

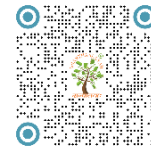
Original Article

MEDITATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AMONG FACULTY MEMBERS: A THEORY-DRIVEN REVIEW OF WELL-BEING, ENGAGEMENT, AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

This is a theoretical review of recent studies regarding the correlation between meditation and psychological capital (PsyCap) in regard to faculty members, with a particular emphasis on the well-being, work engagement, and performance outcomes in higher education. Faculty work has been described as involving high cognitive load, emotional work and long-term performance stress, which require effective individual resource-building processes. The paper is based on the conceptualization of meditation, especially mindfulness-based meditation, as a self-regulating and resource-boosting exercise that facilitates the growth of PsyCap elements, i.e. hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism (based on the contemporary research, 2021-2025). The review incorporates the findings of positive organizational behavior and occupational health theories to describe the role of meditation in affecting faculty engagement and performance indirectly via improved psychological capital and having direct impacts on well-being. Through the synthesis of scattered evidence, the paper explains how concepts are conceptually linked, the trends and gaps within the methodologies, and the importance of meditation-based interventions to sustainable development of faculties and effectiveness of institutions in higher education.

Keywords: Meditation, Psychological Capital, Faculty Well-Being, Work Engagement, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

With the fast changing world of higher education, faculty members are experiencing increasing pressure concerning teaching performance, research productivity, administration, and organizational change. Although these requirements are essential to institutional prosperity, they may raise the level of psychological pressure, lower well-being, and decrease long-term involvement and performance of academic employees. As institutions of higher learning identify ways to sustain faculty resilience and flourish, the idea of individual resource-development that has the potential to reduce stress and improve psychological performance is gaining more and more attention. Meditation, especially mindfulness meditation is one of these practices that has become popular as a contemplative practice and as an evidence-based intervention that facilitates mental well-being and work performance.

Meditation is a concept that can be operationalized as part of the larger practice of mindfulness research and is described as intentional focus on the experience of the present moment and does so in an open and non-judgmental way. The evidence in organizations and educational settings is growing that demonstrates that meditation methods are linked to lowered stress, better emotional management, and higher well-being within the employees, including educators [Sentin \(2025\)](#), [He \(2024\)](#). Even though much of this literature has focused on general populations of the work place, recent research indicates that faculty and academic

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staff can also be helped by meditation and mindfulness based interventions especially when they are faced with high cognitive and emotional loads.

Along with this interest is a growing body of literature on the topic of psychological capital (PsyCap); a positive psychological condition determined by four important resources; hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. It has been demonstrated that PsyCap is a flexible and evolvable resource that positively influences better well-being, work engagement, and performance among occupational groups. The latest studies in the university faculty, such as one, demonstrate that increased PsyCap is correlated with a better well-being through facilitating favorable work experiences and diminishing job burnout [Zhang and Li \(2025\)](#). Moreover, PsyCap has been also identified to be closely correlated with work engagement, motivation, and quality of work life in educational settings [Biswal et al. \(2025\)](#), [Erden \(2025\)](#), which highlights its role in faculty outcomes.

Despite the fact that the constructs of meditation and PsyCap have been researched separately, the interdependence of the two constructs is gaining theoretical and empirical evidence. The positive psychology research indicates that mindfulness-based interventions like meditation can enhance the major elements of PsyCap, self-efficacy and optimism, by increasing self-awareness, emotional balance, and adaptive coping [Baluku \(2023\)](#), [Puspita and Syaebani \(2024\)](#). This correspondence suggests that meditation could help in enhancing of robust psychological resources that resist stress and instead encourages engagement and performance. Nevertheless, empirical studies investigating this mediation channel directly among faculty members are very few and far in between.

Since the focus on faculty well-being and effectiveness is growing, a literature synthesis based on a theory and incorporating meditation and PsyCap into academic working conditions is a timely and needed intervention. Reviewing and contextualizing recent studies on meditation, psychological capital, and their interaction as a concept on well-being, work engagement, and performance outcomes, the paper will help shed light on important conceptual relationships and point out future research and practice directions in the higher education field.

CONCEPTUAL CONNECTION AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS ACADEMIC AND ORGANIZATION MEDITATION

There has been growing interest in the field of organizational psychology and higher education studies in meditation and, specifically, in mindfulness-based meditation on the basis of its capacity to improve cognitive and emotional processing as well as stress-resilience. Modern-day scholarship has developed meditation as a self-regulatory process that develops current awareness, attentional control, and non-reactive reactions to internal and external stimuli. Meditation in high-cognitive load, emotionally demanding academic work settings has been linked to perceived stress reduction, psychological well-being, and increased occupational performance [He \(2024\)](#), [Sentin \(2025\)](#).

The recent research indicates that meditation practice can help teachers enhance their concentration, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping which are essential in maintaining the teaching and research careers. Compared to stress-management skills of short term nature, meditation is considered a resource-building skill that enhances long-term psychological abilities, and is therefore especially applicable to the faculty members who work in a long-term performance-based environment.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AS AN IMPROVABLE PERSONAL RESOURCE

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a positive psychological construct of higher order that consists of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Basing on the positive organizational behavior and developed by Fred Luthans, PsyCap is unique when compared to the personality traits because it is state-like and can be developed by means of specific interventions. The latest studies in the educational context continuously prove that the increased levels of PsyCap in the faculty members correlate with the increased well-being, decreased burnout, better work engagement, and increased effectiveness in the teaching process [Zhang and Li \(2025\)](#), [Erden \(2025\)](#).

PsyCap is important among faculty members to maintain motivation and flexibility in the face of academic demands, including publication pressures, performance assessment, and role overload among faculty. Hope facilitates the development of goal-focused academic action, self-efficacy works to enhance the belief of teaching and research activities, resilience helps to overcome failures, and optimism encourages positive expectations of professional performance. All these resources make PsyCap a focal point in terms of connecting the individual practice with the work-based outcomes.

RELATING MEDITATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL: A THEORY-BASED VIEW

Theoretically, meditation and psychological capital go hand in hand as they both focus on self-regulation, adaptive cognition, and emotional stability. Meditation practices can be used as antecedents to PsyCap due to their ability to positively influence self-awareness and attentional control as antecedents of self-efficacy; acceptance and meaning-making as antecedents of resilience; and positive cognitive reframing as antecedents of optimism and hope [Baluku \(2023\)](#), [Puspita and Syaebani \(2024\)](#)

There is emerging empirical evidence to propose that mindfulness and meditation have a positive relation with PsyCap and personal resource that has an impact on well-being and engagement. Nevertheless, the relationships are indirectly considered or incorporated into larger well-being frameworks in the context of higher education. A synthesis based on theory is thus required to explain the role of meditation in enhancing the outcomes of the faculty based on capacity building of psychological capital.

IMPLICATION ON WELL-BEING, ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE RESULTS

A combination of meditation and psychological capital is an effective model that can be used to explain faculty well-being and effectiveness. Psychological capital is commonly known to be a predictor of work engagement, and is a positive rewarding state, which is vigorous, dedicated, and absorbed. Greater levels of PsyCap among faculty members tend to exhibit a long-term engagement, initiative levels of academic behavior, and higher levels of performance in the teaching and research activities [Biswal et al. \(2025\)](#).

This review contributes to the development of a holistic approach where the development of inner resources is associated with the positive occupational performance because meditation is presented as one of the fundamental practices that can build psychological capital. This model is consistent with modern changes in the higher education sector to sustainable performance, faculty well-being, and good organizational scholarship.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSED MODEL (FIGURE EXPLANATION)

The conceptual framework suggested combines meditation with psychological capital to describe the well-being, work engagement, and performance of the members of the faculty in higher educational institutions. The conceptualization of meditation in this model is that this is an antecedent personal practice, which improves self-regulation, attentional control, emotional balance, and reflective awareness. Their theoretically predicted qualities make them help to develop psychological capital (PsyCap) that is a mediator of core mechanisms.

The psychological capital which consists of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism is placed as a higher-order personal resource based on positive organizational behavior, as defined by Fred Luthans. It is suggested that meditation practices enhance every component of PsyCap by facilitating the clarity of goals (hope), confidence in the ability to perform tasks (self-efficacy), recovery of negative feelings (resilience), and positive views of the future (optimism).

The model also hypothesizes that better psychological capital results in better faculty well-being (less stress and burnout, better mental health), greater work engagement (vigor, dedication, absorption), and greater performance outcomes (teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and service contribution). Direct connections between meditation and well-being are also recognized whereas PsyCap is theorized to mediate the relationships between meditation and engagement/performance outcomes partly. It is an integrative framework that puts a focus on resource-building processes and is compatible with the modern positive organizational and occupational health theories.

TRENDS IN THE METHODOLOGY AND SYNTHESIS OF THE EXISTING STUDIES

An overview of the literature that has been published in the recent past indicates a similar pattern of methodologies used in studies that explore meditation, psychological capital and work outcomes.

DOMINANT METHODOLOGICAL TRENDS

- **Research Design:** Cross-sectional survey based designs mostly quantitative in nature.
- **Sample Characteristics:** Faculty members, teachers or academic staff; usually single-country or single-institution samples.
- **Measurement Tools:** Self-report mindfulness/meditation, PsyCap, well-being and engagement scales.
- **Data Analysis:** Correlation, regression analysis, mediation models, and structural equation modeling (SEM).

Theoretical Anchors: Positive Organizational Behavior, Job Demands resources (JD-R) Theory, Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory.

SYNTHESIS TABLE: ESSENTIAL TRENDS IN THE EXISTING LITERATURE

Focus Area	Common Variables	Methods Used	Key Findings
Meditation / Mindfulness	Mindfulness, stress, emotional regulation	Cross-sectional surveys	Reduced stress, improved well-being
Psychological Capital	Hope, efficacy, resilience, optimism	SEM, mediation analysis	Positive effects on engagement and performance

Faculty Outcomes	Well-being, burnout, engagement	Regression, path analysis	PsyCap buffers stress and enhances engagement
Integrated Models	Meditation → PsyCap → Outcomes	Limited mediation studies	PsyCap acts as a key explanatory mechanism

RESEARCH GAPS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

First, meditation and psychological capital are usually discussed separately, and there are few theoretically integrative approaches to the topic of higher education. Further investigations ought to construct clear theoretical frameworks between meditation and PsyCap and faculty performance that is based on JD-R, COR and Positive Organizational Scholarship schools of thought.

Second, there is still the underrepresentation of the members of the faculty as a separate occupational group even though academic work presents special cognitive and emotional requirements. There is a need to have context-sensitive theories that are specific to the academic settings.

Methodological Gaps

Methodologically, cross-sectional designs have a significant limitation because they are predominant. Future studies should:

- Use longitudinal designs to study the changes in PsyCap with time.
- A use of experimental or intervention based research trials testing meditation programs.
- Use mixed-method strategies to embrace lived experiences and contextualities.
- Include goal-based measures of performance and self-reported measures.

Also, cross-cultural and multi-institutional research needs to be enhanced to enhance generalizability and contextual applicability.

IMPLICATION OF THE PRACTICAL AND POLICY TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The results that were summarized in this review have significant implications on institutional policy and faculty development plans. One of the ways that universities can actively advance the well-being of their faculty is by acknowledging meditation as a scientifically-based method of developing psychological resources, as opposed to a wellness-focused activity.

On a practical level the institutions may:

- Implement faculty development programs to include meditation and mindfulness programs.
- Include resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy psychological capital enhancement workshops.
- Promote contemplative and encouraging scholarly habits and mindsets that promote interactivity and health.

Policy-wise, the incorporation of meditation-based and PsyCap-centered interventions into health-related systems of organizational functioning may help in facilitating long-term academic achievements, decreased burnout, and faculty retention. This kind of initiative is in tune with the changes in the world where there is a shift towards comprehensive management of faculty and the long-term success of institutions of higher learning.

CONCLUSION

The review paper is a synthesis of literature based on a theory that explores the role of meditation and psychological capital in influencing faculty members of higher education institutions in terms of well-being, work engagement, and performance outcomes. The evidence reviewed indicates consistently that meditation is a useful personal practice that can improve self-regulation, emotional regulation, and reflective awareness, which are needed in the cognitively challenging and emotionally intense academic work environment. Through the prism of positive organization and resource-based approaches, meditation can be seen not as one of the methods of relieving stress alone but as the means of developing the long-lasting resources of the mind.

One major explanatory construct found in terms of which meditation is associated with positive faculty outcomes is psychological capital that includes hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. The review notes that, the greater the levels of psychological capital are, the better the well-being, the work engagement and performance-related behaviors of the faculty members. The paper takes a step forward in terms of an integrative framework by placing psychological capital as a mediating resource to relate inner contemplative practices with concrete organizational outcomes in the academic environment.

Although there is an increasing scholarly interest, the literature is limited by a lack of methodological rigor with most of the studies being cross-sectional, using self-report measures, and research on faculty specific intervention. It will be essential to fill these gaps using longitudinal, experimental, and mixed-method designs to promote theory and practice. On the whole, this review will

make a contribution to the higher education and organizational psychology literature as it provides a conceptual synthesis of the relationship between meditation and psychological capital that could be relevant to the development of sustainable faculty, institutional performance, and the establishment of healthy academic cultures.

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