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## EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Positive psychological capital and emotional labor: A study in educational organizations

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the effects of teachers' psychological capital competencies on their emotional labor competencies based on their perceptions. It follows a quantitative research design adopting survey method. Data were collected from 266 teachers working in Siirt Province, Turkey. The results show that teachers have high levels of positive psychological capital (all self-efficacy, optimism, trust, extraversion, and hope dimensions) and though relatively low compared to psychological capital competencies, they often display emotional labor behaviors. It was also found out that PsyCap competencies teachers possess have an impact on their tendency to display emotional labor behaviors. The study presents valuable theoretical and practical implications for research on PsyCap and emotional labor at school organizations.

**Subjects:** Social Sciences; Behavioral Sciences; Education

**Keywords:** psychological capital; emotional labor; educational organizations; teachers

### 1. Introduction

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) contend that science of psychology concentrates on repairing damage by following a disease model, while it more often neglects fulfilling an individual and thriving a community. Rather than fixing what is broken, the new positive psychology concept focuses on creation of an optimum workplace environment that can help individuals become better before any pathological situation arises. Therefore, the focus shifts from pathological human functioning to

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Rasim Tosten's research interests are educational management, educational policy, teachers' emotions at school, and positive psychological capital.

Mustafa Toprak works on educational reforms, teachers' emotions at schools, and emotional intelligence in leadership. This research is a part of an attempt to reveal teachers' emotional labor competencies, to provide evidence that these competencies are influenced by various other competencies, and that they can be developed through leadership activities.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Teaching is a very hard profession because teachers need to deal with classroom issues, students, parents, curriculum, and tests at the same time. From time to time, they can lose control over their emotions and display undesired emotional reactions. Having teachers who are confident that they have the potential to achieve certain tasks, who are perseverant, who do not give up easily when they face problems, and who can express themselves clearly bring a lot of advantages to schools. Teachers who have these abilities can work well under stressful situations, they can control their emotions easily, deal with classroom situations more effectively, and can show more desired emotions. Thus, schools need to be careful in selecting teachers who have these abilities and they should frequently try to develop these psychological competencies so teachers can cope better in hard school life.

optimal human functioning (Lutans, 2005). Rather than focusing on experiences of personal distress, often expressed in the private domain, positive psychology focuses attention on healthy functioning in all areas of life, and this must include the work domain, where much of our lives are acted out in public (Robertson, 2015). Thus, having understanding of employees' emotions, how they are formed, how they can become more positive, and how they can be managed is an important competency for effective leaders to have. However, if a teacher is asked how s/he does at school, it is likely to hear of an "uncaring, insensitive" principal, colleagues or students. Such complaints signify the need for a deeper understanding toward teachers' emotions and also symbolize the negligence about emotions at schools both in theory and practice.

Psychological capital (abbreviated as PsyCap) is defined as the study and application of positive-oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace (Luthans, 2002). It is a result of positive psychology movement initiated by Martin Seligman. In an effort to try to dissociate psychological capital from economic, human, and social capital, Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, and Combs (2006) define psychological capital as a concept going beyond human capital (what you know) and social capital (who you know) and suggest that it is more directly concerned with 'who you are' and "who you are becoming." With psychological management and economic behavior being progressively shaping each other, psychological features, especially emotional ones, became an essential aspect of economic and corporative conduct, and the logic of economic exchange became crucial to shape and understand the psyche and the emotional life of individuals (Cabanas & Sánchez-González, 2016).

As a concept related to appropriate management of emotions at workplace, emotional labor is defined by (Hochschild, 1983) as "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (p. 7). Extending this definition Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) defined emotional labor as "the act of displaying the appropriate emotion." Emotional labor can be seen as a tool to effectively manage emotions in order for employees to achieve organizational goals and to manage mood or anger toward a coworker or customer which could result in better work performance (Grandey, 2000).

Hochschild (1983) asserts that the intense use of emotional labor can be seen in contexts where (a) employees are supposed to make facial or voice contact with the public, (b) employees are required to produce an emotional state in the client or customer, and (c) employer is given an opportunity to exert some control over the emotional activities of employees. Teaching is a daunting job that necessitates effective human relationships (Genç, 2004) and entails the control of anger and facial expressions in and outside the class because frequent expression of felt tense feelings toward students may negatively influence learning process. Also, ineffective control of emotions may hamper relationships with colleagues and leaders outside the class. Thus, teaching as a profession requires the use of a great deal of emotional labor.

PsyCap provided an increased awareness on the relative importance that positive psychological strengths and capacities can have on human functioning (Shahnawaz & Jafri, 2009), and is found to be positively impacting different types of organizational behavior: work engagement (Levene, 2015; Paek, Schuckert, Kim, & Lee, 2015), extra-role organizational citizenship behaviors (Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010), job satisfaction (Kaplan & Biçkes, 2013; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007), employee morale (Paek et al., 2015) work happiness, and organizational commitment (Luthans et al., 2007), and negatively correlated with cynicism, intentions to quit and counter-productive behavior (Avey et al., 2010).

There are several other studies examined the relationship between PsyCap and emotional labor on flight attendants (Hur, Rhee, & Ahn, 2016), on service sector employees (Wang & Lian, 2015), on business workers, and managers (Tamer, 2015). Despite considerable attention being recently devoted to effect of positive organizational behavior on organizational outcomes, how these behaviors

affect teachers' emotional labor competencies in education context seem to be neglected except for relatively recent study by Ching-Sheue (2014) conducted on preschool teachers. Therefore, this study is believed to bridge a gap in the literature by attempting to explore how teachers' positive psychology competencies impact their display of emotional labor.

## 2. Psychological capital

Three levels of positive psychology are identified by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000): (*valued subjective experiences*: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present); *positive individual traits*: the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, esthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom; *civic virtues and the institutions* that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic.

Luthans et al. (2007) classify PsyCap as state-like behaviors differentiating it from positively oriented organizational behavior trait-like constructs such as "Big Five" personality dimensions. The distinction mainly lies in that PsyCap components are relatively malleable and can be developed; in addition to efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism, it also includes positive constructs such as wisdom, well-being, gratitude, forgiveness, and courage as having "state-like" properties as opposed to trait-like constructs that are relatively stable and difficult to change. Based on this distinction, PsyCap is a capital that can be regulated, managed, and developed to meet the goals of an organization, a feature that increases the significance of this concept in organizational outcomes, because it is a tool that can be used to impact on organizational performance and increase corporate competitive power.

Luthans et al. (2007), on the other hand, developed psychological capital concept including different constructs of hope, optimism, efficacy/confidence, and resiliency: "(1) having confidence (*self-efficacy*) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (*optimism*) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (*hope*) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (*resilience*) to attain success."

## 3. Emotional labor

Grandey (2000) defines emotional labor as the deliberate suppression or expression of emotion to meet the goals of an organization. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) focus on the expected emotional display rules employees need to know to meet the organizational goals. Later studies (e.g. Morris & Feldman, 1996) situate emotional labor as a concept that involves knowing not only the emotional display rules expected by the organization, but also how to plan for, control, and develop skills to present appropriate emotional display rules to the customers (Brown, 2011).

One reason for the importance of appropriate display rules for service organizations is that employees' displayed emotions impact customer moods (Tang, Seal, Naumann, & Miguel, 2013). It deals with emotions which employees feel or pretend to feel in order to meet their job requirements, irrespective of whether or not they are different from their true emotions (Lazányi, 2011).

According to Hochschild (1983), emotional labor strategy could be used either in *surface acting* (altering outward appearance to simulate the required emotions—emotions that are not necessarily privately felt), or *deep acting* (altering not only their physical expressions, but also their inner feelings). The surface actor suppresses or conceals his sincere emotions and acts in a way in compliance with the norms the organization has prescribed with respect to its employees' emotional displays. On the other hand, a deep actor alters such emotions of his/her in order to comply with organizational norms as he/she sincerely feels in any particular situation (Lazányi, 2011). Criticizing that these two strategies (surface acting and deep acting) fail to adequately capture the nature of

emotional labor, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), developed an additional strategy, *genuine acting* (when employees' felt emotions are congruent with expressed emotion and display rules) (Chu, 2002; İplik, Topsakal, & Iplik, 2014).

Thinking within the context of teaching and schools, PsyCap (being self-efficient, optimistic, resilient, and hopeful) can be seen as competencies teachers need in order to be able to effectively survive in this highly stressful and difficult profession and to show high levels of performance in and outside the class. Teachers are faced with various discipline problems on daily basis they need to attend, need to understand students' behaviors and emotions, and control felt anger when faced with disruptive behaviors in class. Whether having these competencies help teachers more effectively manage and control their responses in their interactions with students and with other school staff is a question need to be answered. Only limited number of studies were conducted in literature exploring the relationships between these concepts most of which were in non-education organizations. This study attempts to contribute to the literature by studying these concepts in educational organizations thus bringing valuable insights about how the concept of PsyCap and emotional labor are in interaction at schools.

Based on existing literature the following hypotheses will be tested in the current study:

Hypothesis 1: Teachers' psyCap competencies are positively related to their display of emotional labor behaviors

Hypothesis 2: Teachers' psyCap competencies predict their display of emotional labor behaviors

#### 4. Method

Because this research examines how the independent variables are affected by the dependent variables and involves cause and effect relationships between the variables, it adopts a causal comparative research method (Williams, 2007).

##### 4.1. Sample

Two hundred and sixty-six teachers working in Siirt province during 2015 and 2016 academic year were chosen as participants through random sampling method. A considerable majority of participant teachers worked during the dayshift (65.2%) and afternoon shift (27.9%). Due to high number of students and less number of classes, most classes in this part of Turkey (this is not always the case in the West part of Turkey) are overcrowded. To avoid this problem, some students have to attend school between 7.30 and 12.00 am (dayshift), while others start school at 12.30 and finish at around 6 pm in the evening (afternoon shift). Such a program creates problems specifically for students who need to get up very early in the morning and finish all the classes before the afternoon shift students, who stay at school until late evening, come.

About 34.6% of participants have more than 10 years of tenure, 15.6% of participants have a tenure ranging between 6 and 10 years, 37.1% of them have 1–5 years of tenure, while 12.7% of them less than 1 year of tenure. Additionally, 71.3% of respondents reported their employment status as full-time, with 4.5% reporting part-time employment status. As illustrated in Table 1, a great number of participants are 63.9% ( $n = 170$ ) are male, while 36.1% of participants ( $n = 96$ ) are female. Most participants are married (53.1%,  $n = 139$ ) while a great number of them are single (46.9%,  $n = 123$ ). One hundred and thirty-one participants (49.6%) are between 22 and 29 years old, 110 of participants (41.7%) are between 30 and 39, 23 of participants (8.7%) are above 40. Hence, a great majority of participants ( $\%49.6 + \%41.7 = 91.3$ ) are below 40 years old.

A great number of participants (90.9%,  $n = 240$ ) are graduates of a bachelor's degree programs while only a small number of participants are graduates of 2-year vocational school and only a small group (5.3%,  $n = 14$ ) have a master's degree.

**Table 1. Demographics of participants**

		<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Female	96	36.1
	Male	170	63.9
	Total	266	100.0
Marital status	Married	139	53.1
	Single	123	46.9
	Total	262	100.0
Age	22–29	131	49.6
	30–39	110	41.7
	40+	23	8.7
	Total	264	100.0
Tenure	1–5 years	148	55.6
	6–10 years	66	24.8
	11–15 years	27	10.2
	16–20 years	9	3.4
	21+	16	6.0
	Total	266	100.0
Education	Vocational	10	3.8
	Bachelor	240	90.9
	Master's	14	5.3
	Total	264	100.0

About 83.1% ( $n = 217$ ) of teachers work in relatively small schools with a number of 1 to 35 teachers, while 16.9% of teachers ( $n = 44$ ) work in more populated schools with the number of teachers ranging between 36 and 70. Most teachers are graduates of Education Faculty 57.7% ( $n = 153$ ), while 29.8% ( $n = 79$ ) and 12.5% ( $n = 33$ ) of them are graduates of other faculties. A great majority of teachers (59.2%,  $n = 157$ ) work in single shift schools, while 40.8% ( $n = 108$ ) work in double-shift schools. When asked if they suffice with their salary, 6.7% ( $n = 17$ ) totally agree, 18.6% ( $n = 49$ ) mostly agree, 23.1% ( $n = 61$ ) indecisive, 19.7% ( $n = 52$ ) partly agree, and 32.2% ( $n = 85$ ) disagree. Only two teachers work at preschool level, 37.1% ( $n = 95$ ) work in primary school level, while 62.1% ( $n = 159$ ) work at secondary school level (Table 2).

#### 4.2. Ethical procedures

Local ministry of education in Siirt province was contacted and briefed about the framework and goals of the research. A local council responsible for provision of research consents granted a written consent that can be used for selection of teachers at schools. Selected teachers were also informed about the research; they were informed not to name the surveys, that responses they would give would be kept confidential. They were also notified that participation is on voluntary-basis and that they could withdraw from participation in any phase of the research.

#### 4.3. Instruments

Two data collection instruments were used in the study. “Emotional Labor Behaviour Scale” which was adapted to school settings by Begenirbaş and Meydan (2012) was used to collect data on participant teachers’ emotional labor behaviors. The scale was previously adapted to business sector by Öz Ünler (2007). It is a five-point Likert-type scale graded between “Totally Agree” and “Totally Disagree.” The scale has two dimensions; *Behavior to Obey Emotional Behavior Norms* (1st, 5th, 7th, 8th, and 9th items), and *Behavior to Control Emotions* (2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 10th items).

**Table 2. Participants' information based on different variables**

		<i>f</i>	%
Number of teachers	Between 1 and 35	217	83.1
	Between 36 and 70	44	16.9
	Total	261	100.0
Faculty	Faculty of education	153	57.7
	Science and letters	79	29.8
	Other	33	12.5
	Total	265	100.0
Shift	Single	157	59.2
	Double	108	40.8
	Total	265	100.0
Salary	Totally agree	17	6.4
	Mostly agree	49	18.6
	Indecisive	61	23.1
	Partly agree	52	19.7
	Disagree	85	32.2
	Total	264	100.0
School level	Preschool	2	.8
	Primary	95	37.1
	Secondary	159	62.1
	Total	256	100.0
Other school experience	Yes	132	50.8
	No	128	49.2
	Total	260	100.0

“Positive Psychological Capital Scale” developed by Tösten and Özgan (2014) was used to measure psychological capital levels of participant teachers. It consists of 6 dimensions and 26 items in total. These dimensions are self-efficacy (4 items), optimism (5 items), trust (4 items), extraversion (5 items), resilience (5 items), and hope (3 items). It is a five-point Likert-type scale graded between “Totally Agree” and “Totally Disagree”. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of the scales were calculated and it was found to be .94 for Positive Psychological Capital Scale and .90 for Emotional Labor Behavior Scale. Since scales that have .60 and more reliability coefficients are confirmed to be reliable and those with .90 and more as highly reliable in social studies, both scales could be stated to have high level of reliability.

#### 4.4. Data collection and analyses

Data were collected from 266 teachers working in Siirt urban area through two research instruments. SPSS data analysis programme was used in analyses. Descriptive analyses (percentages, arithmetic mean, frequency, and standart deviations) were first made and later correlation and regression analyses to determine relationships between two variables were executed.

#### 5. Findings

Descriptive, correlational, and regression statistics gathered from collected data are presented below. The 5-point Likert-type survey is graded as such: 1 (totally disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (moderately agree), 4 (agree), 5 (totally agree). So, scores that are between 1.00 and 1.79 are interpreted as totally disagree, scores between 1.80 and 2.60 are interpreted as disagree, scores between 2.61 and 3.40 are interpreted as moderately agree, scores between 3.41 and 4.20 are interpreted as agree and scores between 4.21 and 5.00 are interpreted as highly agree.

As illustrated in Table 3, based on their opinions, participant teachers display high levels of emotional labor behaviors ( $X = 3.8527$ ). Accordingly, teachers' Behavior to Obey Emotional Behavior Norms ( $X = 3.9857$ ) and their Behavior to Control Emotions ( $X = 3.7196$ ) are found to be at high levels. Teachers' Psychological capital levels are also found to be at quite high levels ( $X = 4.3249$ ). Means for "Self-efficacy" ( $X = 4.4656$ ), "Trust" ( $X = 4.4235$ ), "Extraversion" ( $X = 4.2855$ ), "Resilience" ( $X = 4.3075$ ), "Hope" ( $X = 4.3535$ ), "Optimism" ( $X = 4.1733$ ) were all at quite high levels. The highest scores are found to be in "Self-efficacy" dimension of psychological capital while the lowest scores are at "Behavior to Control Emotions" dimension of Emotional Labor Behavior.

Table 4 shows correlation between teachers' psychological capital and emotional labor. It is seen that there is a high-level positive correlation ( $r = .69; p < .01$ ) between teachers' psychological capital and emotional labor. Thus, it could be noted that as teachers have better psychological capital competencies, their tendencies to display emotional labor behaviors increase.

As shown in Table 5, the model that tests the effect of teachers' positive psychological capital on their emotional labor behaviors is significant ( $p < .05$ ). Teachers' positive psychological capital as predictor variable explains 48% of variance in their Emotional Labor Behaviors. Hope and optimism as dimensions of psychological capital have the highest predictive power on teachers' emotional labor behaviors.

**Table 3. Mean and standard deviations of research variables**

		<i>f</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Ss</i>
Psychological capital	Self-efficacy	266	4.4656	.54971
	Optimism	266	4.1733	.68542
	Trust	266	4.4235	.56965
	Extraversion	266	4.2855	.63076
	Resilience	266	4.3075	.58521
	Hope	266	4.3535	.61177
	Psychological capital total	266	4.3249	.49990
Emotional labor behavior	Behavior to obey emotional behavior norms	266	3.9857	.77406
	Behavior to control emotions	266	3.7196	.90834
	Emotional labor behavior total	266	3.8527	.78874

**Table 4. Correlation between teachers' psychological capital competencies and emotional labor behaviors**

		Emotional labor behavior	Psychological capital
Emotional labor behavior	Pearson correlation	1	.689**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	<i>N</i>	266	266
Psychological capital	Pearson correlation	.689**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	<i>f</i>	266	266

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 5. Regression analysis on the effect of teachers' psychological capital and emotional labor behaviors**

Predictor variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	β	t	p
Optimism	.562	.316	.223	3.784	.00*
Trust	.511	.261	.025	.365	.72
Extraversion	.575	.331	.098	1.284	.20
Resilience	.578	.335	.148	2.094	.04*
Hope	.607	.368	.262	3.893	.00*
Self-efficacy	.567	.322	.095	1.367	.17
Psychological capital perceptions	.689	.475	.689	15.456	.00*

\* $p \leq .01$ .

## 6. Results and discussion

The current study is an attempt to uncover the impact of positive PsyCap competencies that teachers have on their tendencies to display emotional labor behaviors. It also attempts to advance our understanding of emotional labor by addressing the effect of PsyCap as an organizational antecedent within the context of school settings.

First, teachers' self-reported perceptions show they have quite high levels of positive psychological capital (all self-efficacy, optimism, trust, extraversion, and hope dimensions) with self-efficacy dimension ranking the highest scores. Teachers in this study believe in their personal competencies, suppose that they are perseverant, feel achieved, and make a positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future. Also, they have goal-directed energy and ways to use that energy to achieve their goals even in the face of difficulties and stress they feel at work. Finally, they state they can adapt positively in cases of adversity and risk. These are surprising yet pleasing findings because having high levels of psychological capital competencies is a significant factor helping individuals, teachers in our case, to actively survive and make strong contribution to personal and organizational well-being. These findings are in parallel with Wang (2015)'s findings that also show that the service employees' psychological capital plays a significant positive impact on deep acting behavior of employees, which also negatively influences counterproductive work behaviors of employees. Hur et al. (2016) also related psychological capital to emotional labor behaviors of flight attendants and revealed that PsyCap competencies foster deep acting but not surface acting. Tokmak (2014) expresses that in areas where employees are supposed to display emotional labor behaviors, employees tend to feel alienated, that in these sectors there is always high tendency for emotional dissonances between individual and organization, which could be reflected on employees' performances. He considered psyCap as a variable that moderates the relationship between emotional labor and work alienation. In other words, employees with high levels of psyCap competencies tend to be more perseverant in emotional labor intensive environments and these competencies help them become more attached to their organizations.

Yin, Wang, Huang, and Li (2016), on the other hand, acknowledge that psyCap positively impacts emotion regulation process and that it reduces employees' emotional exhaustion but also argue that employees who possess high levels of psychological capital with high levels of surface acting behaviors may suffer increased emotional exhaustion. Thus, based on their study, psyCap only buffers against emotional exhaustion only when individuals tend to display deep acting behaviors while in the current study, psyCap competencies help with both surface and deep acting emotional labor behaviors.

Although relatively low as opposed to PsyCap competencies, teachers are also reported to show high frequency of emotional labor behaviors. Thus, it would make sense to say that teachers are skilled at deliberately suppressing or expressing their emotions to meet the goals of their schools as defined by Grandey (2000). Having to frequently show emotional labor behaviors could result in high

stress level, psychological strain, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization (Grandey, 2003; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Teachers could also face escalated levels of stress working under the pressure of maintaining discipline in class, use a vast amount of emotional resources while preparing and conducting lessons, creating a balance between needs of students, leaders, and parents. Given this, we have found out in the current study that PsyCap competencies work as a buffer system against all possible emotional disturbances felt by teachers and having these competencies can help teacher manage their emotions more effectively.

Having high levels of PsyCap, as revealed by Tamer (2015), can diminish the negative effects of frequent display of emotional labor whether deep or surface acting on teachers. For teachers, beliefs in personal skills, being adaptive, flexible, knowing how to deal with risks and conflicts, keeping goals and the pathways to these goals clear, and being cognitively and emotionally optimistic help teachers effectively deal with stress derived from display of emotional labor behaviors at schools. These competencies work as “reservoirs of psychological resources” (Hur et al., 2016, p. 480) that give teachers strength to survive in stressful situations and assist them fight with emotional distress at workplace. PsyCap as “positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities” (Luthans, 2002, p. 59).

Organizations are made up of three entities: products, process, and people and much emphasis is put on the first two as hard things while people are generally neglected (Levene, 2015). Employees’ emotions brought to work are assets that could highly determine their behavior patterns, attitudes, and performances. Fisher and Ashkanasy (2000) posit that moods and emotions are considered to be a mediating mechanism by which stable features of the work environment impact job attitudes and behavior. Thus, it should be known that humans are not only made up of flesh and bones and that their emotions should be taken into account and be used as a leverage to help regulate their behaviors at workplace.

## 7. Implications

In today’s business environment where turbulence and stability are becoming the norm, only the organizations that can rejuvenate their adaptational systems and swiftly respond to ever-changing environments are likely to improve or even sustain their competitive advantage (Lutans, 2005). Therefore, effective understanding, management and regulation of emotions help influence positive behaviors at workplace since effectively managed emotions lead to positive experiences which, in turn, impacts on positive sense-making at work. Having teachers who possess or have the potential of positive psychological capital help teachers cope with distressful effects of school or classroom environment through impacting their emotion-regulation mechanisms. “Teachers are very stressed at this school,” “this teacher cannot control his/her emotions and burst into anger very easily” “our teacher lost the balance in class and we could not help laughing at his/her awkward behavior” are common statements we can hear from school leaders, teachers, or students. There is also the question of where to start in terms of making teachers emotionally stronger and more competitive at sometimes stressful school environment.

Given that having teachers with high PsyCap influence teachers’ emotional labor competencies making them more stronger emotionally, it could be reasoned that PsyCap competencies can be used as an effective tool school leaders can use to help teachers regulate their emotions and show more positive displays of their emotions. It should also be noted that first teacher induction procedures should be developed to include PsyCap competencies as core criteria for selection. As implied in the popular statement “hire for the attitudes, train for the skill,” having positive attitudes (being optimistic, extravert, resilient, hopeful, and feeling self-efficient) could help teachers to more positively approach experiences at school, foster their positive sense-making. These competencies are not fixed solely genetics-based competencies but ones that can be developed through training. Thus, they function as beneficial leverages school leaders and policy makers can use to have more effective teachers.

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