

The Relationship between Psychological Capital and Subjective Well-Being among Boarding School Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Background: Psychological capital (Psycap), encapsulates positive mental attributes such as hope, resilience, optimism, and one's ability to positively reframe a situation, all of which shape an individual's responses to and management of challenges. The adolescence period is crucial to the development of Psychological capital (Psycap), and the extent to which it is cultivated will determine levels of happiness in one's future. Its role within the unique socio-educational environment, however, is still unresolved in the context of Islamic boarding schools.

Purpose: The objective of this research was to analyze the correlation of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) with the Subjective Well-Being (SWB) of youth in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools.

Methods: Information was obtained through a cross-sectional survey distributed to 208 adolescents. The Psychological Capital Questionnaire was administered to gauge the PsyCap. The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), in conjunction with the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), was employed to measure subjective well-being (SWB). For data analysis, descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation were used.

Results: This investigation determined that mean scores for all PsyCap components and SWB besides observed the clearly connected data that as PsyCap increased, SWB also appeared to elevate. Among components, hope demonstrated the strongest correlation ($r = 0.444$, $p < 0.001$), followed by optimism ($r = 0.407$, $p < 0.001$), efficacy ($r = 0.364$, $p < 0.001$), and resilience ($r = 0.363$, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: All PsyCap components positively correlated with subjective well-being and with hope being the strongest predictor. This underscores the significance of hope-augmentation PsyCap interventions within the context of a boarding school to aid in the development and well-being of adolescents.

Keywords: efficacy, hope, optimism, resilience, well-being

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BACKGROUND

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is a combination of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, and constitutes a basic component of positive psychology which promotes wellbeing and coping (Luthans et al., 2007; Youssef-Morgan, 2024). Along with optimism and resilience, PsyCap helps to lower psychological distress, which makes it a valuable resource during psychological adolescence.

There is a positive association between Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and subjective well-being (SWB). In adolescents, the levels of PsyCap are the strongest predictor of life satisfaction, positive affect, and the absence of negative affect (Afzal et al., 2016; Finch et al., 2020). Notably, the total impact of the hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (HERO) elements enhances well-being more than any single component, emphasizing PsyCap's synergistic strengthens in well-being of adolescents (Finch et al., 2020).

This phenomenon called subjective well-being encompasses an individual's evaluation of their emotional experiences which can consist of both positive and negative feelings (Diener, 2000). Nonetheless, not all adolescents live with their families. One clear case would be junior high school students in Islamic boarding schools. The Islamic education system and the environment in these schools is in stark contrast to the pupils' experiences in conventional schools. There are particular regulations, strict schedules, and particular pedagogical methods in boarding Islamic schools that shape the students' living and learning everyday life profoundly.

Educational settings positively influence well-being. Constructing a positive school climate, a sense of belonging, and meeting basic psychological needs predict well-being (Tian et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2022). Interpersonal relations, such as family and social support, coupled with personal agency, also shape well-being in challenging circumstances (Ronen & Seeman, 2007).

The socio-educational environment which dominated in the boarding schools during the interactions is of the utmost importance during the adolescent phase in development (Wu et al., 2022), discusses regarding school climate and its importance in positive flourishing but does not shed light psychologically on teenagers, or, boarding school students of Islamic schools in Indonesia.

Wardani et al. (2024) has a research which demonstrates that self-identity and stigma have a significant influence on self-harm behavior in adolescents in drug rehabilitation. Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) which comprises of Hope, Self-Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism (HERO) has the potential of enhancing the Subjective Well-Being (SWB) of adolescents in Islamic boarding schools. This is particularly true in strengthening self-identity and stigma concerns. Positive emotions can predict PsyCap, but reliable negatives measures of emotions are scarce. The association between Subjective Well-Being and the resilience, optimism, and hope components of PsyCap elucidate these links (Afzal et al., 2016). The synergistic effect of the HERO elements is significant because it enhances student performance and decreases anxiety more than each component can do individually (Finch et al., 2020). This signifies the importance of PsyCap on adolescents.

Psychological and social resources interact to shape SWB in an Islamic boarding school setting. Even in the face of major stressors, such as wartime threats, research indicates that social support and self-control are most critical to SWB (Ronen & Seeman, 2007). Adolescents with stronger social networks and self-control report higher wellbeing. Moreover, self-efficacy moderates the effect of social support on some dimension of subjective well-being (SWB) such as life satisfaction (Ronen & Seeman, 2007). These studies illustrate that in addition to social

support, especially personal agency has a significant impact on the wellbeing of adolescents in residential education setups with prescribed social and educational norms.

The adolescents' SWB is schooled particularly for adolescents' SWB which includes belongingness and school climate. The satisfaction of psychological needs like 'autonomy, relatedness and competence' operates reciprocally with school related well-being. Positive school climate and belongingness has been linked to higher well-being (Tian et al., 2014, 2016; Wu et al., 2022). This is more pronounced for boarding students, whose everyday activities, including off hours, are conducted within institutional confines. They spend their free time in school surrounded by their peers. It is necessary to shift the targets of psychological health at the school because the school culture, peer relations, and teacher relationships create barriers to students' psychological well-being.

The interaction between PsyCap and SWB is complicated by socio-cultural and socio-economic determinants. There is a strong association between socio-economic status and social and physical well-being (Steinvoord & Junge, 2022). Family's educational and cultural capital is a strong predictor of psychological well-being in adolescents (Castellanos-Simons et al., 2020), however, mental health issues among adolescents from lower socio-economic families is particularly pronounced, especially in the context of boarding schools, because of the socio-institutional arrangements and resource disparities. Such structural inequities highlight the need for targeted intervention frameworks to mitigate the psychosocial well-being gaps that exist within and across different socio-economic strata and to ensure parity of exclusion within institutional frameworks and mental health service utilization.

The interplay between adolescents' psychological capital (PsyCap) and their subjective well-being (SWB) even for pupils in Islamic boarding schools is influenced by personal psychological assets, contextual settings, nature, and prevailing socioeconomic conditions. There is a PsyCap improvement paradox, for instance, positive psychology initiatives, by in and through schools, emphasizing resilience curricula and hope-centered pedagogies, simultaneously bolstering school support structures through peer support networks and counseling, and addressing inequities in support on the basis of SES (Afzal et al., 2016; Finch et al., 2020; Ronen & Seeman, 2007; Steinvoord & Junge, 2022). Thus, the very nature of the interventions is such that comes along with the territory of an educational improvement, they entail an ethically founded obligation to ensure that all students, irrespective of their socio-economic strata, must flourish.

PsyCap has been integrated with well-being of an adolescent for quite some time, but its impact on wellbeing in the specific socio-cultural situation of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools is still under-researched, which is a significant gap in the literature. Considering the necessity of advocating for adolescent mental health in culturally nuanced educational settings, this research intends to explore the association of PsyCap and adolescent Subjective Well-being or SWB in Indonesian boarding schools. These results could be utilized in interventions at schools to improve the psychological wellbeing and strengthen the psychological resources available.

OBJECTIVE

This study aimed to explore the psychological capital (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) 's connection with the subjective well-being of adolescents in an Indonesian boarding school.

METHODS

Study Design and Setting

This investigation employed a descriptive correlational design to analyze the relationship of psychological capital (hope, efficacy, resilience, optimism) in correlation to well-being among adolescents in an Indonesian boarding school. Data collection was carried out at a Muslim boarding school in the province of West Java from July 2025 to August 2025 as the school serves a diverse population of students.

Participants and Sampling

The subjects in the study were adolescents attending an Islamic boarding school located in Pabuaran, West Java. Participants were chosen through stratified simple random sampling. The sample consisted of both male and female students whose ages ranged from 14 to 18 years old.

Estimation of the sample size was done initially using the G*Power 3.1 software, where the sample size was calculated for the correlation analysis with a moderate effect size ($r = 0,25$) and an alpha of 0.05 set for the study which also used a power of which the sample was driven to the minimum of 217 participants. However, the sample was driven down to 208 participants because practical limitations were in consideration. Estimation of the post hoc analysis showed that the number of participants used in the study was 100 and more than that, the estimation of power for the study was around 0.86 which by accepted standards for estimation of medium sized effects, is considered to be very good. Sample participants were chosen through stratified simple random sampling which was accomplished by the research team independent of the teacher selection. This method was used to ensure that the sample sufficiently represented the most important strata in the student population (e.g. school level and sex), which enhances the generalization and validity of the research. For every participant, consent forms were also included, completed post explainer session by the research team, outlining the objectives and methodology of the study, and the individual responses were affirmative.

Instruments

A demographic registration form along with two standardized instruments pertinent to the primary variables of the study were utilized in the research. An assessment of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) was conducted using the Revised Psychological Capital Questionnaire formulated (Setyandari et al., 2020). It comprises twelve items spanning the four dimensions of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. The instrument has shown high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.759. We looked at how people felt using two established ways to measure it: the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). Both scales have demonstrated strong reliability and validity in prior Indonesian studies (Akhtar, 2019). The research Akhtar (2019) psychometric evaluation of the PANAS, consist of 20 item questions which exhibited exceptional reliability. The Positive Affect subscale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.861 and the Negative Affect subscale also had a high level of reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.853. For the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), construct validity evidence from Akhtar (2019) innicated strong factor loadings ranging from 0.598 to 0.773 with five questions. In addition to the main instruments, demographic including age, gender, order of birth, regional origin, class, length of stay, were collected using a standardized form.

Data Collection

Data were collected by trained research assistants which is the teachers. Teachers selected as research assistants have been trained beforehand about the data collection process, instruments, and all possible lesson learned and solutions encountered during the research process. Eligible participants were approached during after class, provided with research

information, and asked to give written informed consent. Participants then completed the questionnaires in a class room accompanied by research teams.

Data Analysis

Data were input into a computer program for preliminary examination. To summarise the key study variables and participant characteristics, descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were computed. A Pearson correlation analysis was performed to investigate the connection between SWB and PsyCap components. At $p < 0.05$, statistical significance was established.

Ethical Considerations

The Universitas Indonesia Faculty of Nursing granted ethical permission for this study (KET 289/UN2.F12.D1.2.1/PPM.00.02/2025). Data anonymisation and safe record-keeping preserved participant confidentiality. Every participant was made aware of their freedom to leave the study at any moment without affecting their current participation.

RESULTS

Participant characteristics

The study involved 208 students, of whom 54.8% were female and 45.2% were male. Most participants were 17 years old (75%), and 43.3% were the family's first kid. The majority originated come from Java (85.6%). The most participants were grade 12th class. Participants had varied lengths of stay in the boarding school, ranging from 1 to 9 years with the most common 5-6 years (23.1%) in Table 1.

Table 1. The demographic characteristics of participants (N=208)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	114	45,2
Male	94	54,8
Age (y.o)		
14	4	1,9
15	55	26,4
16	72	34,6
17	75	36,1
18	2	1,0
Birth Order		
1 st	90	43,3
2 nd	64	30,8
3 rd	38	18,3
4 th	6	2,9
5 th	10	4,8
Grade's		
10	61	29,3
11	58	27,9
12	89	42,8
Regional Origin		
Jawa	178	85,6
Sumatera	20	9,6
Kalimantan	6	2,9
Kepulauan Riau	1	0,5
Maluku	2	1.0

NTB	1	0,5
Length of stay at the Islamic boarding school (years)		
1	18	8,7
2	9	4,3
3	43	20,7
4	39	18,8
5	48	23,1
6	48	23,1
8	2	1,0
9	1	0,5

Psychological Capital and Subjective Well-Being

Mean scores indicated moderately high levels of PsyCap and SWB (Table 2). Among PsyCap components, hope showed the highest mean 22.3 ± 3.95 , followed by optimism was 13.56 ± 2.32 , efficacy mean scores 8.74 ± 1.82 , and resilience mean scores 7.98 ± 2.06 . The overall mean SWB score was 146.46 ± 16.54 (range 99-194) Table 2.

Table 2. Means scores of psychological capital and subjective well-being (N=208)

Variables	Mean $\pm$ SD	Min-Max	95% CI
Psychological Capital			
Efficacy	8.74 $\pm$ 1.82	2-12	8.47-8.96
Hope	22.3 $\pm$ 3.95	6-30	21.75-22.82
Resilience	7.98 $\pm$ 2.06	2-12	7.71-8.25
Optimism	13.56 $\pm$ 2.32	5-18	13.24-13.86
Subjective Well-Being	146.46 $\pm$ 16.54	99-194	144.08-148.81

Relationship between Psychological Capital and Subjective Well Being

Prior to correlation analysis, data normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test. The results indicated that the variables were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$), thus meeting the assumption for Pearson correlation. Pearson correlation was performed to examine the relationship and revealed significant positive associations between PsyCap and SWB ($p < 0.001$). Hope demonstrated the strongest correlation with SWB ($r = 0.444$, $p < 0.001$), followed by optimism ($r = 0.407$, $p < 0.001$), efficacy ($r = 0.364$, $p < 0.001$), and resilience ($r = 0.363$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that adolescents with higher levels of PsyCap, particularly hope and optimism, reported greater subjective well-being Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation between psychological capital and subjective well-being Among boarding school adolescents (N=208)

Variables		Subjective Well-Being	
Psychological Capital			
Efficacy	r	0.364	
	sig	<0.001	
Hope	r	0.444	<0.001
	sig	<0.001	
Resilience	r	0.363	<0.001
	sig	<0.001	
Optimism	r	0.407	<0.001
	sig	<0.001	

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrated that psychological capital (PsyCap) was positively associated with subjective well-being (SWB) among adolescents in Indonesian boarding schools, with hope emerging as the strongest predictor. Such findings support previous analysis designating PsyCap as a major indicator of well-being in adolescence (Afzal et al., 2016; Finch et al., 2020; Preston et al., 2023).

The strong positive correlation of hope within PsyCap is also significant. As in previous research that defines hope as a major determinant of life satisfaction and positive feelings in adolescents (Finch et al., 2020), so did our research indicate that Goal-Directed and Pathway Thinking (GPD) could assist boarding school students in coping with the rigid structures and academic pressures boarding school life entails. In this case, hope functions as a motivational 'bucket' filling up goal-attaining mentality to revitalize and support students' attendance, engagement and resilience to routine challenges.

Also, the positive effects of optimism, efficacy, and resilience on SWB punctuate the integrative aspect of PsyCap, reinforcing the notion that these psychological resources, in their totality, have a greater influence together than in isolation (Finch et al., 2020). The constituent high mean scores for PsyCap and SWB could also be indicative of the psychological atmosphere in Islamic boarding schools in relation to the communal lifestyle, shared activities and Islamic spirituality, which is suggested to stimulate psychological development in students (Ronen & Seeman, 2007; Wu et al., 2022).

This study considers the unique elements of the Indonesian educational landscape, particularly the role and function of Pondok Pesantren, or Islamic boarding schools, where the Islamic educational system also takes place. Unlike 'secular' educational institutions, the unique socio-cultural and religious environment of independent Islamic schools may differentially influence the role of psychological capital, or PsyCap, in the improvement of overall well-being. The study illustrates PsyCap, particularly the construct of 'hope', provides a strong indicator of subjective well-being (SWB) within Islamic boarding schools and emphasizes the culturally nuanced importance of providing psychological resources to adolescents in residential schooling.

There is an evident divergence between theory and practice. Programs that could be school-based and target the development of hope, resilience and optimism, such as goal-setting workshops, mastery experiences and positive future orientation training, may fortify the psychological resources of students, thereby enhancing psychological well-being. Such programs could be integrated into the boarding school curriculum as a means of providing enduring support for adolescent development.

There is no doubt the findings provide useful knowledge, however, the ability to make strong inferences is restricted as a result of covering cross-sectional data. More relevant to the objectives of this study, the development of PsyCap and its impacts on well-being should be studied with longitudinal data. There also remains a substantial gap in knowledge and analysis of socioeconomic and gender differences to understand the differences in interactions between PsyCap and SWB.

CONCLUSION

This research finds that psychological capital (PsyCap) is positively associated with Subjective Well-Being (SWB) of boarding school adolescents in Indonesia, and hope is the strongest predictor thereof. This positively adds to the resourceful nature of PsyCap and addresses an existing gap by placing it in the socio-cultural context of Islamic boarding school to PsyCap's nature resourceful.

This research confirms the need to strengthen the psychological resources of adolescents to be able to flourish in Islamic boarding schools. Because the most psychologically predictive of happiness was feeling hopeful, school interventions should emphasize goal-oriented, solution-focused, and prospective thinking. Activities like organized hope-group sessions, peer support, and school-based resilience programs aim to build psychological resources at school, which can be used more systematically.

Lastly, addressing such issues can ensure that schools and policymakers more comprehensively consider the mental health and developmental needs of adolescents in boarding and residential schools. Such steps will strengthen the mental health and developmental aid within the context of residential educational facilities.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors report no potential conflicts of interest that could bias this study or its findings.

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