

**USING PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL TO PREDICT MENTAL HEALTH
AMONG DEGREE COLLEGE STUDENTS**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Master of Science in Psychology

By

ELSA M JOHN

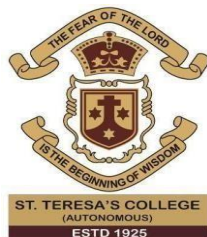
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, “Using Positive Psychological Capital to predict the Mental Health of Degree College students”, is a bonafide record submitted by Ms. Elsa M John, Reg.no. SM20PSY006, of St. Teresa’s College, Ernakulam under my supervision and guidance and that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma, fellowship, title or recognition before.

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DECLARATION

I, Elsa M John, hereby declare that the project entitled, “Using Positive Psychological Capital to predict Mental Health among degree college students.” has not been submitted by me for the award of any degree, title or recognition, before.

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Date: 30/05/2022

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on using Positive Psychological Capital to predict Mental Health among Degree College Students. 195 samples were collected from various colleges in the district of Kerala. The age range of samples was between 18-22. The sampling technique used was Random Sampling. The results of this study indicates that there is significant relationship between the two variables, Psychological Capital and Mental Health and that there is a significant difference between the Psychological Capital of college students who fall in the Languishing, Moderately Mentally Healthy and Flourishing categories.

Keywords- Psychological Capital, Mental Health.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Mental health problems among college students have been increasing in prevalence and severity during recent times (Blanco et al., 2008; Drum, Brownson, Burton Denmark, & Smith, 2009; Eisenberg, Hunt, & Speer, 2013; Fink, 2014; Gallagher, 2008; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). Since the last decade of twentieth century, mental illness has been considered as a public health issue alongside other physical illness (Keyes, 2014). Rather than focusing on the promotion of positive mental health, policy makers and scholars are still focused on addressing mental illness and instituting risk reduction programs. Efforts and initiatives to shift the conception of mental health from the mere “absence of mental illness” to something complete and positive, or to the presence of “well-being” have not yet been significantly effective. (Keyes, 2002)

The WHO emphasizes the need to promote positive mental well-being by defining good mental health as “... a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (Seligman, 2012; World Health Organization [WHO], 2004) (WHO, 2004). Furthermore, the Keyes’ mental health continuum model is exemplified in the WHO’s perspective on mental health—as a complete state that represents not only absence of disease, but also consists of the presence of positive states of human capacities and functioning categorized along a continuum by levels of flourishing, moderate, and languishing. (Keyes,2002, 2007, 2013).

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the past few years, mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and self-injury among college students are growing at an alarming rate. Since the last decade of twentieth century, mental illness has been considered a public health issue alongside other physical illness. Recent studies indicate that there is an upward trend in the number of students with severe psychological problems which makes the mental health profile of college students a growing concern. Attending college has a dual impact on an individual. It marks a significant and stressful developmental period of an individual’s life. On the other hand, it is at this phase of life where various psychological disorders have their first onset. It is imperative that mental health professionals at the college level consider the problems associated with identity formation and the gradual manifestations of mental illnesses during these high-risk early adult years

because the prevalence of developmental and mental health issues in college student communities is becoming more diverse and complex than ever in the history of higher education. (Christine S Bhat., 2015)

Also, the concept of Psychological Capital which is not much familiar among all, is strongly linked to increased well-being, work and life satisfaction. Therefore, it's necessary that the upcoming future, i.e.; the college students' mental health and PsyCap are assessed to help students persevere in their studies in a psychologically healthier manner. As PsyCap and its dimensions are malleable, (Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans et al.,2012) they can be developed through training interventions along with various positive psychology exercises that focuses on enhancing well-being in conjunction with PsyCap. (Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008; Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Luthans, Youssef, &Avolio, 2007). Exploring further in this regard revealed a variety of potent, low- cost approaches that impact mental health through development of positive strengths such as hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. (Luthans et al., 2008)

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The mental health of college students is a growing concern as there has been a significant hike in the number of youngsters with mental health issues. (Blanco et al., 2008; Drum, Brownson, Burton Denmark, & Smith, 2009; Eisenberg, Hunt, & Speer, 2013; Fink, 2014; Gallagher, 2008; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). Also, individuals are prone to develop mental health problems during this age period and health professionals need to pay closer attention to college students. The concept of Psychological Well-being is important since it is strongly linked to increased well-being, work and life satisfaction. Therefore, it's necessary that the upcoming future, i.e.; the college students' mental health and Psychological Capital are assessed and help students persevere in their educational studies in a psychologically healthier manner. As PsyCap dimensions are malleable, they can be developed through trainings interventions.

1.3 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

By drawing connections among a management/organizational concept and an overarching positive psychology approach of mental health among within student population, the study challenges the conventional conceptual frameworks for mental health by enlightening the positive aspects of human functioning and wellness, as well as by emphasizing the significance of individual positive strengths. In doing so, this study addressed knowledge gap in the literature and added implications to the counseling and higher education body of research.

In order to attain optimal mental health (flourishing), the findings of this study can be helpful to professionals in college-settings to redirect their focus on developing positive psychological resources such as the hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism. The findings of this research study also help students persevere in their educational studies in a psychologically healthier manner, making a case of integrating PsyCap into academic curriculum. As PsyCap and its dimensions are malleable (Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans et al., 2012), they can be developed through training interventions and various positive psychology exercises that focuses on enhancing well-being in conjunction with PsyCap (Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008; Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Exploring further in this regard revealed a variety of potent, low-cost approaches that impact mental health through development of positive strengths such as hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. (Luthans et al., 2008)

This study proposes to explore the role of PsyCap and additional correlates (academic achievement, and socio-demographics such as gender, age, race/ ethnicity, sexual orientation, current educational degree) in predicting mental health to bring a positive light on mental health and psychological resources of college students. This study utilizes the overarching positive psychology framework to investigate various positive psychological constructs among college student population (Seligman, 2002, 2003; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman et al., 2005). The rationale for developing various programs and initiatives that ensure fostering higher levels of positive mental health (flourishing) in college campuses will be provided by the findings of this study.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is limited only to degree students from Kerala.

CHAPTER -2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In 2010, Braithwaite et al. used the National College Health Assessment on a population of 1621 college students to compare the difference in the degree of well-being between single college students and college students in committed romantic relationships. The results indicated that students in committed romantic relationships had fewer mental health problems than the single students. Chen & Lucock in 2022, studied the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Levels of mental health and quality of life in 1173 university students during the COVID-19 pandemic using Patient health questionnaire (PHQ-9), Generalized anxiety disorder questionnaire (GAD-7), Brief resilience scale (BRS), EQ-5D-5L, COVID-19 related questions. Results indicated that high levels of anxiety and depression, with more than 50% experiencing levels above the clinical cut offs, and females scoring significantly higher than males. It also suggested relatively low levels of resilience, Higher levels of distress were associated with lower levels of exercising, higher levels of tobacco use, and a number of life events associated with the pandemic and lockdown. In the year 2021, Prasath et al., conducted a study on the relationships between psychological capital (PsyCap), coping strategies, and well-being among 609 university students using self-report measures. Results revealed that well-being was significantly lower during COVID-19 compared to before the onset of the pandemic. It also indicated that PsyCap predicted well-being mediating role of coping strategies between PsyCap and well-being. In 2019, Gujar & Ali studied the effects of psychological capital and self-esteem on emotional and behavioral problems among 387 adolescents using PsyCap Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (self-report). Results showed that Emotional and behavioral problems of the adolescent population are closely related to self-esteem and PsyCap. Son et al., in 2020, conducted a study on the effects COVID-19 on 195 college students using Mental Health Questionnaire, Psychological well-being scale. Results showed that Pandemic has a great effect on the Mental Health and Well-being of students. In the year 2019, Sarshar et al., conducted a study on 261 high school students to investigate the relationship between psychological capital and perfectionism using PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ) & Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale. Results showed that Four aspects of psychological capital affect the negative perfectionism. Yan et al., in 2016 conducted a study to explore the influences of coping styles on interpersonal relationships and academic performances when PsyCap acts as the mediating variable, and to explore the influences of family relations on

PsyCap when coping styles acts as the mediating variable on 832 college graduates using PsyCap Questionnaire (PCQ) & Simplified Coping Style Questionnaire (SCSQ). Results showed that Coping styles of college graduates have a significant impact on interpersonal relationships and academic performances with PsyCap play a mediating role. In 1988, Warr et al., conducted a study on the Effect of unemployment on mental health on 3077 unemployed people using General Health Questionnaire. Results indicated that there is Significant relation between unemployment and mental health. Truong & Ma, in 2006 Study on the Relation between Neighborhoods and Mental Health on 1600 individuals using General Health Questionnaire. Results revealed that There is Significant relation between Mental Health and neighborhood characteristics. In the year 2019, Hernández-Varas et al., studied to examine whether psychological capital, work satisfaction and health self-perception are able to predict psychological wellbeing in a military population on 492 Spanish soldiers using PsyCap questionnaire, Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, SF- 36D Health Survey Questionnaire. Results showed a positive significant correlation detected between the variables psychological capital, work satisfaction and health self-perception and psychological wellbeing. Avey et al., in 2010 studied the Impact of PsyCap on employee well-being overtime on 280 employees from various occupations using PCQ-24, Index of PWB and General Health Questionnaire and the following results showed that there is Significant relation between PsyCap and Well-being. Alzyoud & Mert, in the year 2019 studied to find whether PsyCap is positively correlated with Organisational identity on Chinese workers using Fred Luthans PsyCap Questionnaire and Milleretal Organisational Identification Scale. Results showed that PsyCap is positively related to Organisational Identity. In 2020, Santisi et al., studied the relationships between psychological capital and two dimensions of quality of life on 807 Italian workers using Psychological Capital Questionnaire, Courage Measure, Satisfaction with Life Scale, and Flourishing Scale. results indicated that psychological capital predicts life satisfaction and flourishing, with an indirect mediation effect of courage only on flourishing. Hashmi et al., in 2022 Study to determine the interactive effects of sexual harassment and psychological capital on victims' burnout using the evidence from the post-#MeToo movement era on 304 Female Employees using Sexual Harassment and Gender Harassment related questions, PsyCap Questionnaire. Results found out that Gender harassment leads to burnout causing emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment among the victims. However, psychological capital helps

victims cope with these adverse effects of gender harassment. In 2020, Tian et al., Study to explore the association of occupational stress with fatigue and to examine the mediating role of psychological capital (PsyCap) among 1104 Chinese physicians using 14-item Fatigue Scale (FS-14), the Effort-reward Imbalance questionnaire (ERI), the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ). Results showed that Occupational stress and PsyCap were significantly associated with fatigue. PsyCap significantly mediated the association. Dhiman & Arora, in 2018 Study to determine the significant negative relationship between psychological capital and turnover intentions of 230 paramedical & nursing staff using PCQ scale & turnover intention was measured using a three-item measure based on Mobley, Horner& Hollingsworth theory (1978). Results showed that psychological capital has a significant negative relationship with turnover intentions. Kazemian Moghadam & Haroon Rashidi, in the year 2020 conducted a study to determine the significant relationship of psychological capital and spirituality at work with psychological well-being in 123 nurses using PsyCap questionnaire (Luthans, 2007), psychological well-being scale (Ryff, 1989), and spirituality at workplace questionnaire (Kinjerski and Skrypnek, 2006). Results revealed that psychological capital and spirituality in work are considered in programs to promote mental health in nurses. In 2019, Kawalya et al., studied to determine the significant and positive relationship between PsyCap and flow experience on 800 professional nurses using PsyCap Questionnaire (Luthans). Results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between PsyCap and flow experience among Nurses. In 1992, Norris et al., conducted a study to determine the significant effects of indoor and outdoor exercise sessions on acute wellbeing and stress levels on 140 collegiate sports participants using Mental Health Questionnaire. Results showed that Engagement in outdoor exercise did not lead to more beneficial changes than engagement in exercise sessions indoors, outdoor exercise environments were perceived as more calming and exercise sessions in more calming environments were associated with more stress-reductive effects. Robinson et al., in 2021, Studied to find whether there is a significant extent to which mental health symptoms changed during the pandemic in 2020 on 200 samples using Mental Health Questionnaire. Results showed that compared to pre-pandemic outbreak, there was an overall increase in mental health symptoms observed during March-April 2020. In the year 2021, Munawer et al., conducted a study to determine whether PsyCap is significantly correlated with mental health on 400 Graduate Students using Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire, Mental Health

Continuum-Short Form (MHC –SF). Results showed that the dimensions of PsyCap(HERO) were correlated with the mental health of the graduate students, and there was a positive predictive relationship between PsyCap and Mental Health. Sarif et al., in the year 2021, Studied to determine significant relationship between Mental Health and PsyCap of Digital Learning students amidst Covid 19 on 200 students using PsyCap Questionnaire (Luthans), Mental health Continuum. Results indicated that there are effects on mental health of digital learning students and PsyCap can be used as a coping strategy. Younas et al., conducted a study to examine the relationship between mental health and psychological capital among young adults in the year 2020 on 200 University students using Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ), Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PsyCap). Results showed that PsyCap among young adults leads towards better mental health as it is negatively associated with internalizing (emotional problems) and externalizing (pro-social) behavior. In 2015, Krasikova et al., did a Study to find whether psychological capital is negatively related to diagnoses for mental health problems (PTSD, anxiety, and depression), Psychological capital is negatively related to diagnoses for substance abuse on 1,889 U.S. Army soldiers using Global Assessment Tool, Post Deployment Health Questionnaire, PCQ-12. Results showed that PsyCap affected substance abuse diagnoses both directly and indirectly. Razaq & Latif, n.d. conducted a study to determine the relationship between Psychological Capital, Mental Health and Burnout among Professionals working in Autism Centers in Punjab Pakistan in the year 2021, on 450 Professionals who handle children with autism using Psychological Capital Questionnaire, General Health Questionnaire and Teacher Burnout Inventory. Results showed that There is a significant positive relationship between Psychological Capital and Mental Health. In 2017, Haleem et al., conducted a study to determine the significant relationship between psychological capital and mental health of rescue workers on 502 male rescue workers with their age ranging from 22 to 44 years using Urdu versions of Mental Health Inventory & Psychological Capital Questionnaire. Results found out that there is significant relationship between psychological capital and mental health of rescue workers. Estiri et al., in 2016, conducted a study on the Impact of psychological capital on mental health by investigating the mediating effects of job burnout on this relationship on 384 Iranian Nurses using PCQ-24, Burnout Inventory (MBI), General Health Questionnaire. Results proved that there is a significant relationship between psychological capital, job burnout and mental health; also, there is a significant negative relationship between psychological capital and

job burnout, and a significant positive relationship between psychological capital and mental health.

2.2 RESEARCH GAP

In recent years' mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and self-injury among college students has been showing an upward trend. Since the last decade of twentieth century, mental illness has been considered a public health issue alongside other physical illness. The mental health profile of college students is a growing concern as there is an upward trend in the number of students with severe psychological problems being reported in recent studies. y (Blanco et al., 2008; Drum, Brownson, Burton Denmark, & Smith, 2009; Eisenberg, Hunt, & Speer, 2013; Fink, 2014; Gallagher, 2008; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). The prevalence of developmental and mental health issues in college student communities is currently becoming more diverse and complex than ever in the history of higher education. Attending college marks a significant and stressful developmental period of an individual's life. Various psychological disorders have their first onset during this period. It is therefore imperative that mental health professionals at the college level consider the problems associated with identity formation and the gradual manifestations of mental illnesses during these high-risk early adult years.

It is necessary that the upcoming future, i.e.; the college students' mental health and PsyCap are assessed to help students persevere in their educational studies in a psychologically healthier manner. Finding the relationship of sociodemographic variables with mental health would pave the way for researchers to further examine distinct and 'at-risk' sections of the population. Furthermore, the findings of this study will have the potential to guide and frame student development programs for college students in both overall life and academic areas. The results may be applicable for individuals' as well as for institutional development.

CHAPTER-3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 AIM

To use Positive Psychological Capital to predict Mental Health among Degree College Students.

3.2 STATEMENT PROBLEM

Growing concern regarding the Mental Health of college students.

3.3 OBJECTIVES

The goal of the current research is to test the following research objectives:

1. To describe the level of psychological capital and mental health of college students using their PsyCap and Mental Health scores.
2. To explore the relationships between psychological capital and mental health of college students in the studied sample
3. To determine if differences exist in PsyCap of college students whose scores place them in one of three mental health continuum categories languishing, moderately mentally healthy, and flourishing.
4. To determine the extent to which PsyCap HERO dimensions within the Overall-life and the college-work categories predict the variability in mental health among college students.

3.4 HYPOTHESES

1. There will be a significant relationship between Psychological Capital and Mental Health.
2. There will be a significant difference between the Psychological Capital of college students who fall in the Languishing, Moderately Mentally Healthy and Flourishing categories.

3.5 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

3.5.1 Mental health- Keyes (2002) defines mental health as “a syndrome of symptoms of positive feelings and positive functioning in life” (p. 207). The three categories of mental health on the continuum are languishing, moderately mentally healthy, and flourishing (Keyes, 2002, p. 210). Keyes’ describes dimensions of subjective well-being that accounts for mental health symptoms, broadly are of three clusters- (i) Emotional Well-Being; (ii) Psychological well-being; and (iii) Social well-being (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002, p. 1007).

➤ **Emotional well-being.** Emotional well-being is a specific dimension of subjective well-being and a subset of symptoms used to diagnose states of mental health, which reflects on the degree to which individuals self-report the experience of symptoms of positive and negative affect (Keyes, 2000, p. 71).

➤ **Psychological well-being.** *Psychological well-being* is said to result when an individual is finding meaning and purposeful direction in life, accepting oneself, seeking continued personality development, acting and thinking anonymously and establishing potential relationships with others (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; p. 722). Also referred as *Eudaimonic well-being* (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

➤ **Social well-being.** Keyes’ (1998) states that, “individuals are mentally healthy when they view special life as meaningful and understandable, when they see society as

possessing potential for growth, and when they feel they belong in their communities, are able to accept all parts of society, and when they see their lives as contributing to society”.

3.5.2 Positive psychological capital- Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007) defines PsyCap as a positive psychological strength or resource “characterized by:

(a) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks;

(b) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future;

(c) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and

(d) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success”.

3.6 SAMPLE

The size of the sample was 195 undergraduate students above the age of 18 from different colleges of the Kerala State.

3.6.1 POPULATION

The population considered to draw conclusions from was undergraduate students within the age group of 18-22.

3.6.2 SAMPLING DESIGN

Descriptive Cross Sectional Research design was used to study the relationship between Psychological Capital and Mental Health of college going undergraduate students.

- Inclusion Criteria-
 - Undergraduate students
 - Students within the age group of 22
 - Students from colleges in Kerala.

- Exclusion Criteria
 - Post graduate, Mphil or PhD Students.

3.7 TESTS OR TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

1) Mental health is assessed using Keyes' Mental Health Continuum- Short Form [MHCSF] by Corey L M Keyes. The three well-being clusters assessed by the MHC-SF are emotional well-being, social well-being, and psychological well-being.

Purpose- MHCSF is used to assess the Mental Health of the students.

Scoring- Items are summed, yielding a total score ranging from 0 to 70. Subscale scores range from 0 to 15 for the emotional (hedonic) well-being, from 0 to 25 for social well-being, and from 0 to 30 for psychological well-being. Flourishing mental health is defined by reporting ≥ 1 of 3 hedonic signs and ≥ 6 of 11 eudaimonic signs (social and psychological subscales combined) experienced "every day" or "5-6 times a week." Higher scores indicate greater levels of positive well-being.

Validity- The MHC-SF has been validated (discriminant validity) and has shown excellent internal consistency (> 0.80) in adolescents of 12 through 18 years and adults in the United States (Keyes, 2009). In addition to the U.S, this instrument has been extensively tested-retested for assessing reliability and validity in Netherlands and South Africa population.

Reliability- The three successive three-month periods test-retest reliability of the instrument averaged 0.68, additionally the 9-month test-retest averaged 0.65 (Keyes, 2007; Lamers et al., 2011). Additionally, the test-retest reliability for the Long-Form was over a

time period of 4 weeks and estimated as 0.57 for the overall psychological well-being domain, 0.64 for the overall emotional well-being domain, and 0.71 for the overall social well-being domain (Keyes, 2009; Robitschek & Keyes, 2009).

Thus, the MHC-SF is an empirically tested, highly reliable and valid instrument to measure positive mental health cross-culturally and over a period of time.

II) PsyCap in this study is measured using Academic PsyCap Questionnaire (A-PCQ) modified and adapted by Luthans, Luthans, and Jensen (2012). PsyCap score in A-PCQ are assessed using two distinct domains: Overall-life (OL) and School-work (SW), and an overall PsyCap score.

Purpose- Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire is used to assess positive Psychological Capital of the students.

Scoring- PCQ scales are scored using a 6-point Likert scale. Each dimension has 6 items respectively. Each scale measures its own unique dimension (HERO) of PsyCap. An overall PsyCap score is calculated by taking the mean of all the items in the PCQ. Items 13, 20 and 23 are reverse scored.

Validity-

Discriminant/convergent validity. Youssef and Luthans (2007) report that each of the four constituting positive constructs (HERO) shows empirically based discriminant validity in addition to previous studies of Bryant and Cvenegros (2004), Carifio and Rhodes (2002), and Magaletta and Oliver (1999). PsyCap was found to be not related to age or education demographics and personality dimensions of agreeableness or openness (Luthans, Avolio, et al., 2007). However, in the same study, PsyCap was strongly associated to core self-evaluations (0.60) and moderately related to extraversion (0.36) and conscientiousness (0.39). In the studies with PsyCap, the regression model without the PsyCap composite was found to be significant ($R_2 = 0.13$, $p < 0.001$), however the change in R_2 was also significant ($\Delta R_2 = 0.04$, $p < 0.001$) (Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007). This indicated that PsyCap predicted unique variance in job satisfaction which was beyond the two personality

traits and core self-evaluations. PsyCap was confirmed to be the greater contributor in predicting affective organizational commitment as the beta weight for PsyCap was largest in the regression model (Luthans et al., 2007).

Criterion validity. Study by Luthans, Avolio et al. (2007) found that PsyCap had a stronger relationship to job satisfaction ($p < 0.01$) than conscientiousness and extraversion, however, not as much as core-evaluations and affective organizational commitment had ($p < 0.001$) with PsyCap. Studies have reported that impact of PsyCap is greater in studies based in the US in comparison to the studies outside of the US (Avey, Wernsing, & Mhatre, 2011). Additionally, PsyCap's impact varied based on the sample, for example, the service industry versus manufacturing industry (Luthans et al., 2007). However, it is empirically validated that PsyCap significantly predicted variances in a wide array of attitudes and behaviors that comprised various demographics characteristics and personality traits (Luthans et al., 2007).

Reliability- The Cronbach's alpha reliability for A-PCQ in the preliminary study with college students was 0.90 (Luthans et al., 2012) and for the study is 0.95. Dr. Brett Luthans, developer of A-PCQ indicates that all the psychometric properties of the instrument remain the same as that of original PCQ. In calculating reliability estimate for the total PsyCap and each adapted measure from four sample populations, Luthans et al. (2007) found that reliability of the overall PsyCap measure in all samples was consistently above conventional standards (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). The Cronbach alphas as mentioned in Luthans et al. (2007) were: overall PsyCap (0.88, 0.89, 0.89, 0.89); hope (0.71, 0.75, 0.80, 0.76); efficacy (0.75, 0.84, 0.85, 0.75); resiliency (0.71, 0.71, 0.66, 0.72); optimism (0.74, 0.69, 0.76, 0.79). Internal consistency reliability for optimism and resilience were found to be consistently lower than self-efficacy and hope domains (Dawkins, Martin, Scott, & Sanderson, 2013). However, Luthans believed that this difference is because of the reverse-scored items in resilience and optimism scales that reduce scale reliability (Schmitt & Stults, 1985).

3.8 PROCEDURE

The data was collected using the Questionnaire method of Qualitative Data Collection which comes under the Primary data collection method which is the collection of data directly from the source or the sample. A questionnaire involves reading of each question and responding to them as required.

The sample for this study was undergraduate students who are above the age of 18. 195 was the sample size and the data was collected by distributing the Mental health questionnaire, PsyCap questionnaire, demographic details along with the consent form. The questionnaires were printed and distributed at All Saints college, Trivandrum, Mother Teresa College, Trivandrum, Mar Ivanios College, Trivandrum, Catholocate College, Pathanamthitta, Pamba college, Thiruvalla and Kristu Jyoti College, Changanaserry.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

- Data analysis is done using SPSS version 26.0.
- Descriptive statistics is used.
- Pearson Correlation
- Homogeneity of Variance found using Levene's Test
- ANOVA

CHAPTER-4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULT

In the past few years, mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and self-injury among college students are growing at an alarming rate. Since the last decade of twentieth century, mental illness has been considered a public health issue alongside other physical illness. Recent studies indicate that there is an upward trend in the number of students with severe psychological problems which makes the mental health profile of college students a growing concern y (Blanco et al., 2008; Drum, Brownson, Burton Denmark, & Smith, 2009; Eisenberg, Hunt, & Speer, 2013; Fink, 2014; Gallagher, 2008; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010).

Attending college has a dual impact on an individual. It marks a significant and stressful developmental period of an individual's life. On the other hand, it is at this phase of life where various psychological disorders have their first onset. It is imperative that mental health professionals at the college level consider the problems associated with identity formation and the gradual manifestations of mental illnesses during these high-risk early adult years because the prevalence of developmental and mental health issues in college student communities is becoming more diverse and complex than ever in the history of higher education.

Also, the concept of Psychological Capital which is not much familiar among all, is strongly linked to increased well-being, work and life satisfaction. Therefore, it's necessary that the upcoming future, i.e.; the college students' mental health and PsyCap are assessed to help students persevere in their studies in a psychologically healthier manner. As PsyCap and its dimensions are malleable, they can be developed through training interventions along with various positive psychology exercises that focuses on enhancing well-being in conjunction with PsyCap (Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008; Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Exploring further in this regard revealed a variety of potent, low- cost approaches that impact mental health through development of positive strengths such as hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism.

The primary purpose of this cross-sectional, exploratory study was to examine the relationships and predictions that exist between current levels of mental health and psychological capital [PsyCap] among college students as measured by the Keyes' Mental Health Continuum Short Form [MHC-SF] and Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire [A-PCQ]. Mental health was measured by MHC-SF and participants were categorized into three groups

languishing, moderately mentally healthy, and flourishing. Similarly, PsyCap was measured using A-PCQ and participants were measured for their current level of Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism [HERO]. The main aim of the study was to establish the associations between the studied variables and to test psychological capital as a predictor of mental health.

Research Objective 1

The first objective was to describe the level of psychological capital and mental health of college students using their PsyCap and Mental Health scores. This objective focused on describing the current level of PsyCap and mental health of the studied sample using basic descriptive statistics.

Table 1.

Mean, and standard deviation of Mental Health and Psychological Capital over College life and Overall Life.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mental Health	195	46.15	12.741
Overall Life	195	96.72	19.099
College life	195	98.01	17.976
Psychological Capital	195	194.73	35.825

Table 1 gives the Mean and Standard Deviation of Mental Health variable and Psychological Capital variable. The Mean and Standard deviation for the Mental Health variable was found to be 46.15 and 12.741 respectively. The range of scores of the sample lies between 9 and 70. The Mean and Standard Deviation of Psychological Capital was found to be 194.73 and 35.825 respectively. The score range of the sample lies between 86 and 277.

Research Objective 2

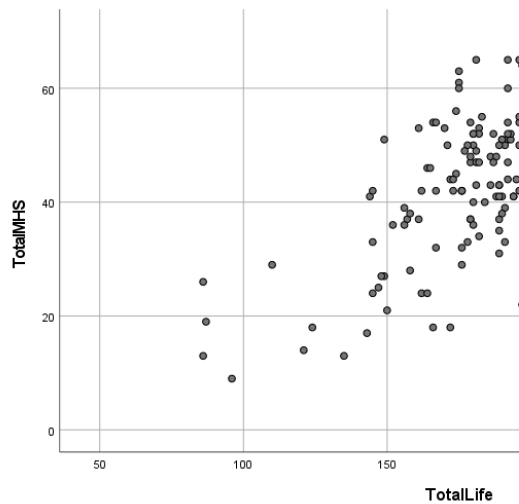
The second research objective was to explore the relationship between psychological capital and mental health of college students in the studied sample. The relationship between PsyCap scores and mental health scores were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient.

Table 2

Correlation between Mental Health and Psychological Capital

		Mental Health
Psychological Capital	Pearson Correlation	.650**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	195

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



The correlation coefficient between Mental Health and Psychological Capital was found to be statistically significant with the p value less than 0.05 ($r=0.650$, $p < 0.01$). Hence, we can accept the hypothesis that there is a relationship between Mental Health and Psychological Capital. This clearly indicates a significant moderate positive correlation between Mental Health and Psychological Capital.

Research Objective 3

The third research objective is to determine if differences exist in PsyCap of college students whose scores place them in one of three mental health continuum categories languishing, moderately mentally healthy, and flourishing. Students were divided into three categories depending on the Mental Health score. The individual categories are described as below.

Table 3.

Description of the categories of Mental health

Mental health	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Languishing	4	122.25	39.331		
Moderately Mentally Healthy	177	193.70	32.951	16.845	.001
Flourishing	14	228.50	35.163		

The normality of the data was ensured by performing Levene's Test of Homogeneity of variances. A p value of more than 0.05 was obtained which led to reject the null hypothesis and accept the Homogeneity of variances. Hence, ANOVA was performed on three groups to compare them based on the variable of PsyCap.

Table 4.

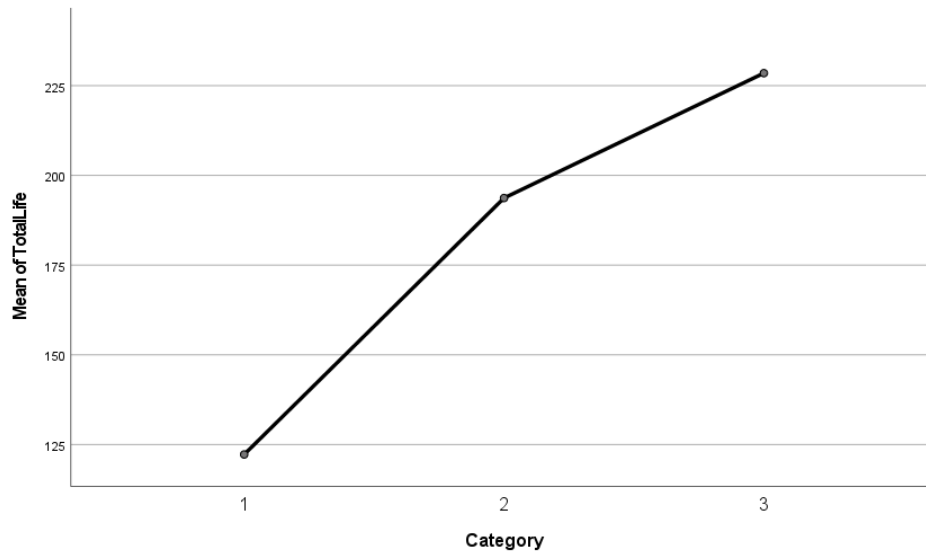
Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Total Life

1. Category	(J) Category	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1	2	-71.451*	16.794	.000
	3	-106.250*	18.831	.000
2	1	71.451*	16.794	.000
	3	-34.799*	9.221	.001
3	1	106.250*	18.831	.000
	2	34.799*	9.221	.001

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4 shows the multiple comparisons on categories of Mental health. The three groups Languishing, Moderately Mentally Healthy and Flourishing was individually compared with each other and the results showed that there is a significant difference between all of the three categories of Mental Health Continuum.



Research Objective 4-

To determine the extent to which PsyCap HERO dimensions within the Overall-life and the college-work categories predict the variability in mental health among college students.

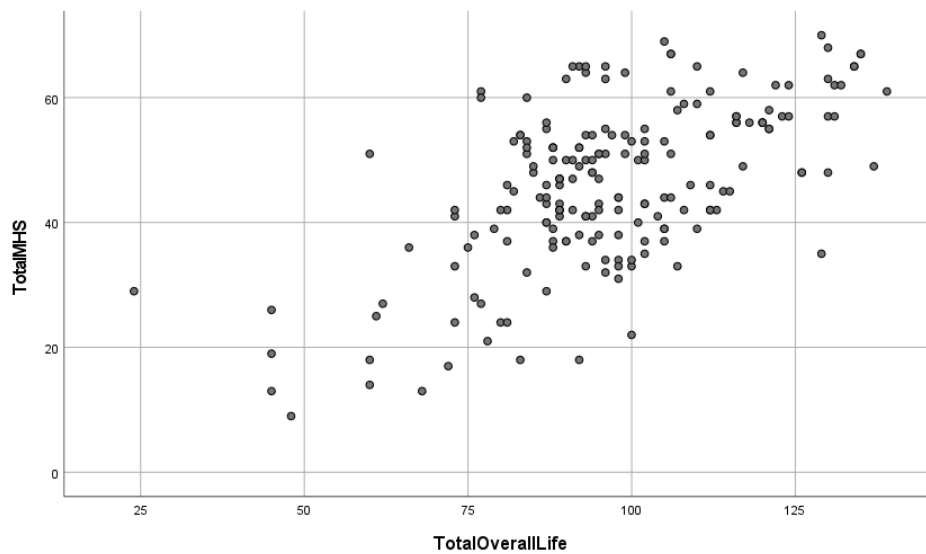
Table 5.

Linear Regression of Overall Life Psychological Capital on Mental health

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standardized Coefficients Beta	F	Sig.
Overall Life	.605	.366	.363	.605	111.532	.001 _b

a. Predictors: (Constant), Overall Life

b. Dependent Variable: Mental Health



The correlation value ($R = .605$) shows a significantly moderate positive relationship between Overall Life Psychological Capital and Mental health. The F value ($p = .001$, $p < .01$) suggests a significant influence of Overall Life Psychological Capital on Mental health of college students. For each unit increase of Overall Life Psychological Capital 0.605 (β) increase in Mental health. There is 36.6% (R^2) of accounted variance for Overall Life Psychological Capital on Mental health.

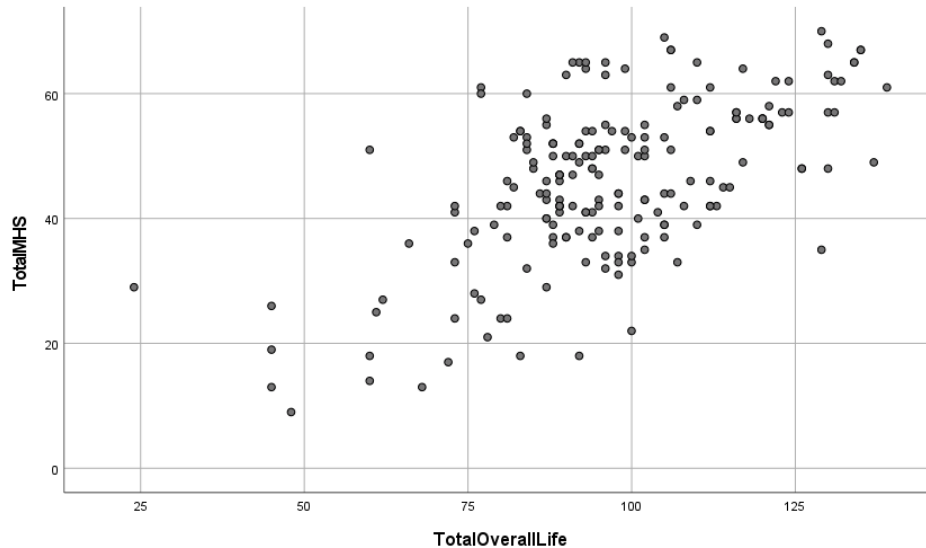
Table 6.

Linear Regression of College Life Psychological Capital on Mental health

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standardized Coefficients Beta	F	Sig.
College Life	.653 ^a	.426	.423	.653	143.234	.000 ^b

a. Predictors: (Constant), College Life

b. Dependent Variable: Mental Health



The correlation value ($R = 0.653$) shows a significantly moderate positive relationship between College Life Psychological Capital and Mental health. The F value ($p = .001$, $p < .01$) suggests a significant influence of College Life Psychological Capital on Mental health. For each unit increase of College Life Psychological Capital, 0.653 (β) increases in Mental Health. There is 42.6% (R^2) of accounted variance for College Life Psychological Capital on Mental health. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that PsyCap can be used to predict the variability in Mental Health within the college population.

4.2 DISCUSSION

In the past few years, mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and self-injury among college students are growing at an alarming rate. Since the last decade of twentieth century, mental illness has been considered a public health issue alongside other physical illness. Recent studies indicate that there is an upward trend in the number of students with severe psychological problems which makes the mental health profile of college students a growing concern. Attending college has a dual impact on an individual. It marks a significant

and stressful developmental period of an individual's life. On the other hand, it is at this phase of life where various psychological disorders have their first onset. It is imperative that mental health professionals at the college level consider the problems associated with identity formation and the gradual manifestations of mental illnesses during these high-risk early adult years because the prevalence of developmental and mental health issues in college student communities is becoming more diverse and complex than ever in the history of higher education.

Also, the concept of Psychological Capital which is not much familiar among all, is strongly linked to increased well-being, work and life satisfaction. Therefore, it's necessary that the upcoming future, ie; the college students' mental health and PsyCap are assessed to help students persevere in their studies in a psychologically healthier manner. As PsyCap and its dimensions are malleable, they can be developed through training interventions along with various positive psychology exercises that focuses on enhancing well-being in conjunction with PsyCap. Exploring further in this regard revealed a variety of potent, low- cost approaches that impact mental health through development of positive strengths such as hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism.

The primary purpose of this cross-sectional, exploratory study was to examine the relationships and predictions that exist between current levels of mental health and psychological capital [PsyCap] among college students as measured by the Keyes' Mental Health Continuum Short Form [MHC-SF] and Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire [A-PCQ]. Mental health was measured by MHC-SF and participants were categorized into three groups languishing, moderately mentally healthy, and flourishing. Similarly, PsyCap was measured using A-PCQ and participants were measured for their current level of Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism [HERO]. The main aim of the study was to establish the associations between the studied variables and to test psychological capital as a predictor of mental health.

The first objective was to describe the level of psychological capital and mental health of college students using their PsyCap and Mental Health scores. This objective focused on describing the current level of PsyCap and mental health of the studied sample using basic descriptive statistics. The baseline characteristics of the study population were described using measures of central tendency.

The second objective was to explore the relationship between psychological capital and mental health of college students in the studied sample. The relationship between PsyCap scores and mental health scores were analyzed using correlation coefficients. From the analysis, it has been found out that there exists a significant relation between the two variables meaning that Mental Health definitely has an effect on the Psychological Capital of the individual. A person categorized as Flourishing or Moderately Mentally Healthy seems to have a better PsyCap score when compared with the scores of a Languishing person. This implies that a mentally well person will be hopeful, self-efficient, resilient and optimistic.

The third objective was to determine if differences exist in PsyCap of college students whose scores place them in one of three mental health continuum categories languishing, moderately mentally healthy, and flourishing. The results of the analysis show that there is a significant difference between the PsyCap of college students whose scores place them in languishing, moderate and flourishing. Students coming in the Languishing category of Mental Health Continuum has a lower PsyCap score whereas the students in the Moderately Mentally Healthy category have a better score and lastly the ones in the Flourishing category of Mental Health Continuum have the best PsyCap score. Hence, this proves that there is a significant difference between the PsyCap scores of students coming under the three categories of Mental Health Continuum. It also implies that there a significant positive correlation between the two variables of the study as proved by the second objective.

The fourth and final objective of this study was to determine the extent to which PsyCap HERO dimensions within the Overall-life and the college-work categories predict the variability in mental health among college students. From the analysis, it is clear that PsyCap and Mental Health has a moderately positive correlation. It also proves that the dimensions of the Overall-life and College-life categories can predict the variability in Mental Health of College students. The two hypotheses of this Research; were therefore accepted.

Taken together, the results of this study provide an essential contribution to theory on mental health continuum and psychological capital. In this study, majority of the respondents were Moderately Mentally Healthy. There is no conclusion that claims that PsyCap is a sufficient condition for mental health, nor would the researcher choose to evaluate individual's lives solely on the basis of whether they are flourishing; researcher values additional characteristics.

However, this study attempts to bridge a gap by establishing additional empirical evidence to connect individuals' positive psychological strengths and mental health—in order to promote the best among the college students. Positive mental health and well-being have gained greater momentum as a serious alternative to the numerous mental illness prevention strategies in past few decades. Focusing on building positive resources in college students may be helpful in propelling students from a languishing mental health state towards a sustainable state of positive and complete mental health. The results highlight the value of further investigation into positive psychological strengths as pivotal components of college students' positive mental health, and have significant implications for the development and content of strategies to promote mental health in college students.

CHAPTER-5: CONCLUSION

5.1 FINDINGS

- The two variables of this study; Mental Health and Psychological Capital have a significant relationship between them. Mental health tends to influence the Psychological Capital of the individual and vice versa.
- It has been determined that there exist differences in Psychological Capital of college students whose scores place them in one of the three mental health continuum categories: languishing, moderately mentally healthy and flourishing.
- Another finding was Psychological Capital HERO dimensions within the Overall-life and College-life categories predict the variability in Mental Health among college students.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

- The study employs self-reported, cross-sectional, survey data. This study is a quantitative study; where examination of the prevalence, relationships, and predictions occur rather than descriptive, in-depth, and deeper understanding of phenomenon that comes with qualitative data. Additionally, as it is non-experimental research, the results would provide only the existence or non-existence of relationship between variables and not the causal factor.
 - A more robust comparison between the mental health continuum categories could have been achieved if all the three cohorts had comparable numerical strengths.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- A much larger sample can be used for further research so that a much comparable numbers across all categories can be obtained.
- The sample of this present study was undergraduate students alone, all students doing their college; be it Post Graduate or Doctoral programs can be included in the further research because students are all the same and they are more likely to be vulnerable towards severe Mental Health issues including stress, burnout, etc. due to their workloads or any other known factors.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Demographic Details-

1. Name in Initials -

2. Age -

3. Date of Birth -

4. Gender -

5. Religion -

6. Place -

7. Annual Income of Family (approx) -

8. How do you identify your sexual orientation?

Bisexual

Lesbian or Gay

Straight or Heterosexual

Other _____(Specify)

9. What is your current relationship status?

In a relation

Single

10. What is your enrolled degree?

11. What was your grade point average (GPA) last semester?

_____ (Provide exact point score if possible)

12. To what extent do you consider yourself to be a religious person?

Not at all Slightly Moderately Very Extremely

13. To what extent do you consider yourself to be part of a religious community?

Not at all A little Moderately Mostly Completely

If so, which religious community are you a part of?

14. To what extent do you have spiritual beliefs?

Not at all Slightly Moderately Very Extremely

15. Which of the following are the most significant social support system (s)

you had/have (please check the appropriate)

- Immediate family (Spouse, Parents or Siblings)**
- Relatives**
- Friends**
- Teachers/Professors**
- Mentors/Coaches/Consultants**
- Mental Health Providers (Coursellors, Psychologists, Social Workers etc.)**
- Human Services Agencies**
- Clergy or members of religious/spiritual organisations(church, mosque, temple, synagogue, cathedral etc.)**
- Student Organisations**
- Community based organisations**

Other (Specify)_____

APPENDIX II**Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF; Keyes, 2009)**

General Instructions- Please answer the following questions are about how you have been feeling during the past month. Place a check mark in the box that best represents how often you have experienced or felt the following:

During the past month, how often did you feel ...	EVER	ONCE OR TWICE	ABOUT ONCE A WEEK	ABOUT 2 OR 3 TIMES A WEEK	ALMOST EVERY DAY	EVERY DAY
1. Happy						
2. Interested in life						
3. Satisfied with life						
4. That you had something important to contribute to society						
5. That you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighbourhood)						
6. That our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people						

7. That people are basically good						
8. That the way our society works makes sense to you						
9. that you liked most parts of your personality						
10. good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life						
11. that you had warm and trusting relationships with others						
12. that you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person						
13. confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions						
14. that your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it						

APPENDIX III**Academic Psychological Capital Questionnaire; Academic PsyCap (A-PCQ; Luthans, Luthans, & Jensen, 2012)**

General Instructions- Below are a series of statements that describe how you may think about yourself RIGHT NOW. We are asking you to consider each question relative to your overall life and work aspects. Use the scale below to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

		Over all-Life	Colleg e-Life
	I feel confident analysing a long-term problem to find a solution concerning my ...		
	I feel confident in representing my ideas concerning my ...		
	I feel confident contributing to discussions about strategies on my ...		
	I feel confident setting targets/goals on my...		
	I feel confident contacting people to discuss problems concerning my ...		
	I feel confident sharing information with a group of students about my...		
	If I should find myself in a jam about my ..., I could think of many ways to get out of the jam.		
	At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my ... goals.		
	There are lots of ways around any problem concerning my...		

0	Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful concerning my...		
1	I can think of many ways to reach my current goals regarding ...		
2	At this time, I am meeting the goals that I have set for myself concerning...		
3	When I have a setback with ..., I have trouble recovering from it, moving on.		
4	I usually manage difficulties one way or another concerning my ...		
5	I can be "on my own" so to speak, if I have to regarding my...		
6	I usually take stressful things in stride with regard to my...		
7	I can get through difficult times at school because I've experienced difficulty before concerning my...		
8	I feel I can handle many things at a time with my...		
9	When things are uncertain for me with regards to ..., I usually expect the best.		
0	If something can go wrong for me with my ..., it will.		
1	I always look on the bright side of things regarding my...		
2	I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to my...		
3	With regards to my ..., things never work out the way I want them to.		
4	I approach my ... as if "every cloud has a silver lining."		

