Original Research Article

 **PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND TEACHER AUTONOMY AS PREDICTORS OF PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE**

**AMONG PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

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ABSTRACT

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| This study aimed to determine whether psychological capital and teacher autonomy significantly predict pedagogical competence among teachers in public elementary schools in Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental. Specifically, the study was guided by two research questions and tested two null hypotheses. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving a sample of 135 public elementary school teachers selected through complete enumeration. Standardized questionnaires were used, consisting of 20 items for psychological capital, 15 items for teacher autonomy, and 15 items for pedagogical competence. The instruments were validated by experts in the field and found to have excellent reliability, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients all exceeding 0.90. Data were collected through face-to-face surveys and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, Pearson product-moment correlation, and simple and multiple linear regression analyses. The findings revealed that the level of psychological capital among teachers was extensive, while both teacher autonomy and pedagogical competence were rated as very extensive. Significant relationships were found between psychological capital (r=0.668; p=0.000) and teacher autonomy (r=0.780; p=0.000) with pedagogical competence (r=0.768; p=0.000). Moreover, both psychological capital and teacher autonomy were significant predictors of pedagogical competence. Based on these results, it is recommended that school administrators foster a supportive environment that enhances psychological capital and promotes teacher autonomy to further strengthen pedagogical competence. |

*Keywords*: Psychological Capital, Teacher Autonomy, Pedagogical Competence, teacher autonomy

1. INTRODUCTION

Pedagogical competence is a critical factor in ensuring quality education, as it directly influences student learning outcomes and overall academic achievement. However, numerous studies have highlighted concerns regarding the low pedagogical competence of teachers, which manifests in ineffective instructional delivery, inadequate classroom management, and poor assessment strategies. Teachers who lack pedagogical competence struggle to engage students, adapt to diverse learning needs, and implement innovative teaching methods. This issue is further exacerbated by insufficient professional development opportunities, outdated curricula in teacher education programs, and a lack of mentoring support. Consequently, students may experience diminished learning motivation, reduced academic performance, and lower retention rates.

Globally, low pedagogical competence among teachers remains a pressing issue, affecting both developed and developing nations. According to Rahman (2023), approximately 31% of teachers in OECD countries feel unprepared to integrate new teaching methodologies in their classrooms. Furthermore, Kasalak & Dagyar (2020) found that 21% of teachers lacked confidence in using digital technology for instruction, highlighting gaps in pedagogical skills. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Yang and Kaiser (2022) revealed that only 45% of elementary school teachers met the minimum competency standards required for effective instruction, significantly impacting student learning outcomes.

In the Philippines, the issue of low pedagogical competence among teachers remains a significant challenge, contributing to poor student performance in national and international assessments. The Programme for International Student Assessment results (2022) revealed that the ranked Philippines in the bottom among participating countries in reading comprehension and among the lowest in mathematics and science, with experts attributing this to deficiencies in teaching quality.

In Philippines, Lee et al (2021) found that 40% of public school teachers struggled with learner-centered pedagogical approaches, while 35% had difficulties in integrating technology into their lessons. The Department of Education (DepEd) has acknowledged these concerns, emphasizing the need for strengthened in-service training, revised teacher education curricula, and improved mentorship programs to enhance pedagogical competence nationwide.

In Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental , the issue of low pedagogical competence among teachers has also been a growing concern, particularly in public schools where resource limitations and teacher training gaps persist. Ras (2024) found that elementary and elementary teachers in Davao struggled with learner-centered teaching strategies, leading to ineffective classroom engagement and poor student performance. Furthermore, Fatima et al. (2023) revealed that only few teachers had undergone advanced professional development training in the past three years, highlighting the need for continuous skills enhancement. This lack of pedagogical competence has contributed to declining National Achievement Test (NAT) scores in the region, particularly in mathematics and science. In response, local education officials have initiated capacity-building programs and partnerships with universities to improve teacher training, but challenges such as funding constraints and limited access to modern teaching resources continue to hinder progress.

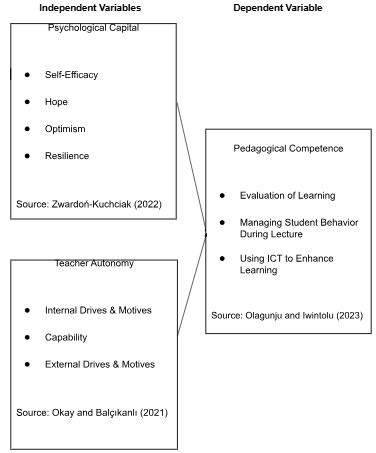
Psychological capital and teacher autonomy play crucial roles in enhancing the pedagogical competence of teachers by fostering resilience, motivation, and professional growth. Psychological capital, which includes self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, enables teachers to overcome challenges, adapt to new teaching strategies, and maintain a positive outlook in the face of difficulties (Freire et al., 2020). Teachers with high psychological capital are more likely to engage in continuous learning, seek innovative approaches, and persist in improving their instructional methods despite setbacks (Clarence et al., 2021).

Similarly, teacher autonomy the ability to make independent decisions regarding instructional strategies, classroom management, and curriculum adaptation empowers educators to tailor their teaching methods to students' diverse needs (Haapaniemi et al., 2021). When teachers have the freedom to exercise professional judgment, they can implement learner-centered approaches, experiment with new pedagogical techniques, and create a more engaging learning environment (Vieira, 2020). Studies have shown that teachers with higher autonomy tend to be more effective in classroom delivery, as they feel a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for student outcomes (Hauck et al., 2020).

Despite extensive research on pedagogical competence, a significant gap remains in understanding the combined influence of psychological capital and teacher autonomy on teachers' pedagogical competence, particularly in the local context of Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental. While studies have examined the individual effects of psychological capital on teacher performance and the impact of autonomy on instructional strategies, no known research has explored how these two factors interact to shape pedagogical competence.

Moreover, existing literature in the Philippine setting primarily focuses on general teacher training deficiencies and student performance outcomes, with limited emphasis on the psychological and professional factors that influence pedagogical competence. The absence of localized studies in Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental further underscores the need for empirical research to address this gap and provide data-driven insights that can inform teacher development programs and educational policies in the region.

This study aims to examine the combined influence of psychological capital and teacher autonomy on the pedagogical competence of elementary public school teachers in Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental. Given the persistent challenges in teaching quality and the lack of localized research on this topic, there is an urgent need to understand the factors that can enhance instructional effectiveness. Addressing this gap is crucial, as improving pedagogical competence directly impacts student learning outcomes and overall educational quality. The findings of this study will be significant for educators, school administrators, and policymakers by providing evidence-based insights that can guide teacher training programs, professional development initiatives, and educational reforms. By identifying how psychological capital and autonomy contribute to pedagogical competence, this research can help shape strategies to empower teachers, foster resilience, and promote innovative teaching practices, ultimately improving the quality of education in Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental and beyond.

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**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of the Study

**1.1 Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to determine if psychological capital and teacher autonomy significantly predict pedagogical competence among teachers in public elementary schools in Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental. Specifically, it sought answers the following questions:

1. What is the level of psychological capital of teachers in terms of:

1.1 self-efficacy;

1.2 hope;

1.3 optimism; and

1.4 resilience?

2. What is the level of teacher autonomy in terms of:

2.1 internal drives and motives;

2.2 capability; and

2.3 external drives and motives?

3. What is the level of pedagogical competence in terms of:

3.1 evaluation of learning;

3.2 managing student behavior during lecture; and

3.3 using ICT to enhance learning?

4. Is there a significant relationship between:

4.1 psychological capital and pedagogical competence; and

4.2 teacher autonomy and pedagogical competence?

5. Do psychological capital and teacher autonomy significantly predict pedagogical competence?

**1.2 Hypotheses**

Ho1. There is no significant relationship between psychological capital and teacher autonomy on pedagogical competence.

Ho2. Psychological capital and teacher autonomy do not significantly predict pedagogical competence.

2. methodology

**2.1 Research Design**

The study used a quantitative research design, specifically employing a descriptive correlational approach. Quantitative research involves the systematic collection of numerical data, with the application of statistical, mathematical, or computational methods to ensure objectivity, accuracy, and measurable outcomes. To ensure reliable results, the study used controlled and standardized data collection techniques, such as surveys, to quantify variables and test hypotheses (Rassel et al., 2020).

Additionally, the research followed a non-experimental approach, which focuses on observing and analyzing naturally occurring relationships between variables. Unlike experimental research, which manipulates variables to establish cause-and-effect relationships, non-experimental research aimed to understand and describe relationships as they naturally exist in real-world settings (Mohajan, 2020).

Furthermore, a descriptive correlational design was used to examine and describe the associations between two or more variables without altering them. The main goal of this approach was to identify and understand patterns, relationships, or connections between variables. In contrast to experimental research, which manipulates variables to determine causality, descriptive correlational research focuses on assessing the strength and direction of naturally occurring relationships (Gamage, 2025).

In context, the descriptive-correlational research design was considered appropriate for the study because it describes the extent of psychological capital, teacher autonomy and pedagogical competence. It also determines the significance of the relationship between the independent variables of psychological capital and pedagogical competence, while the dependent variable was pedagogical competence of public school teachers in Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental .

**2.2 Research Respondents**

The respondents of this study were 135 out of 240 public elementary school teachers in Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental, selected using Slovin’s formula with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. To ensure a homogeneous sample, the following inclusion criteria were applied: First, the teachers were currently employed in a public elementary school within the Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental during the 2024-2025 school year. Second, the teachers had at least one year of teaching experience in any subject area.

The sample was selected using a simple random sampling method. As noted by Demir et al. (2021), simple random sampling provided each member of the population with an equal and unbiased chance of being selected. Each teacher in the population was assigned a unique number, and the sample was drawn randomly through a lottery system after creating a list of eligible teachers.

This approach ensured a comprehensive examination of public elementary school teachers within the Baganga District, Division of Davao Oriental, maintaining homogeneity based on the established criteria. It also guaranteed that the sample was representative of the broader teacher population, providing a valid basis for analyzing the study’s variables.

**2.3 Research Instrument**

In order to determine psychological capital, teacher autonomy and pedagogical competence, this study adopt survey questionnaires based on the well-reviewed literature and published studies of various authors. The questionnaires used for this study are composed of three parts, namely, the Psychological Capital Questionnaire, Teachers’ Professional Autonomy Questionnaire, and Pedagogical Competence Scale.

A 20-item Psychological Capital Questionnaire measures the first part of the questionnaire. The scale was constructed by by Lipińska-Grobelny and Zwardoń-Kuchciak (2022) and had three dimensions namely: self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. The overall internal consistency values had met the criterion of Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.718, which supports the hypothesis that the questionnaire was reliable for measuring the variable psychological capital of teachers. Moreover, the teacher psychological capital questionnaire demonstrated excellent reliability in this study, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.956.

The second part of the questionnaire was constructed by Okay and Balçıkanlı (2021). Moreover, the teacher autonomy questionnaire had three dimensions: internal drives and motives, capability and external drives and motives. The internal reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha) for the subscales are: 0.718, respectively. The questionnaire demonstrated excellent reliability in this study, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.903.

The last part of the questionnaire was the Pedagogical Competence Scale by Olagunju and Iwintolu (2023) which was composed of 15 items. It had three dimensions namely: evaluation of learning, managing student behavior during lecture and using ICT to enhance learning. The Cronbach's Alpha for each field of the questionnaire is within the range from 0.7-1 and over-all reliability is 0.718, which means that the reliability of each field of the questionnaire and for the entire questionnaire indicates acceptable reliability. Moreover, in this study, the pedagogical competence questionnaire demonstrated excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.941.

**2.4 Data Gathering Procedure**

In order to collect data for this study, the researcher went through the following processes and procedures:

Permission to conduct the study. The data collection procedure for this study were carried out in a systematic manner to ensure ethical adherence and obtain the necessary approvals. Initially, formal permission was requested from the Dean of the Graduate School. Once granted, the request was forwarded to the School's Division Superintendent for further evaluation. This step-by-step approval process ensured that all institutional and educational guidelines were followed.

Collection of Data Information. The next phase involved gathering data by creating and distributing survey questionnaires that were thoughtfully designed to meet the study's objectives. Coordination with school officials ensured the smooth distribution of the surveys to public school teachers, along with a clear explanation of the study's purpose. During the data collection phase, the confidentiality and anonymity of participants were prioritized to encourage candid responses.

Collection and Statistical Computation. After data collection, the retrieval process involved carefully organizing and analyzing the collected information. The completed questionnaires will be counted, and responses were systematically recorded for statistical evaluation using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis.

# 2.5 Data Analysis

In analyzing and interpreting the data gathered for this study, several statistical tools were utilized to determine the aim of the study.

Mean was employed to determine the level of psychological capital, teacher autonomy and pedagogical competence among the respondents.

Pearson-r moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the significant relationship between psychological capital, teacher autonomy and pedagogical competence.

Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to determine whether psychological capital and teacher autonomy significantly predict pedagogical competence.

3. results and discussion

**3.1 Level of Psychological Capital of Teachers among Public Elementary School**

Table 1. *Level of Psychological Capital of Teachers among Public Elementary School*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicators** | **SD** | **Mean** | **Descriptive Level** |
| Self-Efficacy | 1.00 | 4.00 | Extensive |
| Hope | 1.05 | 4.09 | Extensive |
| Optimism | 1.05 | 4.11 | Extensive |
| Resilience | 1.06 | 4.20 | Very Extensive |
| **Overall** | **1.04** | **4.10** | **Extensive** |

Presented in Table 1 is the summary of the indicators in the extent of psychological capital of teachers, including self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, based on the mean scores and standard deviations. According to the data, the overall mean of 4.10 is described as "extensive", indicating that teachers generally exhibit a strong level of psychological capital in these areas.

It implies that teachers possess a positive mindset and a belief in their abilities, which contribute to their overall well-being and success in the classroom. This suggests that teachers are equipped with the psychological resources necessary to tackle challenges and maintain motivation in their work.

The indicator of resilience has the highest mean of 4.20, categorized as "very extensive," reflecting teachers' strong sense of resilience in facing challenges. The other indicators—self-efficacy, hope, and optimism—have mean scores ranging from 4.00 to 4.11, all categorized as "extensive". These findings suggest that while teachers demonstrate solid psychological capital, particularly in terms of resilience, there is a slight variation in their levels of self-efficacy, hope, and optimism. This variation may indicate that teachers are more confident in their ability to bounce back from adversity, but may have slightly less certainty regarding their broader personal capacities or future outcomes.

The overall standard deviation of 1.04, being higher than 1, indicates that the ratings were spread out over a wider range around the mean.

According to Paul and Jena (2022), psychological capital plays a significant role in enhancing teachers' well-being and performance, contributing to their ability to navigate challenges and persist in their professional efforts. In line with this, Kun and Gadanecz (2022) highlighted that teachers with high psychological capital are more motivated, engaged, and effective in the classroom. Ma (2023) further emphasized that psychological capital, particularly through fostering a positive outlook, is essential for teachers to remain resilient and optimistic in the face of challenges, ultimately improving their teaching and classroom dynamics.

**3.2 Extent of Teacher Autonomy of Teachers among Public Elementary School**

Table 2. ***Extent of Teacher Autonomy of Teachers among Public Elementary School***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicators** | **SD** | **Mean** | **Descriptive Level** |
| Internal Drives and Motives | 1.08 | 4.20 | Very Extensive |
| Capability | 1.08 | 4.28 | Very Extensive |
| External Drives and Motives | 1.09 | 4.33 | Very Extensive |
| **Overall** | **1.05** | **4.27** | **Very Extensive** |

Presented in Table 2 is the summary of the indicators in the extent of teacher autonomy, including internal drives and motives, capability, and external drives and motives, based on the mean scores and standard deviations. According to the data, the overall mean of 4.27 is described as "very exytensive", indicating that teachers generally exhibit a strong sense of autonomy in their professional roles. This suggests that teachers feel empowered in their work, driven by both intrinsic factors, such as personal motivations and self-belief, as well as external factors that encourage professional growth and recognition.

Among the indicators, external drives and motives have the highest mean of 4.33, categorized as "very extensive", reflecting the strong influence of external factors, such as institutional support and career advancement, on teachers' motivation and autonomy.

Capability follows closely with a mean score of 4.28, also categorized as "very extensive", indicating that teachers feel confident in their abilities to perform their professional tasks effectively. Internal drives and motives have a slightly lower mean of 4.20, categorized as "very extensive", suggesting that while teachers are highly motivated by personal goals, there may be slightly less emphasis on intrinsic factors compared to external drives.

The overall standard deviation of 1.05, being higher than 1, indicates that the ratings were spread out over a wider range around the mean.

According to Worth & Van den Brande. (2020), teacher autonomy plays a critical role in enhancing teachers' motivation and job satisfaction, contributing significantly to their overall performance. Shu (2022) emphasized that teachers who experience a high level of autonomy are more likely to engage fully in their work, demonstrating higher levels of effectiveness and dedication. Wang et al. (2024) also highlighted that autonomy, particularly when supported by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, promotes resilience and a positive mindset, allowing teachers to navigate challenges with confidence and maintain high levels of motivation in their teaching practice.

**3.3 Extent of Pedagogical Competence of Teachers among Public Elementary School**

Table 3. ***Extent of Pedagogical Competence of Teachers among Public Elementary School***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicators** | **SD** | **Mean** | **Descriptive Level** |
| Evaluation of Learning | 1.02 | 4.25 | Very Extensive |
| Managing Student Behavior During Lecture | 1.04 | 4.32 | Very Extensive |
| Using ICT to Enhance Learning | 1.03 | 4.21 | Very Extensive |
| **Overall** | **1.00** | **4.26** | **Very Extensive** |

Presented in Table 2 is the summary of the indicators in the extent of pedagogical competence, including evaluation of learning, managing student behavior during lectures, and using ICT to enhance learning, based on the mean scores and standard deviations. According to the data, the overall mean of 4.26 is described as "very extensive", indicating that teachers generally demonstrate a strong level of pedagogical competence in these areas. This suggests that teachers are highly skilled in evaluating student learning, managing classroom behavior, and integrating technology to improve the learning experience.

Among the indicators, managing student behavior during lectures has the highest mean of 4.32, categorized as "very extensive", reflecting teachers' effective strategies for maintaining discipline and promoting a productive learning environment. Evaluation of learning follows closely with a mean score of 4.25, also categorized as "very extensive", indicating that teachers are proficient in assessing students' progress and adapting teaching methods accordingly. Using ICT to enhance learning has a slightly lower mean of 4.21, but it is still categorized as "very extensive", suggesting that while teachers are skilled in incorporating technology into their lessons, there is still room for further improvement or more widespread application of digital tools.

The overall standard deviation of 1.00, being higher than 1, indicates that the ratings were spread out over a wider range around the mean.

According to Sökmen (2021), pedagogical competence is essential in fostering an effective learning environment, enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. Farmer et al. (2019) emphasized that teachers who exhibit strong pedagogical competence are better equipped to meet diverse learning needs, ensuring a more inclusive and dynamic classroom experience. Serrano (2019) further noted that a very extensive level of pedagogical competence, especially when enhanced through technology, can foster a positive teaching environment that supports both teacher and student growth.

**3.4 Significant Relationship between Psychological Capital, Teacher Autonomy and Pedagogical Competence of Teachers among Public Elementary Schools**

Table 4. *Significant Relationship between Psychological Capital, Teacher Autonomy and Pedagogical Competence of Teachers among Public Elementary Schools*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Pedagogical Competence** | | |
|  | R | p-value | Remarks |
| **Psychological Capital** | 0.668 | 0.000 | Significant |
| **Teacher Autonomy** | 0.780 | 0.000 | Significant |

Presented in Table 4 is the result of the correlation analysis between psychological capital, teacher autonomy, and pedagogical competence. The relationship between psychological capital and pedagogical competence has a correlation coefficient of 0.668 with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates a significant positive relationship between psychological capital and pedagogical competence.

Similarly, the relationship between teacher autonomy and pedagogical competence has a correlation coefficient of 0.780 with a p-value of 0.000, also indicating a significant positive relationship between teacher autonomy and pedagogical competence. These findings suggest that both psychological capital and teacher autonomy are positively related to pedagogical competence, meaning that higher levels of psychological capital and teacher autonomy are associated with better pedagogical skills.

This finding aligns with the research of Zewude et al. (2022), who highlighted that psychological capital enhances teachers' well-being and performance, leading to more effective teaching practices. Additionally, Xu (2023) emphasized that teachers with high psychological capital tend to be more engaged and motivated, which positively influences their pedagogical competence.

Furthermore, Kilag et al. (2023) pointed out that teacher autonomy empowers educators to make decisions in the classroom, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility that leads to more effective teaching outcomes. In addition, Averill and Major (2020) argued that teacher autonomy is crucial in promoting intrinsic motivation, which further enhances pedagogical competence by encouraging teachers to take initiative and innovate in their teaching practices.

**3.5 Significant Influence Between Psychological Capital, Teacher Autonomy on Pedagogical Competence of Teachers among Public Elementary Schools**

Table 5. *Significant Influence Between Psychological Capital, Teacher Autonomy on Pedagogical Competence of Teachers among Public Elementary Schools*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Pedagogical Competence** | | | |
| Singular Influence of the       Predictors | | Standardized Coefficients | T | p-value | Remarks |
| **Pedagogical Competence** | | 0.239 | 4.215 | 0.000 | Significant |
| **Teacher Autonomy** | | 0.430 | 6.345 | 0.000 | Significant |
| Combined Influence of the Predictors | | | | |  |
| R | 0.768 |  |  |  |  |
| R2 | 0.589 |  |  |  |  |
| F | 80.523 |  |  |  |  |
| P | 0.000 |  |  |  | Significant |

Presented in Table 4 is the result of the multiple regression analysis examining the influence of psychological capital and teacher autonomy on pedagogical competence. The analysis shows that both psychological capital and teacher autonomy significantly predict pedagogical competence. Specifically, psychological capital has a positive influence on pedagogical competence, with a standardized coefficient of 0.239, a t-value of 4.215, and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that as psychological capital increases, so does pedagogical competence, though the influence is relatively modest.

Teacher autonomy, on the other hand, shows a stronger influence with a standardized coefficient of 0.430, a t-value of 6.345, and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a highly significant and positive impact on pedagogical competence. For every unit increase in teacher autonomy, pedagogical competence improves more significantly than with psychological capital.

When considering the combined influence of both predictors, the R-value is 0.768, indicating a strong positive relationship with pedagogical competence. The R² value of 0.589 shows that 58.9% of the variance in pedagogical competence is explained by the combined effect of psychological capital and teacher autonomy. Additionally, the model is statistically significant, as indicated by the F-value of 80.523 and the p-value of 0.000. This suggests that psychological capital and teacher autonomy provide a significant influence on pedagogical competence. Therefore, the findings highlight that both factors are important contributors to enhancing pedagogical competence, with teacher autonomy having a stronger impact.

The result of the study emphasizes the crucial role of psychological capital and teacher autonomy in fostering pedagogical competence. When teachers possess high levels of psychological capital and are given the autonomy to make decisions in their teaching practices, they are more likely to demonstrate effective pedagogical skills and improve their overall teaching performance (Huang & Wang, 2021). Furthermore, Paloș et al. (2020) emphasize that the combination of psychological capital and teacher autonomy creates an environment where teachers feel empowered and confident in their abilities, positively influencing their teaching methods and student interactions. Additionally, Zewude & Maria (2022) highlight that when teachers experience both psychological capital and autonomy, they are more likely to take the initiative and adapt their teaching strategies, further enhancing their pedagogical competence.

**5. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were formulated:

The psychological capital of teachers is oftentimes observed, indicating that teachers generally exhibit extensive levels of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. However, while these characteristics are frequently present, variations may occur depending on contextual and individual factors. This implies that teachers' ability to maintain a positive psychological state influences their performance and well-being.

Teacher autonomy is always observed, signifying that teachers demonstrate strong internal drives and motives, possess the necessary capabilities, and respond effectively to external drives and motives. This consistent autonomy implies that teachers have the confidence and resources to make instructional decisions, exercise professional judgment, and navigate their roles independently. A highly autonomous teaching workforce fosters adaptability and innovation, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

Pedagogical competence is always observed, demonstrating that teachers effectively evaluate learning, manage student behavior during lectures, and integrate ICT to enhance instruction. This suggests that teachers possess a strong command of pedagogical strategies and are equipped to facilitate meaningful learning experiences. However, continued professional development and institutional support remain essential to ensure that these competencies are continuously refined and aligned with evolving educational trends.

A significant relationship exists between psychological capital and pedagogical competence. Teachers with higher psychological capital tend to exhibit stronger pedagogical skills, as their self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience contribute to their ability to manage classroom challenges and implement effective teaching strategies.

Similarly, there is a significant relationship between teacher autonomy and pedagogical competence. Teachers with greater autonomy are more likely to exhibit high levels of pedagogical competence, as they have the freedom to make instructional decisions, innovate in their teaching practices, and adapt to student needs.

Psychological capital and teacher autonomy significantly predict pedagogical competence. The combined influence of these factors suggests that fostering both psychological capital and autonomy among teachers can lead to higher levels of pedagogical competence.

This aligns with Positive Psychology Theory, King (2021), as cited by Stiefel et al. (2024), which emphasizes the role of positive psychological traits in enhancing performance and well-being. Teachers with extensive psychological capital are more likely to develop strong pedagogical competence, as their optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy contribute to their teaching effectiveness. Similarly, Control-Value Theory by Pekrun (2006), as cited by Pekrun (2024), suggests that teachers who perceive greater control over their work are more motivated and competent in instructional delivery. The predictive role of autonomy highlights that when teachers have the freedom to make instructional decisions, they are more capable of refining their pedagogical skills. Furthermore, Conservation of Resources Theory, Houn et al. (2020), as cited by Bon & Shire (2022), reinforces these findings by asserting that individuals invest and protect their psychological and professional resources to sustain competence. This suggests that teachers who possess strong psychological capital and autonomy are better equipped to maintain and enhance their pedagogical abilities, ensuring continuous growth in their professional practice.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were proposed:

Given that the extent of psychological capital among teachers is extensive, it may be essential for schools to continue nurturing and building upon this positive resource. Administrators may consider implementing programs or activities that further promote the development of psychological capital, such as resilience-building workshops, mindset training, and fostering an optimistic work culture. Encouraging teachers to harness their psychological strengths may help them navigate challenges more effectively and enhance their overall pedagogical performance. Moreover, providing opportunities for teachers to reflect on their experiences and share strategies for overcoming obstacles may strengthen their psychological capital and contribute to their growth.

As teacher autonomy is very extensive, it may be recommended that schools continue to support and enhance this autonomy. Administrators may ensure that teachers have the freedom to make decisions regarding their teaching practices, allowing them to personalize and adapt their methods to suit their students' needs. Providing teachers with the flexibility to explore new teaching strategies, assess student progress independently, and engage in professional development opportunities that align with their interests may help sustain and expand teacher autonomy. Creating an environment where teachers feel empowered to make decisions about their teaching methods may likely foster a stronger sense of ownership and pride in their work.

Since pedagogical competence is very extensive, it may be crucial to maintain and further develop this strength among teachers. Schools may focus on providing continuous professional development opportunities that build on existing competencies, such as advanced pedagogical training, specialized workshops, and peer observations. Additionally, fostering collaboration among teachers to share best practices, as well as encouraging reflective practices, may further enhance their pedagogical expertise. Recognizing and celebrating the exceptional pedagogical skills of teachers may not only increase their job satisfaction but also inspire others to elevate their teaching practices.

Given the significant relationships between psychological capital, teacher autonomy, and pedagogical competence, it may be recommended that schools adopt a holistic approach that integrates these three elements. School leaders may create a supportive and empowering environment that nurtures teachers' psychological well-being, grants them the freedom to make decisions in their teaching, and encourages continuous development in pedagogical competence. A comprehensive approach that fosters psychological capital and autonomy may likely lead to sustained excellence in pedagogical practices, benefiting both teachers and students.

As psychological capital and teacher autonomy significantly predict pedagogical competence, it is recommended that schools continue to develop these two factors to enhance overall teaching effectiveness. Administrators may provide resources, tools, and professional development programs that strengthen both psychological capital and autonomy, such as mentoring initiatives, leadership opportunities, and workshops on stress management and resilience. Teachers who feel supported in these areas are more likely to demonstrate high levels of pedagogical competence, which can positively influence student outcomes and overall school performance. Given the correlational nature of this study, future longitudinal research is encouraged to examine the causal relationships among these variables over time. Additionally, intervention-based studies, such as training programs aimed at improving psychological capital and teacher autonomy, may offer practical insights into how these constructs can be systematically enhanced to support pedagogical growth.

ETHIC APPROVAL AND Consent

This study was conducted in strict adherence to established ethical standards to uphold the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants. Before initiating data collection, the researcher obtained the necessary approvals, including an endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges and ethical clearance from the institution’s Ethics Review Committee. The research procedures were guided by the framework of Pregoner et al. (2025) and aligned with current protocols for studies involving human participants in educational settings. Participation was entirely voluntary, with respondents fully informed of the study’s purpose, scope, and their right to decline or withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent was secured to confirm their understanding and willingness to participate. To maintain confidentiality, no personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were handled with strict privacy. The data collected were used exclusively for academic purposes. These ethical safeguards ensured that the study was conducted with transparency, integrity, and full professional accountability.

Disclaimer (Artificial Intelligence)

The author(s) hereby declare that generative AI technologies have been used during the writing and editing of this manuscript. The details of the AI usage are as follows:

1. Grammarly: Used for grammar and spellchecking, as well as suggestions for improving sentence structure and overall clarity.
2. Quillbot: Employed for paraphrasing and refining sentence flow to enhance readability and coherence.

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