# IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATES OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

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## INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology has gotten significant attention from the academic world within the previous decade. Psychological capital is defined as an individual's positive psychological development, which has main components such as Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism (HERO). It is known as a HERO; Hope is a feeling of trust, and efficacy is the ability to meet a goal. Resilience is the ability to overcome obstacles quickly, and optimism is the feeling of confidence. Psychological capital is strongly associated with increased well-being, life satisfaction, and work. Developing even one of the four components of psychological capital can help a person achieve his or her goals more efficiently, improve his or her performance in all fields of life, and become more successful. Academic performance is one of the most relevant outputs in university settings. It refers to students' knowledge at the end of the university degree program. One of the main measures in academic performance measurement is the Grade Point Average (GPA). The students who are well educated will have a higher Grade Point Average (GPA) based on their abilities and a lower Grade Point Average (GPA) with lower performance. The university system will have to engage in various educational and extracurricular activities such as examinations, assignments, classroom tests, research, etc., for all these tasks; students must have a good mindset.

The current study will fill the empirical gap in the Sri Lankan context because very few studies have been done based on national universities. Moreover, in the international context, there is a shortage of studies about the impact of psychological capital on the academic performance of undergraduates of universities because there is no access to all current information for gathering data internationally. In reviewing the literature, some researchers have discovered a link between psychological capital and academic performance. However, there are mixed findings in this area. When considering the Sri Lankan context, those studies have not been done based on the entire national universities, where they have considered only one university for the research at a time. As a result, this study examines the impact of psychological capital on the academic performance of undergraduate national universities in Sri Lanka.

## METHODOLOGY

When attaining the study's objective, the researcher used a quantitative approach. This study was conducted using a questionnaire survey involving fourteen national universities of Sri Lanka with 125 respondents to collect the necessary data as a primary data collection tool. The researchers used a convenience sample approach while ensuring representativeness. The sample was determined to be representative of the intended population. Based on the literature

review, the researcher drafted the questionnaire, and then it was given to the two academic experts' research supervisors for their opinion. After that, the comments were adhered to prepare the final questionnaire given to the responders for the pilot testing. The researcher constructed this questionnaire as an online Google form that was emailed to the undergraduates of National universities. The researcher will start by composing an introductory questionnaire. After gathering data using a structured questionnaire, the data were adequately analyzed using descriptive analysis and correlation and regression analysis to find the relationship between psychological capital and academic performance of undergraduates. The research model is constructed as below.

$$PsyCap = \beta_0 + \beta_1 H + \beta_2 SE + \beta_3 R + \beta_4 O \dots (01)$$

Where,

PsyCap-Psychological Capital
H-Hope
SE-Self-efficacy
R-Resilience
O-Optimism
$\beta_0$-Constant $\beta_1$, $\beta_2$, $\beta_3$ and $\beta_4$-cofficient of independent variable

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data cleaning and screening were initially done, and the demographic factors were examined. In this study, academic performance was the dependent variable, and Hope, Self-Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism were used to measure psychological capital as the independent variables. The researcher will use descriptive analysis to explain and summarise the behaviour of the variable in the study. Table 1 shows the results of the descriptive analysis, including mean value, SD, variance, skewness, and kurtosis value of academic performance.

Table 1 Descriptive analysis

| Variables | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | SD | Variance | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Academic Performance | 1.00 | 3.75 | 2.116 | 0.578 | 0.334 | 0.250 | -0.217 |
| Hope | 1.00 | 4.75 | 1.968 | 0.614 | 0.378 | 1.244 | 3.462 |
| Self-efficacy | 1.00 | 4.80 | 1.902 | 0.647 | 0.420 | 1.511 | 4.373 |
| Resilience | 1.00 | 5.00 | 1.976 | 0.606 | 0.368 | 1.812 | 7.442 |
| Optimism | 1.00 | 4.80 | 1.8480 | .57888 | .335 | 1.365 | 5.163 |

The researchers applied regression analysis to compare the dependent and independent variables. This study used multiple regression analysis to assess the impact of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism on undergraduate academic performance.

Table 2 Regression Analysis

| Variables | Coefficients B | Coefficients Std. Error | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Constant) | 0.785 | 0.137 | 5.724 | 0.000 |
| Hope | 0.364 | 0.106 | 3.432 | 0.001 |
| Self-efficacy | 0.288 | 0.124 | 2.323 | 0.022 |
| Resilience | -0.068 | 0.117 | -0.582 | 0.562 |
| Optimism | 0.108 | 0.124 | 0.872 | 0.385 |

According to the regression Table 2, it was found that hope had a statistically significant and positive impact on the academic performance of undergraduates with the ($\beta = 0.364$, p<0.001). This result is the same as the findings of Udayanga and Weerasinghe (2019), who discovered a moderately positive association between hope and academic achievement.

The following hypothesis shows that self-efficacy had a significant and positive relationship with the academic performance of undergraduates with the ($\beta = 0.288$, *p*<0.022). This result is the same as the findings of Richardson et al. (2012). It was further reconfirmed by the present study showing a statistically significant and positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance. The development of self-confidence to articulate thoughts without fear could improve self-efficacy. More opportunities for student presentations should be provided, as well as opportunities for students to participate in the debate and express their opinions. The resilience had an insignificant and negative impact on the academic performance of undergraduates ($\beta = -0.068$, *p*<0.562) because its beta value was recorded as minus and a p-value greater than 0.05. This result was in some ways in contravention to those of other previous studies; according to research by Martin and Marsh (2006), students' academic resilience levels were significant predictors of significant outcomes, including class participation, satisfaction with education, and general self-esteem.

Moreover, it found that optimism had an insignificant but positive relationship with the academic performance of undergraduates ($\beta = 0.108$, *p*<0.385). According to Huan et al. (2006), students' academic performance or achievement is favourably correlated with their optimal level. Because of that, it was against the findings of the present study.

**CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

This study aimed to examine the impact of psychological capital on the academic performance of undergraduates of national universities in Sri Lanka. Based on the regression results, hope and self-efficacy supported the study's objectives, and both variables had a statistically significant positive impact on undergraduates' academic performance. However, resilience and optimism were not supported by the study's objectives because resilience has a statistically

insignificant negative impact on undergraduates' academic performance and optimism had an insignificant but positive relationship with the academic performance of undergraduates. The current study contributed to filling the empirical gap in the Sri Lankan context. There are few studies on this topic considering in the Sri Lankan context. Those studies did not consider all national universities; instead, they focused on only one at a time. This study has gathered data covering all of Sri Lanka's national universities. The research results are helpful for anyone interested in learning more on this subject and for policymakers and regulators who need to make decisions. Additionally, this study can be the basis for future students, students in other undergraduate programs, and academic staff members who want to continue their research in this field.

*Keywords*: Hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy

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