capital intervention can improve the flourishing of first-year students in universities. The above reflection suggests ways in which PsyCap interventions for students in higher institutions of learning might be tailored. Firstly, the participants were familiar with face-to-face teaching and facilitation, but due to covid protocols, all classes and interactions moved online. Hence, the participants were not comfortable with engaging and interacting which reduced peer social support, added perspectives, and encouragement (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). However, considering the nature of the intervention and the participants, it would be best to implement the intervention face-to-face. The intervention's efficacy relies on participants engaging with one another in person and having the intervention online limits this. Studies show that there is a significant difference between face-to-face and online learning, which indicates that in an educational environment, face-to-face is preferable (Sanders, 2006; Wakil et al., 2019).

Secondly, PsyCap development interventions need to be administered in the right environment that promotes positive thinking and replaces deep-seated assumptions or beliefs (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). The researcher had limited control over the environment the participants were in, although in the communication sent to the participants it was mentioned that they should be in a comfortable place that has less to non-interruptions.

Thirdly, the timing or period when the intervention is being implemented should be carefully considered. This intervention is best to be implemented at the beginning of the year when the participants do not have a hectic schedule like classes and tests. Lastly, the evaluation of such a tailored intervention should consider an array of outcome measures rather than solely focusing on the flourishing measure as in the current study. Other previously published psychological capital intervention studies considered, for instance, personal growth initiative (Meyers et al., 2015); meaning-focused coping, satisfaction and academic achievement (Ortega-Maldonado & Salanova, 2018); academic press and student engagement (Fati et al., 2019) and performance (Avey et al., 2010).

While a clear direction for future research would be to replicate such a tailored psychological capital intervention because of the critical nature for such intervention to be transferable. Thus, a great opportunity for future research should be to find out the 'active ingredients' of such an intervention and identify unnecessary elements in the design to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the intervention.

5.5. Recommendation for future research

These are some further research directions that may be applied to some of the gaps in the current study:

a. The sampling method should not be convenient sampling, but rather apply random sampling to increase population representation. In the case of this study, there were more females than males, and although this did not show any significance, there was a significant difference in the type of school.

b. Consider assessing the participants three times (before, immediately after PCI completion, and 4-6 weeks after PCI completion) than two times (before and 4 weeks after PCI completion) as in the current study. This can assist to evaluate the durability of the intervention.

c. Extend the follow-up period. Adding a 6-month and a 1-year follow-up measurement point, for example. This would allow for more plausible answers to issues concerning the long-term viability of the intervention's influence.

5.6. Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study must be considered in light of the methodological framework and other limitations listed below. Despite the fact that the five limitations provided do not significantly weaken the results presented in chapter four, they provide a guiding principle for future research initiatives that should be considered in improving the trustworthiness of a similar result-based psychological capital intervention research. The first constraint of this study was the size and character of the sample, as well as whether the sample was large enough to allow the results to be generalised.

Although the sample size for this study was enough for an appropriate inferential analysis, a higher N would have allowed the researcher to draw a more firm conclusion. Furthermore, because all participants came from the same university, there may be questions regarding whether and why the findings should (or should not) be generalized to other South African universities.

Secondly, a limitation to be considered is the way data was collected. The data for this study were collected through the same self-report questionnaire at observation points 1 and 2, which enabled influences of social desirability and experimenter demand effect. However, using the same self-report questionnaire ensured test-retest reliability.

A third limitation to be considered is that participants had to volunteer, this might be a concern because the participants that volunteered might not be a true reflection of the population. This is supported by a study on the impact of voluntary sampling on estimates, which reveals that voluntary sampling may not represent the population as it is based on the subjective bias of participants (Tiit, 2021). This could impact the trustworthiness of the results. A fourth limitation was the similarity of the data collection method to the online learning method which some of the students already struggled to cope with. A fifth

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limitation to consider is that the current study ooked at the potential positive effects of PsyCap interventions (i.e., enhancing flourishing), while not considering other extraneous factors.

5.7. Conclusion

The overarching goal of this quasi-experimental study was to see if a psychological capital intervention might increase the flourishing of first-year students at a particular university in the Western Cape. This chapter presented a broad overview of the study outcomes, including a critical analysis of the intervention used with participants, as well as guiding principles for future research endeavours and limitations of the study that limited the extent of inferences drawn from the findings.

In conclusion, the outcomes of this study imply that students who attend a positive psychological resource workshop would have an improvement in their levels of thriving, even if the rise was not significant in this study when compared to students who did not attend a workshop. Nevertheless, the levels of the flourishing of the students who participated in the workshop were slightly higher than those who did not attend the workshop. As much as there is a lot of literature that supports the relationship between PsyCap and flourishing, more quasi-experimental research is needed to compare the results of the experimental group with the control groups, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the PsyCap intervention toward improving flourishing in different environments. Furthermore, more research is needed to clarify the precise processes by which the PsyCap intervention works, the intervention employed in this study shows the potential to enhance the flourishing of first-year students in a higher education environment.

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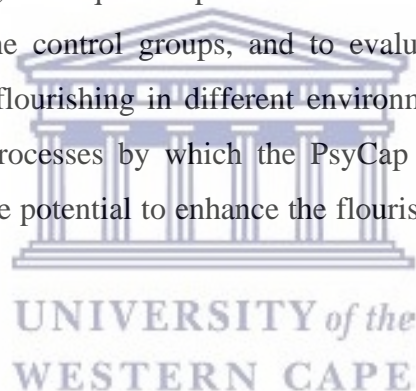
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Appendixes

Appendix A: Biographical Information

Instruction(s): Please answer the following questions. Where applicable, mark the appropriate response with a cross (X).

1. Age: _____

2. Please indicate your gender

1. Male	
2. Female	

3. Please indicate your ethnic group

1. Black (African)	
2. Coloured	
3. White	
4. Indian	
5. Other (specify)	

4. Please indicate your Provinciality you matriculated in?

1. Western Cape	
2. Northern Cape	
3. KwaZulu Natal	
4. Eastern Cape	
5. Mpumalanga	
6. North West	
7. Gauteng	
8. Free State	
9. Limpopo	
10. Other	

4. Please indicate your Degree you studying

_____

5. Please indicate whether you are a full-time or part-time student

1. Full-time	
2. Part-time	

6. Please indicate the type of School you come from?

1. Public	

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2. Private	

Appendix B: Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire

Instructions: Below are statements that describe how you may think about yourself **right now**. Usethe following scale to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Agree 5		Strongly Agree 6			
1. I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution.				1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I feel confident in representing my performance in meetings with instructors/faculty.				1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I feel confident contributing to discussions during class instruction.				1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I feel confident setting targets/goals on my schoolwork.				1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I feel confident contacting people outside the class (e.g., other instructors, mentors, seniors) to discuss problems.				1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I feel confident sharing information with a group of students about my schoolwork.				1	2	3	4	5	6
7. If I should find myself in a jam about my schoolwork, I could think of many ways to get out of it.				1	2	3	4	5	6
8. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my academic goals.				1	2	3	4	5	6
9. There are lots of ways around any problem concerning my schoolwork.				1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Right now I see myself as being pretty successful concerning my schoolwork.				1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I can think of many ways to reach my current academic goals.				1	2	3	4	5	6
12. At this time, I am meeting the goals that I have set for myself concerning my schoolwork.				1	2	3	4	5	6
13. When I have a setback in my schoolwork, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on.				1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I usually manage difficulties one way or another concerning my schoolwork.				1	2	3	4	5	6
15. If I have to, I can be "on my own," so to speak, if I have to regarding my schoolwork.				1	2	3	4	5	6

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16. I usually take stressful things in stride with regard to my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I can get through difficult times at school because I've experienced difficulty before concerning my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I feel I can handle many things at a time with my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. When things are uncertain for me with regards to my schoolwork, I usually expect the best.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. If something can go wrong for me with my schoolwork, it will.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I always look on the bright side of things regarding my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. With regard to my schoolwork, things never work out the way I want them to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I approach my schoolwork as if "every cloud has a silver lining."	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix C: Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF

Please answer the following questions are about how you have been feeling during the pastmonth. Place a check mark in the box that best represents how often you have experienced or felt the following:

During the past month, how often did you feel …	Never	Once or twice	About once a week	About 2 or 3 times a week	Almost every day	Everyday
1. happy						
2. interested in life						
3. satisfied with life						
4. that you had something important to contribute to society						
5. that you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)						
6. that our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people						
7. that people are basically good						

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8. that the way our society works makes sense to you					
9. that you liked most parts of your personality					
10. good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life					
11. that you had warm and trusting relationships with others					
12. that you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person					
13. confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions					
14. that your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it					

-END OF SURVEY-

UNIVERSITY of the
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Appendix D: PsyCap intervention for first year students

Psychological Capital Intervention (PCI)

Increasing levels of psychological, emotional, and social well-being

Participants Example Guide

This is a guide that you must use for guidance or refer when you confused or feel stuck.

Name, Surname & Student Number

Thina Van Merwe 3473026

Degree enrolled for:

Bcom Degree

Date of completed

20 March 2021

Introduction

Welcome to the online PCI intervention.

This training is centred in a goal-oriented framework which is involves on goal design, pathway generation and overcoming obstacles. There are four session/ exercises that you will go through, each session is designed to improve your levels of emotional, psychology and social wellbeing. The invention will take you about two/ three hours to complete. It is recommended that you watch all the videos before attempting to fill in the workbook.

The Psychological Capital Intervention is designed from the theoretical framework of Psychological Capital also abbreviated as PsyCap, PsyCap goes beyond human ('what you know') and social ('who you know') capital, and is more directly concerned with 'who you are' and more importantly 'who you are becoming' (i.e., developing one's actual self to become the possible self).

The training focuses on all the personal strengths that you already possess, as well as consider how you can utilise these qualities to reach your goals and deal with the challenges that you are experiencing.

This workbook should be used throughout your PCI intervention as it will serve as a reminder of:

- the action steps and commitments that you agreed
- the most important insights you gained throughout this intervention

Session 1: Hope Exercise

Focus of this session:

- ✓ To identify personally valuable goals that they will use throughout the session
- ✓ To start thinking of ways to reach identified goals
- ✓ To identify what will keep you dedicated and committed to your goals

Academic Goal	
My Goal is	I want to graduate in record time for my BCom degree
My target date is	23 December 2022
Create pathways - To reach my goal, I will do these 3 things.	1. I need to pass all my modules each year 2. I need to attend all my class periods this year 3. I will create a timetable that will help have a routine
What are some of obstacles do you foresee?	1. Failing my test/ exam
List two things that will help stick to my goals	1. I will think of my parents and how I want to make them proud. 2. I will think of the life I want and not achieving my goal will not give that life.
I will know I have reached my Goal because	I will know when I receive my results via student portal

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Social Goal	
My Goal is	I want to be involved in a youth development initiative on campus.
My target date is	December 2021
Create pathways - To reach my goal, I will do these 3 things.	1. I must start applying for programme before close academic year 2. I will visit the university website to find out about youth programmes 3. I must be a class representative in one my modules next year
What are some of obstacles do you foresee?	1. Failing to get in the organisations that do youth Development
List two things that will help stick to my goals	1. I want to build my soft skills, being involved in these programmes will help me improve my soft skills 2. The passion for improving people's lives.
I will know I have reached my Goal because	When someone tells me, "I am a better person because of you."

Financial Goal	
My Goal is	I want to save R5000 for my work clothes when i complete my academic course
My target date is	January 2023
Create pathways - To reach my goal, I will do these 3 things.	1. I will open a savings fixed saving account this year 2. I will save 10 % of my monthly allowance 3. Budget every Month
What are some of obstacles do you foresee?	1. Inability to secure a part time job.
List two things that will help stick to my goals	1. Seeing my money growth 2. Thinking of the first impression I want to make in interviews
I will know I have reached my Goal because	When I have formal clothes for work

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Physical Goal	
My Goal is	I want to build muscle and be fit
My target date is	23 December 2022
Create pathways - To reach my goal, I will do these 3 things.	1. I will create a weekly training programme 2. I will create an weekly eating plan 3. I will join a gym
What are some of obstacles do you foresee?	1. Lack of time management
List two things that will help stick to my goals	1. seeing fat 2. Not fitting in my clothes
I will know I have reached my Goal because	When I see a six pack with toned muscle

Psychological Goal	
My Goal is	I want a flourishing life each year
My target date is	December 2020
Create pathways - To reach my goal, I will do these 3 things. (Action steps)	1. I will practise self-care each day by doing by reflecting on positive things in my life 2. I will take myself out every month 3. I will maintain good relationships
What are some of obstacles do you foresee?	1. Too much workload as I like to take more than I can handle.
List two things that will help stick to my goals	1. My Peace 2. My belief
I will know I have reached my Goal because	Being in a state of flourishing

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Session 2: Optimism Exercise

Focus of the session:

- ✓ To development generally positive expectations
- ✓ To build confident that to be able to identify and plan to overcome obstacles
- ✓ Promote optimistic explanatory style

Positive emotions Examples

Adored	Dynamic	Graceful	Noble	Spectacular
Alive	Eager	Gracious	Open	Strong
Amazing	Easy	Grateful	Optimistic	Tender
Appreciated	Empowered	Happy	Opulent	Terrific
Appreciative	Energized	Harmonious	Passionate	Thrilled
Awesome	Enlightened	Hopeful	Peaceful	Tranquil
Blissful	Enthusiastic	Inspired	Playful	Trusting
Bold	Excited	Invigorated	Positive	Unlimited
Brig	Exhilarated	Irresistible	Powerful	Uplifted
Brilliant	Expanded	Jazzed	Precious	Valuable
Calm	Exquisite	Joyful	Proud	Vibrant
Cheerful	Extraordinary	Joyous	Quiet	Vivacious
Cherished	Exuberant	Jubilant	Radiant	Warm
Clear	Fabulous	Juicy	Ready	Welcomed
Comfortable	Flowing	Kind	Receptive	Whole
Confident	Focused	Light	Refreshed	Wise
Content	Free	Lovable	Relaxed	Wonderful
Courageous	Focused	Loving	Relieved	Worthy
Creative	Free	Luxurious	Renewed	Yummy
Decisive	Frisky	Magical	Resilient	Zestful
Delicious	Fun	Magnificent	Satisfied	
Delightful	Glorious	Marvelous	Sensational	
Divine	Glowing	Miraculous	Serene	

.

Think of your best possible self or a proud moment of your achievement. Choose three emotions from the above list that you felt and describe how you felt?

List three emotions of best possible self or a proud moment of your achievement?	1. Appreciated 2. Free 3. Strong
Write down describing the proud moment of your achievement (What was the situation, what were you action and what was the outcome)	1. Situation: In grade 11, I was the top achieve in my school. This made me feel strong and so proud of myself. The teachers of the school made me feel appreciated. 2. My Action: I created a time table which I followed, I used to study during break time, After school I stayed behind to finish up my homework and practice some of the new learnings I learnt on the day. I sacrificed sleep and I use to help other learners with their work. This made me to understand more my schoolwork. 3. Outcome: I passed with distinctions and I received the top achiever at school.

Now refer to the personal goals you mention in the hope Exercise, for each goal, describe how you will feel when you reach the goal.

Goal (mention which type of goal it is)	Academic Goal: I want to graduate in record time for my BCom degree
List some of the emotions you will feel when you reach this goal?	1. Proud 2. Grateful 3. Joyful

Goal (mention which type of goal it is)	Financial Goal: I want to save R5000 for my work clothes when i complete my academic course
List some of the emotions you will feel when you reach this goal?	1. Confident 2. Hopeful 3. Refreshed

Session 3: Self-efficacy Exercise

Focus for this session:

- ✓ Mastery experiences or performance attainments
- ✓ To create stepwise techniques or pathways
- ✓ To identify personal Assets

Example:

Goal (mention which type of goal it is)	Academic Goal: I want to graduate in record time for my BCom degree
Identify more pathways (by either googling possible pathways to reach you Goal).	1. I need to pass all my modules each year 2. I need to attend all my class periods this year 3. I will create a timetable that will help have a routine 4. Take a course that you are truly interested in - 5. Always start earlier than you actually need to - Even if you have months left to complete an assignment, or to start studying for an exam, do a little bit of the work as soon as possible. 6. Don't waste time - Concentrate on the quality of the time that you spend on your studies, rather than the duration. 7. Work when I am most active - Try to find your most energised time of day and use it to study. For some, waking up early to study before work is a great option, as the mind feels rested and refreshed 8. Attend Consultation times of my lecturer and tutors 9. Own prescribed books for my modules. 10. Get an organisation that will fund my studies.
Inventory Pathways - Look at the pathway realistically and decide on those that can be pursued	1. Pass all my modules each year 2. Attend all my class periods this year 3. Always start earlier studying and completing my assignments. 4. Attend Consultation times of my lecturer and tutors 5. Own prescribed books for my modules. 6. Work when I am most active 7. Get an organisation that will fund my studies
Identify Personal Resources (What skills or resources can I leverage? / Can I efficiently obtain the skills needed? / What personal networks or initiatives that the university has available to help me respond effectively to this adverse situation?)	1. I am able to work under pressure 2. If I cannot buy a prescribed book, I can borrow from the university library. 3. The university has 24/7 study zone I can use at my convenience. 4. I can start a study group with my classmates. 5. I can use past papers to prepare for exams. 6. There consultation times to reach tutors and lecturers.

Instruction for creating you own diagram:

Take the goals that you are working on and create a diagram of those goals

- The diagram should include the steps along the path to your goals so that you have an aid with which to visualize your goal pursuit.
- The diagram may contain more than one path to your goal, or it may focus on the main path to your goal.
- Be creative!!
- Make a list (inventory) of the major skills/resources that you will need to use your pathway. This may include additional goals.

Example

Current position

Pass all my modules each year

Attend all my class periods this year

Always start earlier studying and completing my

Attend Consultation times of my lecturer and tutors

Own prescribed books for my modules

Work when I am most active

Get an organisation that will fund my studies

Academic Goal: I want to graduate in record time for my BCom degree

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Session 4: Resilience Exercise

Focus of this session:

- ✓ What obstacles or weaknesses could I face in carrying out the actions to reach my goals?
- ✓ How can I deal with obstacles or weakness to ensure that I reach my goals nonetheless?

Think of Obstacles (Internal and External Challenges), identify some of the obstacles that might hinder your progress. For each goal, identify possible obstacles and create plans to overcome those obstacles using the sentence construction exercise below

Please complete the sentence by adding your own scenario. Replace A, B and C with your own examples.

Example

If I fail a test/ exam, **then I will** inquire to the lecturer why I failed and take notes on what I did wrong.

Goal (mention which type of goal it is)	I want to graduate in record time for my BCom degree
If (List any obstacles / weaknesses that could prevent you from carrying out the actions needed to reach your goals.)	I failing a test/ exam Happens
then I will	inquire to the lecturer why I failed and take notes on what I did wrong.

INFORMATION LETTER TO INTERVENTION GROUP

Thesis Title: Evaluation of a psychological capital intervention aimed at improving flourishing of first year students at a selected University in the WesternCape.

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Siyamthanda Ntlahla inpartial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Commercii in the Department of Industrial Psychology, at the University of the Western Cape.

The purpose of this research study is to determine whether a Psychological Capital canbe used as an intervention to improve flourishing of first year students in a selected university.

As a participant you will be exposed to a Psychological Capital Intervention consisting of goal-oriented framework that includes goal design, pathway generation, and overcoming obstacle training session. You will also be required to complete a questionnaire before and after the intervention. The time investment to participate in the training intervention will be 4 hours. Completion of the questionnaire will take 30 minutes prior to the intervention, and 30 minutes after completion of the intervention.

All participants will be required to complete a consent form on the day of the intervention. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any point by making contact with the researcher. Participants' responses will remain strictly confidential and anonymous.

There are no known risks to participating in this study. Should the need arise, thestudy supervisors (of which one is a registered psychologists) will be available on-site to assist with the necessary debriefing. The training intervention and feedback session will be conducted by the researcher/facilitator with a background in Industrial Psychology.

This study received ethical clearance from the Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape (E-mail: research- ethics@uwc.ac.za). If you have any questions or would like additional information about the study, please feel free to contact the following individuals:

Researcher: Siyamthanda NtlahlaE-
mail: 3473026@myuwc.ac.za Contact
number: 078 466 0496

Supervisors: Dr. Marieta Du Plessis & Dr. Tolu Balogun E-mail:
mduplessis@uwc.ac.za & tvbalogun@uwc.ac.zaContact
number: 021 959 3184
Head of Department (Industrial Psychology): Prof Bright
Mahembe E-mail: bmahembe@uwc.ac.za
Contact number: 021 959 2184

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

INFORMATION LETTER TO CONTROL GROUP

Thesis Title: Evaluation of a psychological capital intervention aimed at improving flourishing of first year students at a selected University in the Western Cape.

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Siyamthanda Ntlahla inpartial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Commercii in the Department of Industrial Psychology, at the University of the Western Cape.

The purpose of this research study is to determine whether a Psychological Capital canbe used as an intervention to improve flourishing of first year students in a selected university.

You have been assigned to the control group for the study. As a participant, you will beexposed to a questionnaire process at two points in time. Participants will be required to complete a consent form together with the first questionnaire. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any point by making contact with the researcher. Participants' responses will remain strictly confidential and anonymous. There are no known risks to participating in this study. Should the need arise, the study supervisors (of which one is a registered psychologists) will be available on-site to assist with the necessary debriefing.

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Head of Department (Industrial Psychology): Prof Bright MahembeE-mail: bmahembe@uwc.ac.za

Contact number: 021 959 2184

Human and Social Sciences Ethics Committee of the University of the WesternCape

Care of: Research and Development, UWC
Tel: 021 959 2988 research-ethics.uwc.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

Thesis Title: Evaluation of a psychological capital intervention aimed at improving flourishing of first year students at a selected University in the Western Cape.

The study has been explained to me in a language that I can comprehend. I am aware of what my participation will involve and I agree to participate freely and voluntarily.I also understand that my information will remain strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to any third party. Furthermore, I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequence orloss of benefits.

By signing below, I am indicating my consent to participate in this research study.Name of

respondent (optional): _____

Signature of respondent: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions or would like additional information about the study, pleasefeel free to contact the following individuals:

Researcher: Siyamthanda NtlahlaE-mail: 3473026@myuwc.ac.za Contact number: 078 466 0496

Supervisors: Dr. Marieta Du Plessis & Dr. Tolu BalogunE-mail: mduplessis@uwc.ac.za & tvbalogun@uwc.ac.zaContact number: 021 959 3184

Head of Department (Industrial Psychology): Prof Bright MahembeE-mail: bmahembe@uwc.ac.za

Contact number: 021 959 2184

Human and Social Sciences Ethics Committee of the University of the WesternCape

Care of: Research and Development, UWC Tel: 021 959 2988 research-ethics.u

Appendix H: Psychological Capital Intervention: Training workshop presentation slides

OBJECTIVE OF THE INTERVENTION

- To gain insight in the evaluation of a psychological capital intervention aimed at improving flourishing of first year students.

AGENDA

Hope Exercise

Optimism Exercise

Self Efficacy Exercise

Resilience Exercise

EXERCISE TO COMPLETE

Hope Exercise

Optimism Exercise

Efficacy Exercise

Resilience Exercise

Click licks below to understand the objective of the Hope exercise

HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=ZUHZHI1B4T4&T=165S
HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=MT0SQ8MVAU4

TYPE OF GOALS TO CONSIDER

- Academic Goals
- Psychological Goals
- Social Goals
- Spiritual Goals
- Relationship Goals
- Physical/Health Goals

THINK ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL GOAL WHILE IN UNIVERSITY FOR THE NEXT 2-3 YEARS.

THINK ABOUT WHY YOU WANT YOU WANT ACHIEVE THESE GOALS?
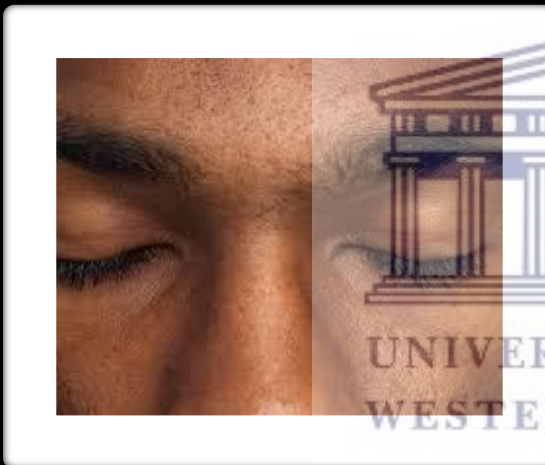
IMAGINE HOW YOU WILL FEEL IF YOU ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS?

Academic Goal

My Goal is	
My target date is	
Create pathways - To reach my goal, I will do these 3 things.	
What are some of obstacles do you foresee?	
List two things that will help stick to my goals	
I will know I have reached my Goal because	

Academic Goal

My Goal is	I want to graduate in record time for my BCom degree
My target date is	23 December 2022
Create pathways - To reach my goal, I will do these 3 things.	1. I need to pass all my modules each year 2. I need to attend all my class periods this year 3. I will create a timetable that will help have a routine
What are some of obstacles do you foresee?	1. Failing my test/ exam
List two things that will help stick to my goals	1. I will think of my parents and how I want to make them proud. 2. I will think of the life I want and not achieving my goal will not give that life.
I will know I have reached my Goal because	I will know when I receive my results via student portal

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PROGRESS

Hope Exercise

Optimism Exercise

Efficacy Exercise

Resilience Exercise

OPTIMISM EXERCISE

Click licks below to understand the objective of the Optimism exercise

1. Learned Optimism by Martin Seligman - Animation – YouTube
2. The Power of Optimism- YouTube
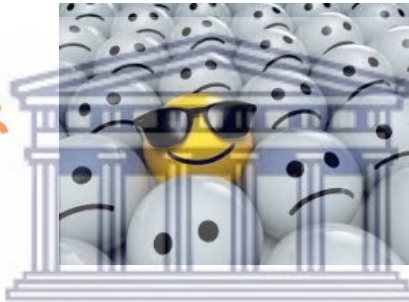
Positive emotions

Think of your best possible self or a proud moment of your achievement.

Choose three emotions from the above list that you felt and describe how you felt?

Adored	Dynamic	Graceful	Noble	Spectacular
Alive	Eager	Gracious	Open	Strong
Amazing	Easy	Grateful	Optimistic	Tender
Appreciated	Empowered	Happy	Opulent	Terrific
Appreciative	Energized	Harmonious	Passionate	Thrilled
Awesome	Enlightened	Hopeful	Peaceful	Tranquil
Blissful	Enlightened	Inspired	Playful	Trusting
Bold	Excited	Invigorated	Positive	Unlimited
Brig	Exhilarated	Irresistible	Powerful	Uplifted
Brilliant	Expanded	Jazzed	Precious	Valuable
Calm	Exquisite	Joyful	Proud	Vibrant
Cheerful	Extraordinary	Joyous	Quiet	Vivacious
Cherished	Exuberant	Jubilant	Radiant	Warm
Clear	Fabulous	Juicy	Ready	Welcomed
Comfortable	Flowing	Kind	Receptive	Whole
Confident	Focused	Light	Refreshed	Wise
Content	Free	Lovable	Relaxed	Wonderful
Courageous	Focused	Loving	Relieved	Worthy
Creative	Free	Luxurious	Renewed	Yummy
Decisive	Frisky	Magical	Resilient	Zestful
Delicious	Fun	Magnificent	Satisfied	
Delightful	Glorious	Marvelous	Sensational	
Divine	Glowing	Miraculous	Serene	

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PRACTICAL EXAMPLE TEMPLATE

List three emotion of best possible self or a proud moment of your achievement?	**1.** **2.** **3.**
Write down describing the proud moment of your achievement (What was the situation, what were you action and what was the outcome)	**Situation:**
	My Action:
	Outcome:

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

List three emotion of best possible self or a proud moment of your achievement?	1. Appreciated 2. Free 3. Strong
Write down describing the proud moment of your achievement (What was the situation, what were you action and what was the outcome)	1. **Situation:** In grade 11, I was the top achieve in my school. This made me feel strong and so proud of myself. The teachers of the school made me feel appreciated. 2. **My Action**: I created a time table which I followed, I used to study during break time, After school I stayed behind to finish up my homework and practice some of the new learnings I learnt on the day. I sacrificed sleep and I use to help other learners with their work. This made me to understand more my schoolwork. 3. **Outcome:** I passed with distinctions and I received the top achiever at school.

FOR EACH GOAL, DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL FEEL WHEN YOU REACH THE GOAL

Goal (mention which type of goal it is)	Academic Goal: I want to graduate in record time for my BCom degree
List some of the emotions you will feel when you reach this goal?	1. Proud 2. Grateful 3. Joyful

Goal (mention which type of goal it is)	Financial Goal: I want to save R5000 for my work clothes when I complete my academic course
List some of the emotions you will feel when you reach this goal?	1. Confident 2. Hopeful 3. Refreshed

Click licks below to understand the objective of the Self efficacy exercise

1. (45) Self Efficacy - YouTube
2. (45) Importance of Self-Efficacy - YouTube

SOME OF THE THINGS TO CONSIDER?

Identify Pathways
- Identify possible ways to reach each of the goals

Inventory Pathways
- Look at the pathway realistically and decide if it can be pursued
- Look at the resources available to reach the goals

Visualize Pathways
- Draw up pathways that will lead you to reach your goals

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE TEMPLATE

Goal (mention which type of goal it is)	
Identify more pathways by googling possible pathways to reach you Goal.	
Inventory Pathways - Look at the pathway realistically and decide on those that can be pursued	
Identify Personal Resources (What skills or resources can I leverage? / Can I efficiently obtain the skills needed? / What personal networks or initiatives that the university has available to help me respond effectively to this adverse situation?)	

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE TEMPLATE

Goal (mention which type of goal it is)	Academic Goal: I want to graduate in record time for my BCom degree
Identify more pathways by googling possible pathways to reach you Goal.	1. I need to pass all my modules each year 2. I need to attend all my class periods this year 3. I will create a timetable that will help have a routine 4. Take a course that you are truly interested in - 5. Always start earlier than you actually need to - Even if you have months left to complete an assignment, or to start studying for an exam, do a little bit of the work as soon as possible. 6. Don't waste time - Concentrate on the quality of the time that you spend on your studies, rather than the duration. 7. Work when I am most active - Try to find your most energised time of day and use it to study. For some, waking up early to study before work is a great option, as the mind feels rested and refreshed 8. Attend Consultation times of my lecturer and tutors 9. Own prescribed books for my modules. 10. Get an organisation that will fund my studies.
Inventory Pathways - Look at the pathway realistically and decide on those that can be pursued	1. Pass all my modules each year 2. Attend all my class periods this year 3. Always start earlier studying and completing my assignments. 4. Attend Consultation times of my lecturer and tutors 5. Own prescribed books for my modules. 6. Work when I am most active 7. Get an organisation that will fund my studies
Identify Personal Resources (What skills or resources can I leverage? / Can I efficiently obtain the skills needed? / What personal networks or initiatives that the university has available to help me respond effectively to this adverse situation?)	1. I am able to work under pressure 2. If I cannot buy a prescribed book, I can borrow from the university library. 3. The university has 24/7 study zone I can use at my convenience. 4. I can start a study group with my classmates. 5. I can use past papers to prepare for exams. 6. There consultation times to reach tutors and lecturers.

YOU HAVE 10 MINUTES TO DO THE HOPE EXERCISE
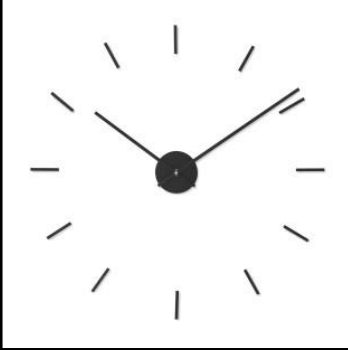
Please do not move to the next slide if you have not finished the exercise!

UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

SELF-EFFICACY
EXERCISE
COMPLETED

PROGRESS

Hope Exercise

Optimism
Exercise

Self-efficacy
Exercise

Resilience
Exercise

Click licks below to understand the objective of the Resilience exercise

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7OF5_rT6tQw
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wcf5b3mENJU

THINK OF OBSTACLES (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES), IDENTIFY SOME OF THE OBSTACLES THAT MIGHT HINDER YOUR PROGRESS.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE TEMPLATE

For each goal, identify possible obstacles and create plans to overcome those obstacles using the sentence construction exercise below
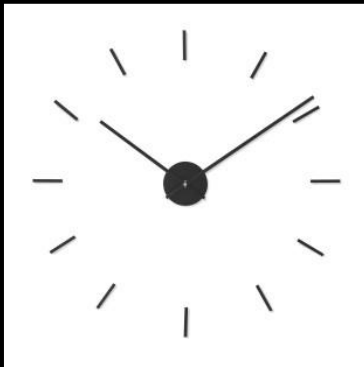
Goal	I want to graduate in record time for myBCom degree
If (List any obstacles / weaknesses that could prevent you from carrying out the actions needed to reach your goals.)	
then I will	

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE TEMPLATE

For each goal, identify possible obstacles and create plans to overcome those obstacles using the sentence construction exercise below

Goal	I want to graduate in record time for myBCom degree
If (List any obstacles / weaknesses that could prevent you from carrying out the actions needed to reach your goals.)	I failing a test / exam
then I will	inquire to the lecturer why I failed and take notes on what I did wrong.