

Authentic Leadership and its Relationship with Psychological Capital in Educational Institutions

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of authentic leadership among school leaders and its effect on the psychological capital of school personnel in public and private schools in the United States. The responses of the 498 participants surveyed indicated a significant positive relationship between authentic leadership and psychological capital. Higher levels of authentic leadership, as evidenced by self-awareness, balanced decision-making, an internalized moral perspective, and honest interactions, were associated with increased psychological capital among staff members, including self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and hope. These findings highlight the critical role of authentic leadership in creating a psychologically supportive climate within educational institutions, ultimately enhancing staff morale and performance.

Key words: authentic leadership, psychological capital, educational leadership, organizational culture.

Introduction

Authenticity has become a key paradigm in leadership, emphasizing the qualities and characteristics necessary for successful leadership. Moreover, the shaping of future leaders in educational institutions depends on leadership, highlighting the significance of this crucial quality. Authentic leadership (AL) is characterized by a multifaceted approach including self-awareness, honesty, moral integrity, and relationship transparency, which demonstrates how a leader's behavior and fundamental principles relate to each other (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Avolio et. al., 2006; George, 2003). Employees demonstrate engagement and trust in their leaders within the educational sector, characterized by numerous stakeholders and complex challenges. Furthermore, authentic leadership is important for achieving positive outcomes and influencing organizational culture.

Leadership plays a role in educational settings by creating an atmosphere that nurtures development, fostering innovation and academic success. A recent focus has been on leadership marked by being genuine, transparent, and ethical conduct (Aldawsari, 2020). Positive characteristics like optimism and resilience determine organizational success and employee happiness (Beheshtifar, 2013; Herbert, 2011; Joo & Lee, 2017; Kim et. al., 2017; Omar et. al., 2019; Şen et. al., 2017; Taştan et. al., 2020). Studies have highlighted the significance of psychological capital (PsyCap) in achieving these outcomes (Gupta et al., 2019; Herbert 2011; Little et al., 2007; Mathews 2022; Mikus et al., 2022; Owais et al., 2023; Rao et al., 2020). PsyCap brings a layer of complexity to this area, providing a paradigm for cultivating opportunities for achieving success with its psychological resources of optimism, hope, efficacy, and resilience. PsyCap organizational changes, academic stress, and personal goals are experienced by a variety of groups within the framework of educational institutions including teachers, staff, and students. Also, the development of PsyCap is required in educational settings to maintain individual well-being and promote efficiency within organizations.

The main goal of this research was to explore the complex connection between PsyCap and authentic leadership within educational settings, particularly how leadership practices in institutions impact individuals' psychological well-being and performance. Avolio and Gardner (2005) highlight the significance of leaders being self-aware and transparent in relationships, with a perspective and balanced thinking to build trust and commitment through authentic leadership. Organizational culture plays a significant role in fostering upcoming leaders and nurturing intellectual assets, with positive psychological resources greatly impacting individuals' resilience adaptability and overall well-being

(Luthans et al., 2007). The growth of resources is crucial for promoting success and well-being in the educational setting which presents a range of obstacles for teachers, staff, and students to navigate. Therefore, this study sought to connect capital and authentic leadership in educational environments, specifically showing how authentic leadership behaviors and the growth and preservation of psychological capital in the realm of education are related.

Literature Review

Authentic leadership (AL) is a method of management rooted in values such as integrity and transparency while promoting honest and ethical conduct. This style of leadership emphasizes building relationships and cultivating a work atmosphere that encourages trust and teamwork (Gardner et al., 2021; Crawford et al., 2020; Corriveau, 2020). Psychological capital (PsyCap) pertains to the psychological qualities or assets individuals have which stem from resilience self-efficacy hope and optimism (Vilarino & Lopez Zafra, 2022). There is extensive research on AL and PsyCap in education, so this literature review evaluated such studies and the interrelationship between these concepts in the context of education.

AL is particularly beneficial in academic settings, positively impacting students' psychological safety and academic performance (Soares & Lopes, 2020), as well as teacher engagement (Alazmi & Al-Mahdy, 2022). Alkadash (2020) analyzed the connection between this leadership philosophy, organizational commitment, and talent turnover in higher education institutions, indicating a significant positive correlation between AL and talent turnover. Several studies indicate that AL is essential for promoting innovation, collaboration, and trust (Gardner et al., 2021; Gelaidan et al., 2023; Sengupta et al., 2023; Arshad et al., 2024). Students and faculty members perceive leaders who demonstrate authenticity as trustworthy and honest; these characteristics fundamentally foster engagement and lead to success. Furthermore, AL fosters positive organizational outcomes including decreased turnover, enhanced organizational commitment, and increased satisfaction (Alkadash, 2020; Gelaidan et al., 2023; Sengupta et al., 2023).

AL also offers considerable organizational benefits but there are contrasting perspectives in the literature. Einola and Alevsson (2021) emphasized that AL produced suboptimal outcomes due to its intrinsic limitations, contending that AL theory impedes academic integrity, creates identity challenges within academia, and presents misleading assurances to organizations. Furthermore, leaders who engage in this practice frequently struggle to maintain a balance between authority and openness (Einola & Alevsson, 2021). These disadvantages result in difficulties in maintaining boundaries in professional settings, with AL further complicating the balance between connection and professionalism (Gardner et al., 2021; Einola & Alevsson, 2021) and arise from the flawed premises upon which AL theory is founded.

PsyCap has achieved significant attention in academic institutions over the past few decades and is a fundamental element in the success of both students and teachers. Nambudiri et al., (2020) examined the influence of PsyCap on academic achievement and personality utilizing a conceptual model, indicating that PsyCap had a positive influence on academic achievement and mediated the relationship between students' personality and educational achievement. Kauffeld and Spurk (2022) examined the significance of this concept in relation to career success, identifying PsyCap as a significant predictor of career success in a cohort of German scientists. Slåtten et al. (2023) demonstrated the applicability of the concept in higher education institutions, as evidenced by social-contextual factors, including peer support and academic support, being associated with students' psychological capital. They showed that how involved students were in their studies played a role in connecting achievement with psychological capital. Consistent with the findings of Nambudiri et al. (2020) and Slåtten et al. (2023), da Costa et al. (2021) emphasized the beneficial influence of PsyCap on student performance grounded in experiential learning and positive psychology principles. The findings indicated that the educational intervention enhanced PsyCap, additionally impacting student's academic performance.

Several researchers have examined the relationship between these two leadership philosophies. Akkakanjanasupar et al. (2022) examine the relationship between these two variables, presenting an

empirical model for establishing causal relationships within educational institutions with PsyCap serving as a mediating variable in the relationship between leadership and academic outcomes; the AL style will similarly impact the student's PsyCap. The study demonstrated the direct and indirect effects of AL on educational institutions mediated by PsyCap. Ali et al., (2022) examined the role of PsyCap as a mediator between leadership and job performance within a higher education context, finding that AL significantly correlates with PsyCap and its dimensions.

AL in conjunction with PsyCap yields significant advantages. Novitasari et al. (2020) demonstrated that these leadership concepts significantly influenced innovativeness, with PsyCap serving as a mediating factor in the relationship with innovative work behavior. Similarly, Supriyadi et al. (2020) examined the impact of these theories on innovative work behavior in lecturers, indicating a significant and positive effect on innovative work behavior among the study respondents. Wirawan et al. (2020) found that PsyCap and AL influence work engagement. Research suggests that both AL and PsyCap foster innovation and boost work engagement.

The literature review identified multiple facets of AL and PsyCap, demonstrating that they provided higher education institutions with benefits including increased innovativeness and enhanced work engagement, and that PsyCap served as a mediator in AL. The literature review identified a gap in research regarding the drawbacks of authentic leadership, so future studies are recommended to address this gap.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions: 1) What is the degree of practicing authentic leadership among principals from the perspective of teachers and administrators?; 2) What is the level of psychological capital among teachers and administrators?; 3) Is there a relationship between authentic leadership and psychological capital among teachers and administrators?

Methodology

This study involved 498 teachers and administrators from both public and private schools from different states in the United States selected by stratified random sampling to ensure representation from different types of schools (public and private) and educational levels. Participants were chosen based on specific criteria, a minimum of one year of teaching experience, and the incorporation of digital tools in their schools. The data were collected by a questionnaire distributed electronically through a survey platform and the participants were allowed six weeks to complete the survey. The participants' confidentiality was maintained to ensure accuracy and objectivity. Participation was explicitly indicated as voluntary with no negative consequences for non-participation or withdrawal.

Results and Discussions

Participants' demographics

The study participants were predominantly female (78.9%) and teachers (90.4%) working in public schools (75.1%). Over half of the participants possessed a master's degree or higher, with 48.6% having 10 or more years of experience (Table 1).

| Variables | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 105 | %21.1 |
| | Female | 393 | %78.9 |
| | Total | 498 | %100.0 |
| Educational qualification | Bachelor's degree or lower | 223 | %44.8 |

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-----|--------|
| | Master's degree or higher | 275 | %55.2 |
| | Total | 498 | %100.0 |
| Job title | teacher | 450 | %90.4 |
| | Administrator | 48 | %9.6 |
| | Total | 498 | %100.0 |
| Type of school | Public | 374 | %75.1 |
| | Private | 124 | %24.9 |
| | Total | 498 | %100.0 |
| Years of experience | Less than 5 years | 117 | %23.5 |
| | 5 to less than 10 years | 139 | %27.9 |
| | 10 years and more | 242 | %48.6 |
| | Total | 498 | %100 |

Table 1: Summary of participants' demographical data (N=498)

Data collection

A questionnaire was created as the principal instrument for data collection as it corresponds with the study's purposes, methodology, and target demographic. The questionnaire sought to evaluate the extent of AL among school leaders in public and private institutions in the United States, as well as its relationship to the PsyCap of teachers and administrators. The questionnaire was structured into three sections: 1) demographics including gender, educational qualifications, job title, type of school, and years of experience; 2) the AL dimensions comprising 20 items organized into four categories, self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, relational transparency; 3) the PsyCap dimensions comprising 20 items across four dimensions: self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and hope. The items were scored using a four-point Likert scale as follows: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The approach employed for understanding the average values entailed determining the range by dividing the difference between the maximum and minimum values of the scale ($4-1=3$) by the maximum value ($4/3 = 0.75$). The minimum value was augmented by this amount to ascertain the range for each degree of the scale, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Four-point Likert scale

| Weighted Mean | | Assessment (Four-point Likert Scale) | Degree of response |
|---------------|------|---|--------------------|
| 3.26 | 4 | I strongly agree | Very high |
| 2.51 | 3.25 | I agree | medium |
| 1.76 | 2.50 | I disagree | low |
| 1 | 1.75 | I strongly disagree | Very low |

The questionnaire validity was assessed through two methods. First, the initial version of the research instrument was distributed to a group of four reviewers including university faculty members specializing in educational administration and pedagogy for assessment of the clarity of the items, their relevance to the field of study, and the appropriateness of the scaling system for measuring each dimension. They

were invited to suggest any additional items deemed significant that were not included in the initial version. An agreement rate of 80% among experts was established as the criterion for evaluating the suitability of each item. Experts' feedback guided the necessary revisions, leading to the creation of the final version of the questionnaire. Additionally, the internal consistency validity was evaluated with a pilot sample of 30 teachers and administrators who were not included in the main study sample. Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed in SPSS to evaluate the relationship between each item and its corresponding dimension (Table 3), as well as the correlation between each dimension and the overall questionnaire score (Table 4). The results demonstrate that all correlation coefficients were statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that all items show strong internal consistency, suggesting that the questionnaire effectively measured the AL and PysCap of school leaders in public and private schools in the United States.

Table 3: The correlation coefficient between each item and the whole field

| No | Coefficient of correlation | No | Coefficient of correlation | No | Coefficient of correlation | No | Coefficient of correlation |
|---|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Dimensions of Authentic Leadership | | | | | | | |
| 1 st Dimension: Self-Awareness | | 2 nd Dimension: Balanced Processing | | 3 rd Dimension: Internal Ethical Perspective | | 4 th Dimension: Transparency in Relationships | |
| | 0.844** | | 0.793** | | 0.884** | | 0.838** |
| | 0.892** | | 0.873** | | 0.881** | | 0.820** |
| | 0.862** | | 0.885** | | 0.807** | | 0.860** |
| | 0.773** | | 0.829** | | 0.909** | | 0.842** |
| | 0.843** | | 0.719** | | 0.873** | | 0.793** |
| Dimensions of the Psychological Capital | | | | | | | |
| 1 st Dimension: Self-Efficacy | | 2 nd Dimension: Optimism | | 3 rd Dimension: Flexibility | | 4 th Dimension: Hope | |
| | 0.716** | | 0.663** | | 0.644** | | 0.755** |
| | 0.761** | | 0.750** | | 0.759** | | 0.781** |
| | 0.737** | | 0.743** | | 0.731** | | 0.773** |
| | 0.685** | | 0.730** | | 0.701** | | 0.794** |
| | 0.744** | | 0.788** | | 0.655** | | 0.778** |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Table 4: The correlation coefficient between each dimension and the total average of the questionnaire items

| Dimensions | Dimensions | Coefficient of correlation | significant |
|---|--|----------------------------|-------------|
| Dimensions of Authentic Leadership | 1 st Dimension: Self-awareness | 0.931** | 0.01 |
| | 2 nd Dimension: Balanced Processing | 0.937** | 0.01 |
| | 3 rd Dimension: Internal Ethical Perspective | 0.947** | 0.01 |
| | 4 th Dimension: Transparency in Relationships | 0.947** | 0.01 |
| Dimensions of the Psychological Capital | 1 st Dimension: Self-Efficacy | 0.855** | 0.01 |
| | 2 nd Dimension: Optimism | 0.868** | 0.01 |
| | 3 rd Dimension: Flexibility | 0.880** | 0.01 |
| | 4 th Dimension: Hope | 0.872** | 0.01 |

Reliability refers to the consistency of responses obtained when the same instrument is administered repeatedly to the same participants. The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha method (Table 5) and the results revealed a substantial degree of reliability for both the AL and PysCap dimensions. The reliability coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.958, signifying a high level of reliability.

Table 5: Cronbach's Alpha

| Dimensions | Dimensions | No. of items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|--|--|--------------|------------------|
| Dimensions of Authentic Leadership | 1 st Dimension: Self-Awareness | 5 | 0.899 |
| | 2 nd Dimension: Balanced processing | 5 | 0.880 |
| | 3 rd Dimension: Internal Ethical Perspective | 5 | 0.920 |
| | 4 th Dimension: Transparency in Relationships | 5 | 0.887 |
| Dimensions of Authentic Leadership | | 20 | 0.969 |
| Dimensions of the Psychological Capital | 1 st Dimension: Self-Efficacy | 5 | 0.767 |
| | 2 nd Dimension: Optimism | 5 | 0.787 |
| | 3 rd Dimension: Flexibility | 5 | 0.718 |
| | 4 th Dimension: Hope | 5 | 0.835 |
| Dimensions of the Psychological Capital | | 20 | 0.920 |
| All Dimensions | | 40 | 0.958 |

Regarding the primary research question, "To what extent is authentic leadership practiced by school principals in the United States, as reflected in the responses of the study sample?", Table 6 presents the overall mean score for the AL dimensions indicating a moderate understanding of AL practices among school principals in the United States. This suggests that school personnel, including teachers and administrators, typically hold a favorable view of this leadership style, particularly regarding the ethical conduct of school leaders. The principals' dedication to ethical values, integrity, and

transparency, combined with their ability to communicate effectively and motivate staff, shaped the moderate overall perception of AL. The ethical dimension highlights the importance of ethical conduct in school leadership positions.

Table 6: Statistical analysis of the responses regarding the authentic leadership dimensions

| Rank | No | Dimensions | No. of items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|------|----|------------------------------------|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 3 | Internal Ethical Perspective | 5 | 3.077 | 0.678 | medium |
| 2 | 2 | Balanced processing | 5 | 3.033 | 0.635 | medium |
| 3 | 1 | Self-Awareness | 5 | 3.009 | 0.645 | medium |
| 4 | 4 | Transparency in Relationships | 5 | 2.974 | 0.671 | medium |
| | | Dimensions of Authentic Leadership | 20 | 3.023 | 0.618 | medium |

Table 7 illustrates the thoughts of teachers and administrators about the implementation of AL by school principals emphasizing self-awareness, demonstrating that most participants perceived the self-awareness practices of school leaders to be moderate. This is attributed to the experience and increased awareness of school administrators together with their capacity to assume responsibility for their actions. This competency enhances their capacity to lead, influence others, and cultivate the abilities of their personnel, thereby favorably affecting the educational process.

Table 7: Statistical analysis of the items related to self-awareness

| Rank | No | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|------|----|--|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 4 | Adjusts his decisions to align with the school's priorities and goals. | 3.12 | 0.712 | medium |
| 2 | 2 | Understands the impact of his actions on others | 3.06 | 0.813 | medium |
| 3 | 1 | Seeks information and feedback to improve interactions with others | 3.04 | 0.781 | medium |
| 4 | 5 | Chooses the right time to revise his stance on important issues | 2.93 | 0.745 | medium |
| 5 | 3 | Perceives how others view his abilities accurately | 2.89 | 0.772 | medium |
| | | Self-Awareness | 3.009 | 0.645 | medium |

Table 8 illustrates the perspectives of teachers and administrators regarding the application of AL by school principals with a focus on "balanced processing". The average score for this dimension was 3.033 out of 4, indicating that most participants perceived the practice of balanced processing by school leaders to occur at a "moderate" level. These findings were attributed to the leadership style of school principals perceived as deficient in decision-making autonomy. Their inquiry represents multiple viewpoints and involves engagement in discussions before reaching a conclusion. Furthermore, their

ability to adapt to the educational environment and involve personnel in decision-making significantly improves their capacity to make rational and informed decisions.

Table 8: Statistical analysis of the items related to balanced processing

| Rank | No | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|----------------------------|----|--|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Analyzes data before making a decision. | 3.19 | 0.748 | medium |
| 2 | 5 | Maintains consistency in his/her stance as long as it aligns with the goals and interests of the school. | 3.06 | 0.691 | medium |
| 3 | 2 | Provides an opportunity for everyone to express their opinions freely. | 3.03 | 0.847 | medium |
| 4 | 3 | Listens to diverse perspectives before reaching a conclusion. | 2.95 | 0.818 | medium |
| 5 | 4 | Engages in discussions with viewpoints that contradict his/her viewpoints. | 2.95 | 0.755 | medium |
| Balanced processing | | | 3.033 | 0.635 | medium |

Table 9 presents the views of teachers and administrators on the practice of AL by school principals focusing on the internal ethical perspective. The mean score for this dimension was 3.0771 out of 4, suggesting that most participants view the implementation of an internal ethical perspective by school leaders as occurring at a "moderate" level. The actions of school leaders are grounded in a strong ethical framework characterized by integrity and transparency. These leaders constantly match their activities with their real ideas and values, demonstrating a distinct and authentic ethical stance in their leadership practices.

Table 9: Statistical analysis of the items related to an internal ethical perspective

| Rank | No | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|------|----|---|------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 3 | Urges us to adhere to positions that uphold our core values. | 3.16 | 0.675 | medium |
| 2 | 2 | Makes significant and challenging decisions based on high ethical standards. | 3.11 | 0.740 | medium |
| 3 | 1 | Demonstrates honesty and objectivity in handling all situations. | 3.07 | 0.823 | medium |
| 4 | 4 | Aligns actions with words, serving as a role model. | 3.06 | 0.810 | medium |
| 5 | 5 | Considers prioritizing employee well-being as a fundamental responsibility and an ethical obligation. | 2.98 | 0.840 | medium |

| Rank | No | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|-------------------------------------|----|-------|--------|----------------|--------------------|
| Internal Ethical Perspective | | | 3.0771 | 67874. | medium |

Table 10 illustrates the perspectives of teachers and administrators regarding the implementation of AL by school principals with a specific emphasis on the dimension of transparency in relationships. This is attributed to the understanding of AL principles by school principals which emphasize transparency in communication, the sharing of ideas, and decision-making based on clear, well-defined rules. Principals recognize the importance of transparent interpersonal relationships and their positive impact on teachers' performance.

Table 10: Statistical analysis of the items related to transparency in relationships

| Rank | No | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|--------------------------------------|----|--|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 5 | Conveys facts to others candidly. | 3.06 | 0.729 | medium |
| 2 | 2 | Communicates clearly and precisely to ensures that messages are understood | 3.01 | 0.786 | medium |
| 3 | 1 | Encourages employees to express their ideas freely. | 3.00 | 0.830 | medium |
| 4 | 3 | Instills confidence in employees to achieve desired outcomes. | 2.95 | 0.819 | medium |
| 5 | 4 | Acknowledges mistakes promptly without hesitation. | 2.86 | 0.871 | medium |
| Transparency in Relationships | | | 2.974 | 0.671 | medium |

The second research question examined the level of PsyCap among teachers and administrators in public and private schools in the United States. Table 11 indicates that the overall mean score for the PysCap dimensions of 3.171 with a standard deviation of 0.376, suggesting a moderate level of PsyCap among teachers and administrators in public and private schools in the United States. The responses of the survey participants suggest that the PsyCap of teachers and administrators is moderate in all areas, reflecting the commitment and diligence of educators and administrators in their responsibilities. Their proficiency and enthusiasm for their positions certainly enhance their general optimism and hope, as evidenced in their responses.

Table 11: Statistical analysis of the dimensions of psychological capital

| Rank | No | Dimensions | No. of items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|------|----|---------------|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 4 | Hope | 5 | 3.260 | 0.422 | Very high |
| 2 | 1 | Self-Efficacy | 5 | 3.225 | 0.420 | medium |
| 3 | 3 | Flexibility | 5 | 3.128 | 0.426 | medium |
| 4 | 2 | Optimism | 5 | 3.073 | 0.465 | medium |

| Rank | No | Dimensions | No. of items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|------|----|--|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| | | Dimensions of the Psychological Capital | 20 | 3.171 | 0.376 | medium |

Table 12 illustrates the perspectives of teachers and administrators regarding the significance of self-efficacy as an element of PsyCap. The average score for this dimension was 3.2257 out of 4, demonstrating that most participants perceive self-efficacy practice as moderate. This analysis evidences the participants' considerable capacity to organize and perform responsibilities efficiently, possibly resulting from their general confidence and competence. This possibly signifies the effort demonstrated by the participants in effectively completing activities, especially in challenging circumstances when they perceive they may overcome problems and accomplish their objectives.

Table 12: Statistical analysis of the items related to self-efficacy

| Rank | No | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|--|----|--|--------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 5 | I demonstrate the ability to plan and perform tasks effectively. | 3.39 | 0.546 | Very high |
| 2 | 1 | I possess the ability to identify alternatives while completing tasks at work. | 3.28 | 0.520 | Very high |
| 3 | 3 | I have the capability to confront obstacles and endure difficulties in the workplace. | 3.27 | 0.534 | Very high |
| 4 | 2 | I tend to tackle challenging problems with a proactive approach. | 3.24 | 0.560 | Medium |
| 5 | 4 | I have confidence in expressing my opinions openly and without hesitation in front of other employees. | 2.94 | 0.738 | Medium |
| 1st Dimension: Self-Efficacy | | | 3.2257 | 0.4209 | Medium |

Table 13 presents the perspectives of teachers and administrators regarding the level of PsyCap in the dimension of optimism. The average score for this dimension was 3.073 out of 4, indicating that most participants perceive the practice of optimism as moderate. These findings are attributed to the participants' optimistic views of their work and their well-articulated vision for goal attainment. Participants exhibit an outstanding sense of personal accountability and self-assurance, indicating their capacity to remain optimistic under challenging situations.

Table 13: Statistical analysis of the items related to optimism

| Rank | No | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|------|----|--|------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 1 | I believe in my abilities to achieve success consistently. | 3.29 | 0.573 | Very high |

| Rank | No | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|---|----|---|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| 2 | 3 | I feel a sense of responsibility and self-confidence under work pressure. | 3.16 | 0.621 | Medium |
| 3 | 5 | I maintain a comprehensive and positive outlook on work, with the potential to achieve goals and succeed. | 3.09 | 0.629 | Medium |
| 4 | 2 | I expect the best in the workplace even when circumstances are unstable. | 2.94 | 0.693 | Medium |
| 5 | 4 | I turn a crisis at work into an opportunity for a positive change | 2.88 | 0.645 | Medium |
| 2nd Dimension: Optimism | | | 3.073 | 0.4656 | Medium |

Table 14 presents the perspectives of teachers and administrators regarding the level of PsyCap in the dimension of flexibility. The mean score for this dimension was 3.128 on a four-point scale, indicating that most participants perceive the practice of flexibility as moderate. These findings are attributed to the participants' abilities in creative idea generation, perseverance, and relationship management with colleagues, even in challenging circumstances. The results demonstrate the participants' strong commitment to managing work-related stress and pressures.

Table 14: Statistical analysis of the items related to flexibility.

| Rank | No | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|--|----|---|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 4 | I demonstrate perseverance and am available at work when needed. | 3.34 | 0.558 | Very high |
| 2 | 5 | I can develop creative ideas to enhance work procedures. | 3.28 | 0.589 | Very high |
| 3 | 3 | I am able to confront obstacles and return to a normal routine. | 3.19 | 0.534 | medium |
| 4 | 2 | I am capable of adapting to stress and pressure and navigating critical situations effectively. | 3.13 | 0.590 | medium |
| 5 | 1 | I can manage my colleagues' behaviors at the workplace | 2.70 | 0.800 | medium |
| 3rd Dimension: Flexibility | | | 3.128 | 0.4261 | medium |

Table 15 illustrates the thoughts of teachers and administrators regarding the importance of hope as an element of PsyCap. The mean score for this dimension was 3.260 out of 4, demonstrating that most participants perceive hope as being displayed at a higher level. These responses are ascribed to the individuals' stable determination and optimistic attitude which cultivate an enhanced sense of hope in realizing their objectives. The exhibited perseverance and preparedness to face challenges indicate that hope is essential for improving the performance and motivation of educational personnel.

Table 15: Statistical analysis of the items related to hope

| Rank | No | Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | Degree of response |
|---------------------------------------|----|---|-------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 1 | I possess a determination to achieve goals with persistence. | 3.32 | 0.544 | Very high |
| 2 | 2 | I continuously evaluate and improve my performance. | 3.28 | 0.578 | Very high |
| 3 | 5 | I am capable of realigning strategies to meet work requirements. | 3.27 | 0.517 | Very high |
| 4 | 3 | I am prepared to face challenges in the workplace. | 3.22 | 0.548 | medium |
| 5 | 4 | I demonstrate a positive willpower directed towards achieving objectives. | 3.20 | 0.537 | medium |
| 4th Dimension: Hope | | | 3.260 | 0.4227 | Very high |

There was also a positive correlation between each dimension of AL and PsyCap (Table 16), indicating that a gain in one corresponds with an increase in the other. This significant link between AL and PsyCap is consistent with prior studies and theoretical frameworks that support the association between these variables. The emergence of AL correlates with an increase in PsyCap among teachers and administrators. Authentic leaders, defined by self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and an internalized moral worldview, positively influence their employees' PsyCap, fostering optimism, resilience, self-efficacy, and hope. This highlights the significance of cultivating a constructive relationship between AL and teachers to improve the educational process. AL involves activities that utilize positive psychological resources, foster ethical surroundings, and enhance self-awareness, thereby promoting balanced decision-making, relational transparency, and recognition of employees' efforts. These factors foster self-improvement among educational personnel, hence enhancing the learning environment.

Table 16: The correlations between the dimensions of authentic leadership and psychological capital.

| Dimensions of the Psychological Capital | Statistic | 1 st Dimension: Self-Awareness | 2 nd Dimension: Balanced processing | 3 rd Dimension: Internal Ethical Perspective | 4 th Dimension: Transparency in Relationships | Dimensions of Authentic Leadership |
|--|---------------------|---|--|---|--|------------------------------------|
| 1st Dimension: Self-Efficacy | Pearson Correlation | 0.355 | 0.414 | 0.399 | 0.378 | 0.446 |
| | P-value | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2nd Dimension: Optimism | Pearson Correlation | 0.340 | 0.332 | 0.350 | 0.330 | 0.389 |
| | P-value | 0.010 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| 3rd Dimension: Flexibility | Pearson Correlation | 0.367 | 0.360 | 0.390 | 0.363 | 0.426 |
| | P-value | 0.004 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| 4th Dimension: Hope | Pearson Correlation | 0.390 | 0.387 | 0.393 | 0.364 | 0.442 |
| | P-value | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Dimensions of the Psychological Capital | Pearson Correlation | 0.446 | 0.389 | 0.426 | 0.442 | 0.453 |
| | P-value | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

Conclusion & Recommendations

The study reveals a developing positive relationship between authentic leadership and psychological capital among educational leaders and staff within the United States education system, indicating that school leaders who display self-awareness, balanced processing, an internal ethical perspective, and transparency in relationships enhance psychological capital among teachers and administrators, that is, self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and hope. This connection highlights the essential function of authentic leadership in fostering a psychological environment conducive to employee well-being, motivation, and overall performance. It is recommended that educational institutions, whether public or private, should implement leadership development programs that emphasize authentic leadership traits. Training programs for school leaders should emphasize ethical decision-making, relational transparency, and self-awareness to enhance their impact on staff psychological capital. Initiatives that foster open communication, collaborative decision-making, and personal development among educators and administrators can improve employee engagement and resilience.

Future research should examine the long-term impacts of authentic leadership on student outcomes, particularly how positive effects on staff well-being and psychological capital enhance student achievement. Additionally, studies could explore the variations in leadership influence among different school types and regions to determine whether contextual factors affect the relationship between leadership and psychological capital. The implementation of these approaches may enhance the educational environment, resulting in benefits for staff, students, and the broader school community.

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