

**Occupational Stress, Psychological Capital, Happiness and Turnover Intentions among  
Teachers**

**By**

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Social Science in Industrial Psychology in the School of Applied Human  
Sciences**

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**Durban, South Africa**

**November 2012**

## **Declaration**

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Social Science (Industrial Psychology) in the College of Humanities, School of Applied Human Sciences, University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to the following people each of who have played a significant role in my life throughout this challenging academic year:

- God, who has given me the ability, strength, courage and determination to complete my research.
- The NRF for its financial investment in my research journey.
- My supervisor, Professor Joey Buitendach who has provided guidance, insight, expertise, personal and academic support and has inspired my love for research.
- My mother, Rose for her unconditional love, support and belief in my ability to do anything I so desired.
- My brother, Greshim for acting as a pillar of strength and for the words of encouragement throughout this trying year.
- Lastly, to all the teachers who so kindly participated in this study. Their time and participation is invaluable as without their contribution this research study would have not been possible.

## **Abstract**

The occupational field of teaching is under attack as it faces high turnover rates— ultimately resulting in a weakening of the educational system. The present study is rooted in Fredrickson's Broaden and Build theory and aimed to examine the relationship between occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions among teachers. Studies have found that positive emotions (psychological capital or happiness) can alleviate turnover intentions among teachers. A quantitative research design was used to collect data. The study took the form of a cross sectional survey design with a random sample (N-140) of teachers from 7 different schools in the Durban, Kwazulu Natal region. The data was collected with the use of five questionnaires. These included a biographical questionnaire, Teacher Stress Inventory, Psychological Capital Questionnaire, Orientation to Happiness Scale and the Turnover Intention Scale. Data analysis included descriptive and inferential statistics which was conducted on the statistical program SPSS 18. The results were as follows: firstly, the teachers in this study reported general work stress (poor organisational management, role ambiguity and job satisfaction) and task stress to be the principle stressors in their occupational field. Secondly, the teachers in the present study reported experiencing positive emotions such as pleasure, meaning and engagement. Third, practically and statistically significant relationships were found between work related stress and task stress, PsyCap and pleasure and meaning, PsyCap and engagement, PsyCap and turnover intentions and between pleasure and meaning and engagement. From the above relationships, it can be seen that PsyCap promotes positive experiences in stressful occupational environments. Hence, the lack of PsyCap has the potential to exacerbate the experience of turnover intentions amongst teachers. Lastly, the results confirmed that psychological capital is a predictor of pleasure and meaning amongst teachers despite their stressful occupational field. Thus, the results showed that positive emotions and psychological capital may have the

potential to alleviate turnover intentions amongst teachers. The present study is limited in the following ways: First, is the poor response rate (65%), thus reducing the sample size to 91. Second, this study used a cross-sectional research design as opposed to a longitudinal research design. Therefore, the results of this study cannot determine causality between the variables. Lastly, the data came from self-reported questionnaires, this can affect the reliability and validity of the data. As the participants may have answered the questions to reflect more socially acceptable responses. Although this study has limitations it acts as a starting point for research on the positive psychological perspective on the constructs occupational stress, PsyCap, happiness and turnover intentions. Specifically, future studies should focus on examining and developing hope optimism and self-efficacy amongst teachers as the present study found that the above three constructs of PsyCap contributed to positive emotions such as engagement amongst teachers. An improved understanding of the above constructs is a step toward alleviating turnover intentions amongst teachers and possibly other occupational fields.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides the background to the problem of the study, followed by the objectives and research questions of the study. Additionally, it includes an overview of the division of the chapters and is concluded with a summary.

#### **1.2. Background**

The occupational field of teaching is under attack as it faces the shortage of teachers (HSRC, 2011). According to Boe, Bobbit and Cook (1993) the teacher shortage is a result of high turnover rates and involves the progressive loss of teachers and may include teachers exiting the profession, teachers who change fields or schools and natural exit by death or retirement. Particularly, the present study is interested in the premature exit of the profession or the exit of the profession to other occupational fields, which largely contributes to teacher turnover (Xaba, 2003). According to Chisholm (2009) there exists a mass discrepancy between the supply and demand of teachers – creating a shortage of teachers (p. 28). As the rate that teacher's exit the profession is not proportionate to the supply of teachers. Research studies (Markley, 2001; Rohr & Lynch, 1995) assert that countries such as New Zealand, Germany, Sweden and the USA are afflicted by a shortage of teachers. Further, in Britain the shortage of teachers has reached such extents that it is declared a national crisis (BBC News, 2001). Hence, it can be seen that teacher turnover is a global phenomenon.

South Africa is no stranger to the teacher shortage as there exists considerable inconsistencies in regard to the supply and demand of teachers (HSRC, 2011). According to the Educational and Research Council (2006) “between 18000 to 20000 teachers leave the profession

annually either voluntarily or forcibly and higher educational institutes produce 6000 graduates each year – not nearly enough to curb the loss” (p.34). Within the South African context the central contributors to teacher turnover include poor work environment, diminishing social respect for the profession, immigration for better remuneration opportunities abroad, poor pupil behaviour, work overload, and the pursuit of other occupations (Xaba, 2003). Of particular importance to the South African context is the constant ‘change’ within the profession with regard to the national curriculum (Wilkinson, 2001). This ‘change’ is a significant contributor of turnover as it is coupled with a lack of support from central government and lack of guidelines for implementation of new educational curriculum – ultimately exacerbating stress levels and the occurrence of turnover (Wilkinson, 2001). Hence, the occupational field of teaching is indeed stressful.

Teacher turnover has serious consequences which deplete the standards of education delivered (Wilkinson, 2001). Specifically, the effects include: economic loss on the educational system in terms of loss teaching time and replacement teachers, poor states of wellbeing among teachers due to the occupational stress experienced, lowered standards of education due to disruption of the academic year and decreased levels of performance of the students – ultimately resulting in a weakened educational system (HSRC, 2011; Xaba, 2003; Wilkinson, 2001). It can be seen that teacher turnover is a serious problem - hence it is important to equip teachers with the skills necessary to contend with their stressful occupational environment. More so, it is imperative to alleviate the occurrence of turnover due to high levels of occupational stress experienced by teachers.

As discussed, studies (HSRC, 2011; Xaba, 2003; Wilkinson, 2001) have shown that occupational stress increases turnover and contributes to poor states of wellbeing. Further, Galanakis, Galanpoulou and Stalikas (2011) have found that positive emotions (e.g. psychological capital or happiness) can alleviate the negative influence of occupational stress

on employees. Hence, the present study aimed to apply the principles of positive psychology to the problem of teacher turnover by exploring the relationship between the constructs occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover, with a focus on the role of psychological capital as a mediator. Ultimately, aiming to understand what aspects of psychological capital contributes to happiness in a stressful occupational field. Further, the present study aimed to determine if psychological capital is a predictor of happiness. Since, the development of an understanding of the factors that contribute to happiness in teachers can act as a starting point to develop interventions that promote the development of these factors among teachers – ultimately aiming to alleviate teacher turnover rates.

Further, there exists a wealth of research (Xaba, 2003, Wilkinson, 2001) that examines the causes and consequences of turnover in teachers, however there exists a gap in literature, especially within the South African context that applies positive psychology to the problem of teacher turnover. Thus, the present study aimed to contribute to the above gap in literature.

### **1.3. Objectives**

With reference to the background of the study, the central objective of this study is to understand what aspects of psychological capital contribute to happiness within the stressful occupational field of teaching.

The specific objectives of the study were to understand if a relationship exists between the constructs occupational stress, PsyCap, happiness, and turnover intentions among teachers. The second objective was to determine if PsyCap mediates the relationship between occupational stress and happiness either/or turnover. The last objective was to determine if PsyCap is a predictor of happiness.

As, studies (Xaba, 2003; Grey, 1998; Hart & Cooper, 2001; Evers & Brouwers, 2005) have found that occupational stress is a principle cause of turnover amongst teachers. Further, research (Galanakis, 2011) has found that positive strengths such as PsyCap can decrease the

3negative influences of occupational stress upon employees. Additionally, research (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, & Kelloway, 2000; Nistor, 2004) has shown that employees who are happy are less likely to engage in voluntary turnover, even within a stressful occupational environment. Hence, it can be seen that positive emotions (PsyCap and happiness) may have the potential to decrease turnover rates amongst teachers

Consequently, from the objectives the present study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions amongst teachers?
2. Does psychological capital mediate the relationship between occupational stress and happiness either/or turnover intentions amongst teachers?
3. Is psychological capital a predictor of happiness amongst teachers?

#### **1.4. Structure of the Study**

##### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter introduces the foundations of the study and includes the background to the study, objectives and research questions.

##### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter includes two parts, the first being, definitions of and a review of the research on occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions amongst teachers. The second being, the theoretical framework of the present study.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter explains the method of research, research design, sampling method, data gathering and the data analysis method.

### **Chapter 4: Results**

This chapter presents the results of the study in the form of tables.

### **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This chapter discusses the results of the study within the context of the existing literature.

### **Chapter 6: Recommendations and conclusion**

This chapter includes the suggestions for future research and the conclusions that can be drawn from the present study.

#### **1.5. Summary**

First, this chapter introduced the research topic and provided a background to the study. Second, the chapter clearly stated the objectives and research questions of the study and lastly the chapter provided the structure and division of the study.

The next chapter presents a review of the literature occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the general academic literature on occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions. The chapter opens with a discussion on positive psychology as it is the foundation of this research study. The chapter, then proceeds to discuss the study constructs occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions amongst teachers with a focus on academic literature internationally and nationally. The chapter ends with a discussion of the theoretical underpinning of the present and a summary of the chapter.

#### **2.2. Positive Psychology**

As early as 1954, Maslow had argued that psychology tended to focus more on the “darker, meaner half” of its potential (Maslow, 1954). Maslow (1954) proposed that the field should be more balanced in areas such as growth, contentment, optimism, and actualisation of human potential – it is here that the seed for a positive psychological stance had been planted. Positive psychology revisits “the average person,” with an interest in finding out what works, what is right, and what is improving. It asks, “What is the nature of the effectively functioning human being, who successfully applies evolved adaptations and learned skills? (Sheldon & King, 2001). Thus, the discipline of positive psychology is concerned with the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing and optimal functioning of people, groups and institutions (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Hence, positive psychology is concerned with the factors that contribute to positive experiences in individuals, and in effect an increased quality of life.

Gable and Haidt (2005) aptly capture the essence of positive psychology in the following excerpt: “Positive psychology fully acknowledges the existence of human suffering and dysfunction, but the aim of positive psychology is to study the ways that people experience joy and happiness by addressing the full spectrum of human experience” (p.105).

From the above excerpt it can be seen that positive psychology marks the much needed move away from a traditional psychological focus on the negative factors that inhibit functioning. As positive psychologists assert a focus on a more open and appreciative experience regarding human potentials, motives and capacities, which open a realm into ‘what works’ for individuals and knowing ‘what works’ can lead to building on these positive experiences (Sheldon & King, 2001). Ultimately, fostering and acting on positive experiences to increase the quality of life. Positive psychology marks a new found interest by psychologists to simply understand what makes life worth living (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) “researchers have discovered that there are human strengths that act as buffers against mental illness, courage, optimism, faith, hope, interpersonal skill and the capacity for insight” (p.7). By building a wealth of understanding of these admirable qualities a science of human strength can be formed which aims to understand and learn how to foster these virtues in people. Positive psychology is a science that is committed to understanding the intensity and magnitude of positive thoughts and strengths (Gable & Haidt, 2005).

Positive psychology applied to the work setting is concerned with fostering positive experiences at work, especially in relation states of happiness and wellbeing (Turner, Barling & Zarcartatos, 2004). As happiness is associated with positive experience and optimum functioning, which are essential strengths within a work environment (Turner et al., 2004). This research study aims to explore the relationships between occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover among teachers. As teachers work in stressful

occupational environments and there is a need to understand what positive strengths (i.e. psychological capital) contribute to positive psychological states (i.e. happiness) and possibly decrease turnover intention rates amongst teachers (Xaba, 2003). As the development of an understanding of the teacher turnover can lead to interventions that help foster positive experiences and optimum functioning among teachers and help alleviate teacher turnover. Hence, the framing of teacher turnover under the umbrella of positive psychology opens doors into understanding the positive experiences that are essential within the teaching occupational field. Consequently, the fostering of positive experiences (i.e. happiness) among teachers may result in an alleviation of the high levels of turnover.

## **2.3. Study Constructs**

### **2.3.1. Occupational Stress**

According Teasdale and Mckeown (1994) “stress is a reality like love or electricity – unmistakable in experience but hard to define” (p.28) Teasdale and Mckeown (1994) have aptly captured the dilemma of theorists (Selye, 1956; Cooper & Williams, 1991; Cox, 1987, Hart & Cooper, 2001) as defining stress has remained a challenge to present day. There exists no single agreed upon definition of stress in available literature, however many theorists have provided their own definition (Viljoen & Rothmann, 2009).

According to Cooper (1998) “the term stress is derived from the Latin word ‘strictere’ which literally means ‘to draw tight’ (p.1). It can be seen that the literal meaning of the word stress connotes tension.

One of the earliest and most well known works on stress is that of endocrinologist Hans Selye (1956) who is regarded as the ‘father’ of stress research (Grey, 1998). According to Selye (1956) “stress is an adaptive syndrome or non-specific response to demands placed upon the

human body, which either stimulate or threaten the individual (p.38). Additionally, after extensive literature review Cox (1987) defined stress “as a complex psychological state deriving from the person’s cognitive appraisal of the adaptation to the demands of the environment (p.1155). Further Cox (1987) found that the appraisal of the stressful account included the demands placed on the individual, individual characteristics, constraints placed on the individual and support afforded to the individual (p.1155). A more recent definition of stress is provided by Anderson (2002) who defines “stress as a response of an individual to the self-perceived imbalance between the demands of the situation presented, and the resources one has at one’s disposal to respond successfully” (p.648). From the above definitions it can be seen that defining stress has indeed been a challenge over the years. However, all the above definitions make reference to demands placed on an individual, the perception of the demands and the ability of an individual to deal with those demands (Cooper, 1998). This emphasises that occupational stress is an interaction between demands, perception and response to the demands.

Occupational stress has the same characteristics of stress except that it occurs within the domain of one’s occupational environment (Cooper, Dewe & O’Driscoll, 2001). Spector (1998) suggests “that occupational stress is the sum total of factors experienced in relation to work which affects the psychosocial and physiological homeostasis of the worker, the individual factor is termed a stressor and stress is the individual worker’s reaction to stressors” (p.108). From the above definition it can be seen that occupational stress is an inherent element of the occupation that causes an imbalance in psychological, social and physiological states of the individual. Hence, occupational stress has the same characteristics of stress, however it is confined to the occupational environment and is dependent on the individual’s subjective appraisal of the stressor.

Studies (Cope, 2003; Wilson, 2002; Gray, 1998; Idris, 2011) have found that the dominant causes of occupational stress include job role conflict, environment, work overload, mundane work, relationships at work, lack of social support and the lack of opportunities for career development. Compounded the above factors act as catalysts to the experience of occupational stress.

For the purpose of this study Kyriacou's (2001) definition of teacher occupational stress will be used. According to Kyriacou (2001) "occupational teacher stress can be defined as the experience by teachers of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher. (p.28). From the above definition it is clear that occupational stress in teachers refers to any aspect of the job that enables the experience of negative psychological states.

The sources of occupational stress among teachers include poor work environment, diminishing social respect for the profession, lack of support from central government, poor pupil behaviour, poor working relationships, work overload, routine work, low salary and a lack of sufficient resources (Gray, 1998; Wilson, 2002).

Now, that occupational stress has been conceptualised the discussion will examine the literature pertinent to the present research study.

A wealth of research (Larrivee, 2000; Hart & Cooper, 2001; Gillepsie, Walsh, Winefields, Dua & Stough, 2001) has found that occupational stress is related to unpleasant emotions and behaviours, such as turnover, fatigue, general strain, anxiety, tension, and poor states of wellbeing. Thus, it is clear that occupational stress has a taxing result on the individual.

Specifically, in relation to teachers, studies (Conley & Woosley, 1999; Xaba, 2003; Wilson, 2002; Gray, 1998) have shown that occupational stress increases the likelihood of turnover among teachers. Hence, occupational stress can be considered to be a principle cause of the

global shortage of teachers. Within the South African environment the sources of occupational stress that contribute to turnover intentions include the constant change of curriculum, low salaries, poor pupil behaviour and lack of central governmental support (Gillepsie et al., 2001; HSRC, 2011; Xaba, 2003).

As with stress in general, occupational stress results in the experience of poor levels of happiness (Layard, 2003). Additionally, research (Weiss & Cropranzano, 1996; Van Der Werf & Sanderman, 2000; Ros, 1999) has found that increased states of happiness at work can buffer the experience of occupational stress. In support of the above finding, Hart and Cooper, (2001) have found that the occupational stress within the teaching profession depletes states of wellbeing. Consequently, it can be seen that occupational stress is associated with negative psychological states. Specifically, with relation to the teaching profession, occupational stress has been found to be associated with low moods, poor wellbeing, turnover intentions, anxiety and depression (Xaba, 2003; Pawan, 2003; Grey, 1998). Hence, occupational stress is a chief contributor of poor psychological states. Importantly, studies (Luthans, Luthans & Luthans, 2004; Page & Donohue, 2004) have concluded that in the presence of occupational stress the right psychological capital can act as a strength that promotes positive psychological states. More so, psychological capital can act as a mediator within stressful occupations (Luthans, Norman, Avolio & Avey, 2007; Kong, 2003). Further, Avey, Luthans and Jensen (2009) assert that psychological capital can act as a psychological strength to combat occupational stress and turnover. Thus, it is clear that the psychological capital can lead to positive psychological experiences even when challenged with a stressful occupational field. Hence, the present study drew upon the above findings to explore the role of psychological capital as a mediator between occupational stress, happiness and turnover intentions.

### **2.3.2. Psychological Capital**

The development of the construct psychological capital (PsyCap) originated from the wealth of research (Luthans, 2002; Wright, 2003) in positive organisational behaviour (POB). POB is the study and application of positively oriented psychological capacities that can be measured and effectively developed within organisations. Hence, POB concentrates on fostering positive experiences in organisations.

According to Luthans et al. (2008)

PsyCap is an individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterised by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks, (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future, (3) persevering toward goals (hope) and when necessary redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success (p.3).

From the above definition it is clear PsyCap is made up of four underlying constructs, namely self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency. Although, the above four constructs have different theoretical perspectives and definitions, taken together these four have been theoretically developed and empirically tested as a state like positive core construct – PsyCap (Avey et al., 2009). Hence, PsyCap emerged from POB as a core construct that may be used to develop positive psychological states in individuals.

Now that an understanding of the central tenet of PsyCap has been developed the discussion will examine the four underlying dimensions of PsyCap namely: self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency as it is important to understand these constructs as they form PsyCap.

The first dimension of PsyCap is self-efficacy. Do you know that you have what it takes to be successful? Do you believe that it is all within you? (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007). The above questions mirror the underlying propositions of self-efficacy as self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his/her ability to accomplish a goal. Self-efficacy has its origins in the work of Bandura (1997) who has found that "human accomplishments and positive wellbeing require an optimistic sense of personal efficacy to override the numerous impediments to success" (p.56). Hence, Bandura (1998) stresses the importance of self-efficacy as it acts as a catalyst to override the barriers to success. It is from the work of Bandura (1997) that Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) develop their definition of self-efficacy under PsyCap.

According to Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) "self-efficacy is an individual's conviction about his/her abilities to mobilise the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context" (p.66). Thus, self-efficacy then refers to an individual's positive belief in his/her abilities to execute a task. Further, research (Cope, 2009) has found that high levels of self-efficacy can result in greater success when approaching a task and low levels of self-efficacy increases the likelihood of failure when approaching a task. Additionally, research (Page & Donohue, 2004) has found that individuals high in self-efficacy set high goals, are self-motivated and persevere in the midst of a challenge. According to Youssef and Luthans (2007) self-efficacy is beneficial within the workplace as employees who have high levels of self-efficacy have positive work experiences and higher levels of wellbeing. Thus, self-efficacy is essential in individuals as the mere positive belief in oneself may result in greater success.

The second dimension of PsyCap is that of optimism. Seligman (1998) defines optimism "as an explanatory style that attributes positive events to personal, permanent and pervasive causes and negative events to external temporary and situation specific ones" (p.83). Thus, an

individual who is optimistic takes credit for positive experiences in their lives and perceives events as controllable (this is dependent on a realistic evaluation).

Optimism in relation to PsyCap is associated with a “positive outcome outlook or attribution of events, which includes positive emotions, motivation and has the caveat of being realistic (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Hence, PsyCap optimism has a flexible and realistic characteristic, as it involves what one can and cannot accomplish in a particular situation. Of importance to note is that PsyCap optimism is concerned with the reasons and attributions one uses to explain why events occur (Luthans et al., 2008). Thus, PsyCap optimism shows that a positive outlook coupled with a realistic evaluation of the causes of events results in optimism that is a psychological strength. As it is a functional, flexible and realistic optimism that helps individuals deal constructively with challenges. Specifically, studies (Avey et al., 2009; Youssef & Luthans, 2008; Avey, 2007) have found that optimism within the workplace helps employees constructively contend with feelings of being overwhelmed, guilt and shame when challenged at work, more so it helps employees contend with occupational stress.

The third dimension of PsyCap is that of hope. Do you tend to figure out alternative paths to the same destination? (Luthans et al., 2008). The above question illustrates the central tenet of hope which entails the will to succeed and the ability to identify, clarify and pursue goal. According to Snyder (1991) “hope is a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful agency and pathways to meet goals” (p.287). Thus, hope consists of three components, agency, pathways and goals. The agency component refers to the will or motivational energy to pursue a goal, pathways refer to the various ways that an individual may attain a specific goal and the last component is the actual process of identifying sub-goals and goals (Avey et al., 2009). Hope then consists of the willpower (agency) and way-power (pathways) to achieve goals. Studies (Luthans et al., 2007) have found that hopeful employees display autonomy, creativity, are resourceful and can deal

effectively with workplace stress as compared to employees who are not that hopeful. As employees who are not hopeful experience anxiety and strain. Further, research (Snyder, 2000) has found that hope acts as protection against feelings of vulnerability, uncontrollability and unpredictability. Hence, hope is indeed a valuable psychological strength for employees.

The last dimension under PsyCap is that of resilience. Masten and Reed (2002) assert that “resilience can be identified, measured and nurtured in individuals of all ages and psychological conditions, as it has the profound ability to promote competence and human capital in individuals and society” (p.235). Consequently, it is clear that resilience has been identified to be highly beneficial to all individuals.

Of importance to this study is the above perspective of resilience under PsyCap applied to the workplace. Applied to the workplace resilience under PsyCap is defined as “the positive psychological capacity to rebound, to ‘bounce back’ from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility” (Luthans, 2002, p. 702). Thus, resilience is the ability to constructively adapt in the face of adversity. PsyCap resiliency would view adversities and setbacks as both risk factors and challenging opportunities for growth and success beyond the normal state (Avey et al, 2009). Thus, resilience is the uncanny ability to persevere amidst adversity and even has the potential to give rise to growth. It is important to note that PsyCap resiliency is not reactive to adversity but is enabling and proactive. According to Reivich and Shatte (2002) the proactive nature of resiliency is the “capacity to overcome, steer through, bounce back and reach out to pursue knowledge and experiences deeper relationships and find meaning in life” (p.103). Hence, resilience is not a linear reactive concept but a complex proactive amalgamation of processes that has the ability to stimulate growth in individuals.

The importance of resilience in the workplace is to understand how this psychological strength can be facilitated and developed in employees (Luthans et al., 2007). As the capacity to ‘bounce back’ when faced with challenges is important because it equips employees with the ability to rise up to challenges (Luthans et al., 2008). Further, studies (Luthans, Smith & Palmer, 2010) have found that resiliency can act as buffering mechanisms, it may help build strong and stable organisations, promotes employee wellbeing, and it has the ability to push employees above and beyond their capacities (Coutu, 2002). Hence, it is clear that resilience is a commendable psychological strength to develop in employees as it increases the experience of wellbeing, promotes creativity and stimulates growth.

From the above discussion on self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency it is clear that individually they are beneficial psychological strengths. However, the compounded beneficial nature of the four constructs that have given rise to the formation of a higher order core construct – PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2002). It is important to note that Luthans and Jensen (2005) acknowledges the conceptual independence and discriminant validity of the constructs but goes on to assert that “they make a unique theoretical and measurable contribution to a PsyCap” (p.60). Consequently, studies (Luthans et al, 2002, Luthans & Jensen 2005; Avey et al., 2009; Luthans et al., 2010) have acknowledged the important contribution that the underlying constructs make to PsyCap, as PsyCap can be described as a construct that is at the forefront of positive psychology. As since its conception in 2002, research (Luthans et al, 2002; Luthans, 2005; Avey, 2007; Avey et al., 2009; Luthans et al., 2007) has found that PsyCap is related to multiple outcomes in the workplace, these include lower employee absenteeism, less employee cynicism, and turnover and higher job satisfaction, wellbeing, commitment, engagement and organisational citizenship. Hence, it is resoundingly clear that PsyCap has the capability to promote positive experiences in the workplace.

Now that an understanding of PsyCap has been developed the discussion will proceed to conceptualise PsyCap in relation to the present study.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argue that people suffer stress when they believe that they lack the capabilities to deal with difficult events. Hence, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) recognise the existence and importance of cognitive processes that may appear as 'hidden factors' but they greatly affect the outcome of potentially stressful events. Thus, the mere interpretation and belief of being able to contend with the event may change the outcome of the potentially stressful event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Specifically, Lazarus (2003) identifies efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience as relevant avenues of exploration for enhanced understanding of how humans adapt to stress. Thus, Lazarus (2003) has recognised the potential of PsyCap as a psychological strength to be used to contend with stress, as it is the cognitive processes of the underlying constructs that has the potential to change the outcome of a stressful event. PsyCap then is viewed as a psychological strength to have when faced with stressful events.

The above view carries over into the occupational field, as work is stressful (Costa & McCrae, 2009). Research (Luthans, Avey & Patera, 2008) has found that the PsyCap is an important psychological strength as it helps employees build the critical strengths needed in today's stress-filled workplace. In light of the above statement, research (Avey et al., 2009) has found that a significant negative correlation exists between the PsyCap of employees and their perceived symptoms of occupational stress. Further, Jex (1998) believes that the three key elements to dealing with occupational stress "is to plan a course of positive action to limit and contain stress (i.e. hope), to maintain an optimistic attitude (i.e. optimism) and believe that you have control or at least influence over the stress-inducing event (i.e. efficacy)" (p.83). Thus, the development of PsyCap is indeed a vital psychological strength in any occupation. Further, studies (Luthans et al., 2004; Page & Donohue, 2004) have concluded that in the presence of occupational stress the right psychological capital can act as a strength that

promotes positive psychological states. More so, research (Savicki & Riolli, 2004; Luthans et al., 2007) has found that PsyCap can act as a mediator by buffering the negative influence of occupational stress. Hence, PsyCap has the potential to act as mediator of occupational stress.

This point further illuminates the benefit of fostering PsyCap as a psychological strength in organisations.

Research (Nistor, 2004; Luthans et al., 2004; Diener & Seligman, 2002; Culbertson, Fullagar & Mills, 2010) has concluded that there exists a relationship between PsyCap and happiness. As having PsyCap as a positive psychological strength results in happier employees. Further, studies (Ozmete, 2011; Luthans et al., 2007; Culbertson et al., 2010) have found that there exists a significant relationship between PsyCap and happiness, as the right PsyCap can increase the experience of happiness in employees. As employees are equipped with the psychological strengths (PsyCap) to plan, persevere and feel greatly rewarded when a task is accomplished. In relation to turnover, studies (Avey et al., 2009) have found that a negative correlation exists between an employee's PsyCap and turnover intentions. Suggesting, that developing PsyCap in employees may have the potential to alleviate turnover intentions.

Specifically, in relation to PsyCap among teachers a study by Cheung, Tang and Tang (2011) examined the benefits of PsyCap in a sample of Chinese teachers and found that PsyCap was a significant mediator of negative stressors at work. However, there exists a significant gap in the literature nationally and internationally that has examined the role of PsyCap amongst teachers. As studies (Gomez, 2007; Pajeras 2001) have concentrated on how PsyCap can be developed amongst students in educational institutions, however they have not examined the advantages of developing PsyCap amongst teachers. It is the above gap in literature that the present study aimed to address. Additionally, there is limited research in South Africa that

examines the relationship between happiness and PsyCap amongst a teaching sample – thus this study aimed to contribute to this gap in research. From the above discussion, it is clear that PsyCap is a higher order construct that has many positive benefits for employees as the right PsyCap can lead to positive psychological experiences even when challenged with a stressful occupational field such as teaching.

Hence, the present study drew upon the above findings to examine the role of psychological capital as a mediator between occupational stress happiness and turnover intentions. Focusing on whether psychological capital promotes the experience of happiness and decreases the occurrence of turnover intentions among teachers.

### **2.3.3. Happiness**

Research in psychology had adopted the ‘biomedical model of man’ which defined wellness as the absence of disease and focused on eliminating human suffering (Nistor, 2003). Thus, traditional psychology focused on eliminating disease and paid little attention on optimising and increasing the experience of happiness in individuals. Positive psychology has come to revive the traditional scientific psychology by encouraging research and practice that attempts to establish a balance between the current model of wellness as general wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). It is within the ambits of positive psychology that happiness research resides.

According to Wilson (1967) “the characteristics of a happy person include young, well-educated, well-paid, extroverted, optimistic, worry-free, religious, married with high self-esteem, high job morale, modest aspirations of either sex and of a wide range of intelligence” (p.294). It was Wilson’s above (1967) work that has led to four decades of research in happiness, as researchers (Argyle, 2001; Frey & Stutzer, 2002) have recognised the importance of understanding ‘what makes individuals happy’ (Leung, Kier, Fung & Fung,

2010). According to Ryan and Deci (2001) “ happiness is a complex construct that concerns optimal experience and functioning derived from two general perspectives namely the hedonic approach and the eudaimonic approach” (p.142). From the above definition it can be seen that happiness is a multidimensional construct derived from two approaches constituting happiness an ‘umbrella’ concept.

The hedonic approach originated with Greek philosopher Aristippus who asserted that the goal of life is to seek the maximum amount of pleasure and that happiness is the totality of one’s hedonic experiences (Ryan, Huta & Deci , 2006). Thus, the hedonic approach is based on the notion that happiness is entwined in the constant pursuit of pleasure and the maximising of these pleasurable experiences. According to Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz (1999) “the hedonic approach can be defined as the occurrence of positive affect and the absence of negative affect” (p.83). Hence, the hedonistic approach attempts to maximise pleasure and minimise pain. Hedonism then operates on a pleasure seeking principle, as they view individuals in a constant cycle of maximising the density of rewards and optimising inputs associated with subjective happiness of pleasure and displeasure (Leung , Chiu, Cheung, Mak & Lee, 2010). The entirety of the hedonist pleasure seeking philosophy can be captured by the common saying: “Don’t worry be happy!” (Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005, p. 26).

Early philosopher Aristotle critiques the hedonic view as a vulgar ideal making humans slavish followers of desire and posited that true happiness is doing what is worth doing - the eudaimonic approach (Ryan & Deci, 2001). According to Waterman (1993) “eudaimonia occurs when people’s life activities are most congruent or meshing with deeply held values and are holistically or fully engaged” (p.59). Thus, the eudaimonic approach sees happiness as different to simply experiencing pleasure by asserting that happiness calls upon people to live in accordance with their ‘daimon’ or true self” (Ryan & Deci, 2001). This approach sees

achieving happiness as a process rather than as a state, as happiness is said to come from identifying one's virtues and living accordingly. Hence, the eudaimonic approach is not associated with pleasure-seeking but is characterised by a sense of authenticity that leads to individuals feeling intensely alive.

Subsequently, hedonic thinking leads to short-term happiness, whereas eudaimonic living leads to a more enduring lasting happiness (Ryan et al., 2008). It is important to note that both the hedonic and eudaimonic approach offer a path to happiness and in order to understand happiness it is vital to adopt a holistic stance of happiness. The present study recognises the theoretical contributions of the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches and understands that happiness is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes aspects from the hedonic and eudaimonic approach. Thus, a holistic stance to happiness is adopted.

Now that an understanding of happiness has been formed the discussion will proceed to conceptualise happiness in relation to the present study.

The interest in happiness applied to the workplace originated with the simple hypothesis that 'a happy worker is a better worker', this simple hypothesis gave birth to decades of research (Diener et al., 1999; Warr, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Leung et al., 2010) that have found that happiness does indeed contribute to better employees. Further, a study conducted by Boehm and Lyubomirsky (2008) has found that happy employees are more successful in the workplace, they describe their job more positively and ultimately enhance the success of the organisation. Further, George (1995) asserts that happy employees go beyond their required duties at work and are more invested and involved in their work. Importantly, research (Veenhoven, 1999) has found that happiness can buffer the experience of occupational stress. Hence, it is clear that happy employees are indeed beneficial to any organisation. Specifically, in relation to teachers

research (Chan, 2009; Yun, Chui & Hui, 2010) in China and Tibet have found that happiness in teachers is related to an increased sense of life satisfaction, wellbeing and greater investment in their occupations. More so, Martin (2006) asserts the importance of ‘happy teachers’ as this will lead to accelerated learning and the fostering of happiness in students. Hence, it is clear that happy teachers deliver a better quality education.

A study conducted by Cleave and Boniwell (2012) have found that compared to other occupational professions, teachers report experiencing the lowest levels of happiness, this is due to their occupational stressors. In relation to the South African context Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2006) asserts that the South African educational system has experienced rapid transformations which are a great source of occupational stress in teaching. Hence, there is a need to foster happiness in the teaching sector as their occupational stressors have depleted feelings of happiness. Furthermore, studies (Culbertson et al., 2010; Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli,) have found that there exists a significant positive relationship between happiness and PsyCap as having PsyCap increases the experience of happiness. In support of the above, research (Van der Warff & Sanderman, 2002) has concluded that optimism and resilience can mediate the experience of occupational stress and increase the experience of happiness in employees . Hence, PsyCap can be viewed as a positive psychological strength that leads to the experience of happiness despite stressful occupations. Further, research (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, Kelloway, 2000) shows that happy teachers are less likely to engage in voluntary turnover. Thus, fostering happiness in teachers may decrease turnover rate.

From the above discussion it is clear that happiness has important beneficial capacities amongst employees and specifically within the teaching sector. Thus, it is important to understand the role of happiness amongst the highly stressed teaching profession. Subsequently, the present study draws upon the above findings to explore the role of

psychological capital as a mediator between occupational stress, happiness and turnover. Focusing on whether psychological capital promotes the experience of happiness and decrease the occurrence of turnover among teachers. As happy teachers deliver higher quality education and are less likely to have turnover intentions despite their stressful occupations. More so, the present study aims to contribute to the literary gap in happiness research among teachers in South Africa.

#### **2.3.4. Turnover Intentions**

According to Croasmun, Hampton and Hermann (2002) turnover can be defined as the movement of the employees out of the organisation or any permanent departure beyond organisational boundaries (p.287). Hence, turnover is the loss of employees by any means. Turnover can be distinguished as either involuntary turnover or voluntary turnover (Xaba, 2003). Involuntary turnover is the loss of employees by death, dismissals, layoffs and retirements, alternately voluntary turnover is the loss of employees by resignation (Fitz-enz, 1987). Of importance to the present study is the concept of voluntary turnover intentions applied to the teaching profession, as the excessive turnover rates have created an unstable teaching workforce, which decreases the delivery of quality education. Hence, the high turnover rates categorises teacher turnover as dysfunctional because it results in the weakening of the educational system. Research studies (Markley, 2000; Rohr & Lynch, 2000) have found that countries such as New Zealand, Germany, Sweden, Britain and the USA are afflicted by a teacher turnover and it has even been declared a national crisis.

According to the Educational and Research Council (2006) “between 18000 to 20000 teachers in South Africa leave the profession annually either voluntary or forcibly and higher educational institutes produce 6000 graduates each year – not nearly enough to curb the loss” (p.34). Hence, it can be concluded that South Africa is afflicted by teacher turnover. In the

South African context the causes of teacher turnover intentions include poor work environment, diminishing social respect for the profession, personal and family reasons, immigration for better remuneration opportunities abroad, poor pupil behaviour, poor working relationships, work overload, routine work, and the pursuit of other occupations (Xaba, 2003; Steyn & Kamper, 2006). Further, studies (Xaba, 2003; Evers & Brouwers, 2005; Wilson, 2002) have found that in South Africa low salaries and high levels of stress are chief contributors to teacher turnover intent. Hence, it can be seen that the stressful nature of the teaching profession in South Africa acts as a chief contributor of teacher turnover intentions.

Teacher turnover has serious consequences that deplete the standards of education delivered. The effects include: economic loss on the educational system in terms of loss teaching time and replacement teachers, poor states of wellbeing among teachers due to the occupational stress experienced, lowered standards of education due to disruption of the academic year and decreased levels of performance of the students – ultimately resulting in a weakened educational system (Steyn & Kamper, 2006; Xaba, 2003; Wilson, 2002).

Now that an understanding of the problem of teacher turnover has been unpacked the discussion will address the relevant literature in relation to the present study.

Studies (Markley, 2001; Evers & Brouwers, 2005; Wilson, 2002; Emery, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001) conducted nationally and internationally have found that teacher turnover is a serious problem that requires due attention.

As discussed, studies (HSRC, 2011; Xaba, 2003 & Wilson, 2002) have shown that occupational stressors of teachers increases turnover and contributes to poor states of wellbeing. Further, a wealth of research (Grey, 1998; Hart & Cooper, 2001; Zurlo & Cooper, 2007) has found that occupational stress is related to unpleasant emotions and

behaviours, such as turnover, fatigue and anxiety. Hence, it is clear that the stressors of the teaching profession contribute to turnover. Further, research studies (Ingersoll, 2001; Wilson, 2002) assert that there is a need to better understand the problem of teacher turnover in order to develop interventions that could alleviate the problem.

Research (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Van Katwyk et al., 2000) shows that happy employees are less likely to have turnover intentions. Additionally, studies (Nistor, 2004; Emery, 2010; Salanova et al., 2006) have found that happy teachers are unlikely to engage in voluntary turnover. The substantial body of research (Bobbitt et al., 1994; Chapman & Green, 1986; Chapman & Hutcheson, 1982; Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Hafner & Owings, 1991) on determining which kinds of teachers are more prone to leave teaching and why, have found teacher turnover is strongly correlated with individual characteristics of teachers. The above finding is of importance to the present study as this study aimed to understand the problem of teacher turnover from a positive psychological stance as opposed to the wealth of research concentrating on a traditional psychological stance. Furthermore, the present study aims to understand if PsyCap mediates the relationship between occupational stress and happiness and turnover, with a focus on what PsyCap best contributes to happiness in teachers. Thus, the present study focuses on the individual characteristics of teachers that alleviate turnover intentions. Specifically, studies (Cheung et al., 2011; Avey et al., 2009; Nistor, 2004) have found that developing PsyCap in teachers decreases the likelihood of teachers leaving the profession as the psychological strengths of self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience equip teachers to contend with the stressful nature of their occupations.

## **2.4. Theoretical Framework**

The present study adopts a positive psychological stance, which is a focus on understanding and fostering the factors that allow individuals, communities and society to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihaly, 2000). Thus, positive psychology aims to uncover and understand what makes life good – put simply positive psychology wants to understand why it is good to feel good.

It is from within the positive psychological arena that Barbara L. Fredrickson (1998) developed the Broaden and Build Theory of Positive emotions, which is the theoretical framework of the present study.

Fredrickson's Broaden and Build theory arose from the simple notion that positive emotions feel good, however Fredrickson asserted that this statement serves as a seed for further exploration into positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2003). As Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) propose that positive emotions not only feel good in the present, but also increase the likelihood that one can feel good in the future – an upward spiral toward emotional wellbeing” (p.172). Thus, Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) proposed that positive emotions have the potential to build enduring states of wellbeing and that a deeper understanding of the value of positive emotions can help foster positive emotions in individuals. “Unlike negative emotions which narrow peoples’ thought action repertoires, positive emotions broaden peoples’ thought action repertoires, encouraging them to discover novel lines of thought and action” (Fredrickson, 2001, p.220). Hence, positive emotions ‘broaden’ and ‘build’ an individual’s sense of wellbeing and are not constraining as are negative emotions.

According to Fredrickson (1998) the broaden and build theory asserts “that certain positive emotions (joy, interest, love, hope, optimism, contentment, pride, etc.) although phenomenologically distinct, all share the ability to broaden people’s momentary thought-

action repertoires and build their enduring personal strengths, ranging from physical to and intellectual strengths to social and psychological strengths” (p.3). Hence, positive emotions help broaden individuals’ attention and cognitive skills, enabling flexibility and creative thinking. Positive emotions then can be said to have adaptive significance, as they produce patterns of thought that are notably unusual, flexible, creative and receptive (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). Thus, positive emotions have an unconventional undertone, however it is this unconventional character that ignites the ability to for growth and enduring development. Thus, positive emotions enlarge the cognitive context (Isen, 1987).

Further, in contrast to negative emotions, which carry direct and immediate adaptive benefits in situations that threaten survival, the broadened thought-action repertoires, triggered by positive emotions are beneficial in other ways (Fredrickson, 2003). As the broadening of mindsets by positive emotions carry indirect and long-term adaptive benefits because broadening builds enduring personal strengths which function as reserves that can be drawn on later (Fredrickson, 2003). Thus, positive emotions broaden and build personal strengths in an enduring developmental way, ultimately resulting in an individual who has the reservoir of strengths to deal with life challenges.

Now that an understanding of Fredrickson’s (1998) Broaden and Build theory has been established, discussion will focus on applying the theory to the present study.

The present study draws upon the premise that positive emotions broaden and build an individual’s personal repertoire of strengths which have long-term adaptive benefits. Further, studies (Luthans et al., 2007; Galanakis et al., 2011) have found that positive emotions help equip employees with the strengths they need to better contend with occupational stress.

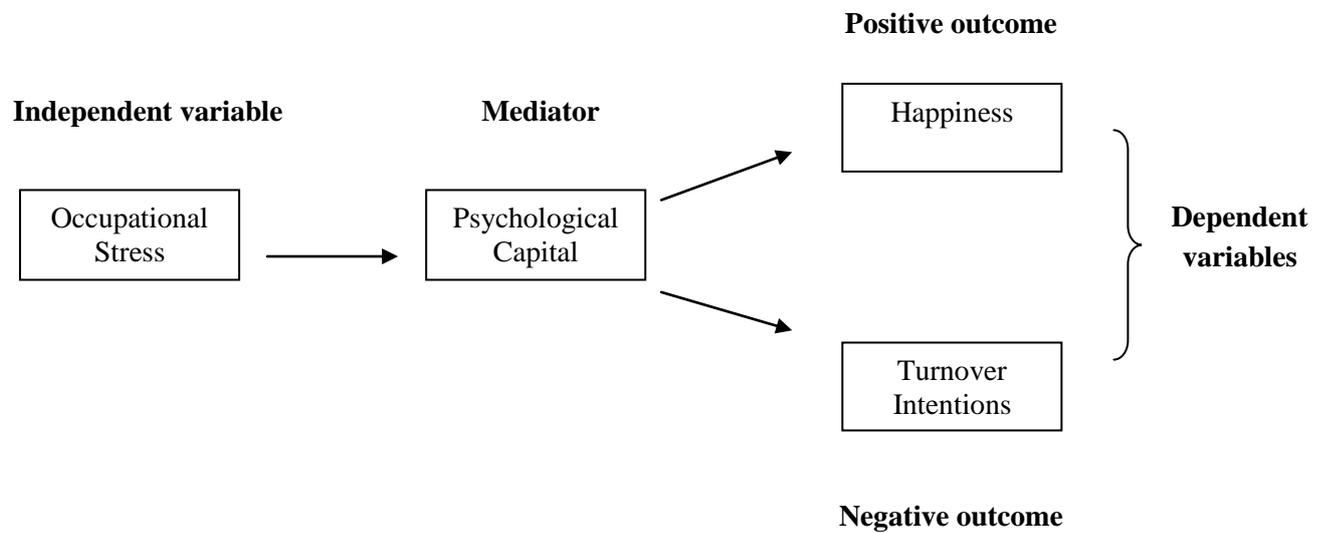
Importantly, research (Xaba, 2003) has shown that occupational stress is a principle cause of turnover in teachers. Hence, the present study proposes that by fostering positive emotions

such as self-efficacy, resilience, hope and optimism (PsyCap) in teachers it could possibly decrease turnover rates in teachers – thus the present study aimed to form an understanding of what PsyCap broaden and builds teacher’s repertoire of strengths. Further, the present study aimed to understand if certain PsyCap can lead to the experience of happiness in teachers, ultimately aiming to understand what PsyCap leads to enduring positive experiences such as happiness. As by understanding the psychological strengths (PsyCap) related to positive experiences in teachers, these strengths can be fostered and act as a starting point to help alleviate the problem of teacher turnover. Hence, it is clear that Fredrickson’s (1998) Broaden and Build theory of positive emotions acts as the theoretical frame work of the present study.

## **2.5. The present study**

The above literature review provided a theoretical and conceptual foundation for the present study. The purpose of this research study was to investigate the relationship between occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions amongst teachers from a positive psychological standpoint. As previous studies (Xaba, 2003; Steyn & Kamper, 2006) have focused on the causes of turnover and have not examined the influence of PsyCap on turnover intentions amongst the stress filled teaching occupational field. Hence, this study employed a positive psychological stance by focusing on whether PsyCap can promote positive emotions (happiness) amidst an occupational field that is ridden by a stressful work environment and plagued by high turnover rates. More so, in reviewing the literature it is clear that there is a significant gap in the literature that has focused on the development of PsyCap amongst teachers, especially within the turbulent South African teaching occupational field.

The figure below illustrates the proposed relationships between the study constructs (i.e. occupational stress, PsyCap, happiness and turnover intentions).



*Figure 1.* Model of study constructs (occupational stress, PsyCap, happiness and turnover intentions)

## 2.6. Summary

The constructs occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions were conceptualised in this chapter. Studies that were undertaken by other researchers and possible relationships were examined in order to set the stage for the research study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology that was used in this research study.

#### **3.2. Research Methodology**

##### **3.2.1. Research Design**

The present study took the form of a quantitative research study. A quantitative research study employs theory testing, numerical data, objectivity and hypotheses/research questions to examine the relationships among variables of a study (Neuman, 2006). This design is appropriate, as the present study aimed to determine if there are statistical and practical significant relationships between occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions more so, the study aimed to understand if PsyCap acts as a mediating variable and to determine if PsyCap is a predictor of happiness. Thus, the quantitative research design is most suited as it explores relationships and allows the researcher to make inferences in regard to mediation and prediction. Hence, the quantitative research design is the best fit to answer the research questions of the study.

Specifically, the present study took the form of a quantitative cross-sectional research study design. A cross sectional research design is used when information about the constructs represents what is going on in one point in time – thus the study is conducted at one point in time to answer specific research questions (Pallant, 2011). A cross-sectional research design was used for the present study as the data will be collected once and no follow-up studies will be conducted, as the sole purpose of the study is to answer the research questions. Further, a quantitative, cross-sectional research design is suited as the teachers are on a strict timetable

thus the quantitative design was most suited to the time constraints of the teaching occupational environment.

### **3.2.2. Participants**

The researcher began contacting schools telephonically in the Durban, Kwazulu Natal area to enquire if the schools would be interested in participating in the study. Ultimately, the study sample consisted of teachers from 7 primary and secondary schools in the Durban, Kwazulu Natal region as only 7 schools were willing to participate. The schools that were included in the study are from the following areas: Parlock, Hillgrove, Newlands West, Newlands East, Reservoir Hills, Berea and Bufflesdale. The above schools consisted of 40 teachers each bringing the study population to 280 teachers. The study sample consisted of 140 teachers (n=140) from the 7 schools (however, 91 questionnaires were completed) (see Table 1). The sample was dominantly female (68.1%). Most of the participants were in the 29-33 and 39-44 year old age group and taught in secondary schools (86%). The teachers were all educationally qualified with the majority having a degree in teaching, further the bulk (34.1%) of the sample been working in the organisations for at least 18 years.

### **3.2.3. Sampling**

Permission to conduct research was attained telephonically from the principals of all 7 schools and a request was made to gain access to staff registry lists. The present study used the stratified sampling method due to the schools being in various geographical regions.

“Stratified sampling is used to establish a greater degree of representativeness in situations where populations consist of subgroups or ‘strata’ (grades in schools) and involves the independent proportionate or disproportionate sampling from each stratum in the population (Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Stratified sampling was used as the population of teachers work in various (Parlock, Hillgrove, Newlands West, Newlands East, Reservoir Hills, Berea and

Bufflesdale) schools (strata), thus stratified sampling would increase representativeness of the study population. Further, stratified proportionate sampling has been used to minimise sampling error, ensure representativeness of the study population and to increase the practical applicability of the results as the study sample is employed in different schools within the Durban region.

Table 1

*Characteristics of the participants*

C	Frequency	N	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	29	91	31.9
Female	62	91	68.1
<b>Age</b>			
21-26 years	15	91	16.5
27-32 years	16	91	17.6
33-48 years	12	91	13.2
39-44 years	18	91	19.8
45-50 years	15	91	16.5
51-65years	15	91	16.5
<b>Tenure</b>			
1-5 years	25	91	27.5
6-11 years	16	91	17.6
12-17 years	18	91	19.8
18-30 years	31	91	34.1
31-40 years	1	91	1.1
<b>Qualifications</b>			
Diploma	21	91	23.1
Degree	43	91	47.3
Honours	19	91	20.9
Masters	8	91	8.8
<b>Level teaching</b>			

Primary	5	91	5.5
Secondary	86	91	94.5

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The present study carried out stratified sampling as follows: once the registration lists were attained from all the schools 20 teachers were randomly selected from each school to form the study sample – the use of stratified proportionate sampling. Thus, the study sample consisted of 140 teachers from the 7 secondary schools.

### **3.3. Data Collection Technique and Research Instruments**

The present study used the survey design to collect data. Survey research involves the quantitative study of large human populations, which identifies the population being studied, requires the selection of a representative sample and collects data by means of questionnaires that asks people about their, thoughts, emotions and behaviour (Cozby, 2004). The survey design is most suited as the study used questionnaires to gather information on the study constructs (i.e. occupational stress, PsyCap, happiness and turnover).

The specific questionnaires that were used in the study include a biographical questionnaire, the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI), the PsyCap Questionnaire, the Orientation to Happiness Scale (OHS) and the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS).

#### **3.3.1. Biographical Questionnaire**

A biographical questionnaire was designed for the purpose of this research study and aimed to identify, age, gender, qualifications, number of years employed as a teacher and level of students that the teachers educate.

### **3.3.2. Teacher Stress Inventory**

The teacher stress inventory (TSI) was originally developed by Fimian (1983) and later revised by Schutz and Long (1988). The central aim of the TSI is to identify what type of situations teachers find stressful by obtaining an overall stress score (Schutz & Long, 1988). The TSI consists of 36 items rated on a 5-point likert scale (i.e. 1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= neither disagree/agree, 4 = somewhat agree, and 5 = strongly agree) (Schutz & Long, 1988). The items of the TSI are grouped into seven categories which include: role ambiguity (e.g., “I am unclear on what the scope and responsibilities of my job are”); role stress (e.g., “I find that I have extra work beyond what should be normally expected of me”); organisational management (e.g., “My administrative head does not ask my opinion on decisions that directly affect me”); job satisfaction (e.g., “All in all, I would say that am I am not satisfied with my job”); life satisfaction (e.g., “My life is currently quite lonely”); task stress (e.g., “I find that dealing with student discipline problems puts a lot of stress on me”); and supervisory support (e.g., “My administrative head does not pay attention to what I say”) (Harlow, 2008). Hence, it is clear that the instrument is designed to collect information on stress specific to the teaching occupational field. Further, the TSI has high levels of reliability and validity (>0.70) and has been used to conduct research (Putter, 2003; Khoza, 2006) in the South African context. Thus, due to the TSI being designed specifically for use in the teaching profession, being a reliable and valid instrument and having applicability within the South African context it has been selected to be used in the present research study.

### **3.3.3. Psychological Capital Questionnaire**

The PsyCap questionnaire was developed by Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007) and include 24 items on a 6-point likert scale (i.e. 1 = strongly agree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat

disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree and 6 = strongly agree). The 24 items on the PsyCap questionnaire measure the 4 underlying dimensions (each dimension has 6 items) of PsyCap namely efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007). Thus, the PsyCap questionnaire aims to provide an inclusive measure that gathers information on the 4 underlying constructs (i.e. efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience) of the higher order construct PsyCap.

Examples of items on the PsyCap questionnaire include: “I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution” (efficacy), “If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it” (hope), “I can get through difficult times at work because I’ve experienced difficulty before” (resilience), and “I’m optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work” (optimism) (Luthans et al., 2007). The PsyCap questionnaire has favourable psychometric properties as it has high reliabilities (0.94) and validity (> 0.70). Hence, it can be seen that the PsyCap questionnaire is an all-inclusive instrument of the higher order construct PsyCap.

Further, the PsyCap questionnaire is applicable within the South African context as numerous studies (Appolis, 2010; Herbert, 2011) have been conducted using the PsyCap questionnaire – thus the PsyCap questionnaire has multi-cultural applicability. Thus, the PsyCap questionnaire has been selected for the present study as it reliable and valid and is applicable within the South African context.

#### **3.3.4. Orientation to Happiness Scale**

The orientation to happiness scale (OHS) was developed by Peterson, Park and Seligman (2005) and reflects the three factors which include: life of meaning, life of pleasure and life of engagement. Each factor was measured by six items, which were rated on 5-point Likert-

type scales ranging from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me). A higher score indicates that the participant has a higher orientation to happiness.

The OHS assesses how strongly respondents endorse finding happiness through pleasure (Pleasure orientation; 6 items, e.g., ‘I love to do things that excite my senses’); engagement (Engagement orientation; 6 items, e.g., ‘I seek out situations that challenge my skills and abilities’); and meaning (Meaning orientation; 6 items, e.g., ‘My life serves a higher purpose’) (Peterson et al., 2005).

Peterson et al. (2005) reported good structural validity and internal consistency (0.82 for Pleasure orientation; 0.72 for Engagement orientation; 0.82 for Meaning orientation), as well as convergent validity via correlations of each approach with life satisfaction. Consequently, the OHS is a statistically significant instrument as it is reliable and valid. The OHS has been used in research studies (Ingelhart, 2006; Coetzee & Bergh, 2009) within the South African context, thus it is an applicable instrument to gather information on happiness among research participants in South Africa.

Subsequently, the OHS gathers three-dimensional information on an individual’s orientation to happiness, is reliable, valid and applicable within the South African context – thus it was be used in the present study.

### **3.3.5. Turnover Intention Scale**

Turnover intentions was assessed with the use of the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) which is adapted from the Michigan Organisational Assessment Questionnaire was developed by Cammann, Fichmann, Jenkins and Klesh (1979). The scale consists of 3 items (e.g. It is very possible for me to leave for another organisation in the next year) rated on a 5-point likert scale (i.e. 1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= neither disagree/agree, 4 = somewhat agree, and 5 = strongly agree) that ask individuals about their turnover intentions.

The scale has been adapted to many studies and is reliable and valid ( $>0.70$ ) (Cammann et al., 1979). Further, the TIS has been used in cross-cultural settings (Cammann et al., 1979; Scott, Bishop & Chen, 2003). Hence, for its psychometric properties and cross-cultural applicability the TIS was used to gather information on turnover intentions in the present study.

The above instruments have been selected to use in the present this research study as they are good measurement instruments of the constructs of this research study (Fimian, 1983; Schutz & Long, 1988; Luthans et al., 2007; Peterson et al., 2005; Cammann et al.).

### **3.4. Study Procedure**

The researcher first requested permission and staff registry lists from the principals at each school. Once permission was attained, stratified sampling was then conducted with the use of the staff registry lists. Thereafter, the researcher visited the 7 schools to brief the teachers on the research and request participation from the teachers. The teachers were given a week to decide if they wanted to participate or not. The researcher then visited each of the schools after a week and enquired if the teachers would participate.

The researcher then briefed participants on the purpose of the study and notified the participants that they are free to ask any questions at any point in time in regard to the study. The researcher also assured the participants that complete confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the research study. Further, the researcher notified the participants that they are required to answer 6 questionnaires which are not a test of ability or performance but asks their opinion on the topic.

The researcher then left a box with the principal of each school and asked them to distribute the questionnaires to each of the participants and to let them know that the researcher will return in 2 weeks for completed questionnaires.

The researcher returned 2 weeks later to debrief the participants. The participants were asked if they had any concerns and were assured that they could contact the researcher at any time. The participants were assured that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained at all times – as the research is governed by high ethical standards. Lastly, the participants at all the schools were thanked for their participation.

### **3.5. Ethical Issues**

In order to ensure that the highest ethical standards were maintained the following ethical provisions were implemented. First, permission to conduct research was attained telephonically from each of the principal in each of the seven schools. Second, before data collection commenced permission was attained from the ethics board of the University of Kwazulu Natal. Lastly, each participant was made aware through a letter of informed consent that their participation is voluntary, they may withdraw at anytime and that confidentiality and anonymity is assured throughout the study.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

The data analysis was conducted with the use of the SPSS program 18.0 (SPSS, 2005). The study made use of descriptive and inferential statistics.

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to summarise the data for occupational stress, PsyCap, happiness and turnover intentions to find the factors that best represent the data collected (Pallant, 2011). Thus, factor analysis is highly appropriate as it reduces the data to factors that which best represent the data and in effect create a clearer picture of the data collected. Simple components analysis was carried out, eigen values greater than 1 and scree plots were studied to find the statistically significant factors.

First, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) adequacy will be checked and all values above 0.6 were considered acceptable (Pallant, 2011). Next, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity values were examined and all values less than or equal to 0.05 are considered significant. To attain an idea of how many components to extract eigen values above 1 and total variance explained tables were examined. The Kaiser criterion is often an over representation, thus screeplots were examined for changes in the elbow of the plot, ultimately aiming to find the factors that best represent the data collected (Pallant, 2011). Lastly the component matrix was examined and values higher than 0.45 were deemed as an accepted factor loading, anything below was excluded (Pallant, 2011). Once the factors were found, Cronbach alpha coefficients were computed to determine the reliability of the factors.

Descriptive statistics were then used to describe the distribution of the results of the sample in relation to the constructs (occupational stress, PsyCap, happiness and turnover) (Howell, 2005). Thereafter, inferential statistics were used to draw information from the data collected to answer the specific research questions (Howell, 2005).

First, the means (statistical average), standard deviations, (deviation of the distribution of scores from the mean), minimum and maximum scores, kurtosis (used to establish the peakedness) and skewness (use to establish if the results are positively or negatively skewed) of the results were used to describe the distribution of scores for occupational stress, PsyCap, happiness and turnover intentions.

Further, Cronbach alpha coefficients for the TSI, PsyCap questionnaire, OHS and the TIS were computed to determine the reliability (internal consistency) of the data collected. Cronbach alpha coefficients above 0.70 were considered reliable (Pallant, 2011). The above descriptive statistics is essential, as they will describe the distribution and build the foundation for inferential statistical analysis.

Pearson's correlation, which is a statistical technique used to understand the linear relationship between two variables by determining the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was used in this study (Howell, 2003). Pearson's correlation was used to determine if there are relationships between occupational stress, PsyCap, happiness and turnover intentions. A correlation matrix was computed and the Pearson correlation coefficients and significant levels were examined to check for statistically and practically significant values.

The coefficients were interpreted as follows:  $r = .30 - .49$  are considered medium relationship and  $r = .50 - 1.0$  are considered large relationships (Pallant, 2011). These relationships are considered practically significant. The strength of the relationship was determined by the coefficient value as values less than or equal 0.05 are considered statistically significant. Lastly, the coefficient of determination were studied to determine how much shared variance the relationships between the variables possess.

Thereafter, data analysis was conducted to determine if PsyCap mediates the relationship between occupational stress, happiness either/or turnover. In order to check for a mediating variable three conditions need to be met. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), these conditions include the following: (1) the first regression equation shows that the independent variable (IV) relates to the dependent variable (DV) (i.e. occupational stress must relate to happiness and turnover); (2) the second equation shows that the IV relates to the mediating variable (occupational stress must relate to PsyCap); and (3) the third regression shows that the mediating variable relates to the DV (PsyCap must be related to occupational stress) and the relationship of the IV with the DV is significantly lower in magnitude in the third equation than in the second (i.e. that PsyCap has mediated the relationship thus there now exists a stronger correlation in the third equation as opposed to the first equation between occupational stress (IV) and happiness and turnover).

Thereafter, regression (regression analysis is a technique used to explore relationships between one continuous DV and a one or many IV's) coefficients and standard errors will be computed for the relationships between occupational stress (IV) and PsyCap (mediator) and for PsyCap (mediator) and each DV (happiness and turnover) (Pallant, 2011). Significant levels ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) for the coefficients were analysed to determine if the predictor is statistically significant.

Afterwards, Sobel tests were conducted to confirm that mediation is present. This test is designed to assess whether a mediating variable (PsyCap) carries the effects of the IV (occupational stress) to a DV (happiness and turnover) The test statistic for the Sobel test is 1.32, with an associated  $p$ -value of 0.18 (Pallant, 2011). The fact that the observed  $p$ -value does not fall below the established alpha level of .05 indicates the association between the IV and the DV (in this case occupational stress and each of the DV's (happiness and turnover intentions). Hence, a significant  $p$ -value of Sobel tests will help determine if PsyCap acts as a mediator between occupational stress and happiness either/or turnover

Multiple regression analysis was then used. Multiple regression analysis is a flexible method of data analysis that may be appropriate whenever a quantitative variable (the dependent or criterion variable) is to be examined in relation to any other variables (expressed as independent or predictor variables) that may contribute to the relationship among the variables (Pallant, 2011). Standard multiple regression analysis was used to determine if PsyCap predict happiness.

During multiple regression analysis, the R squared valued will be examined to determine the amount and percent of variance of the dependent variable (happiness) is explained by the independent variable (PsyCap). Thereafter, the standardized coefficients (beta) will be examined to determine which variable is a better predictor. Lastly, significant levels ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

for the beta coefficients will be checked to determine if the prediction is statistically significant. Thus, multiple regression analysis helps determine if PsyCap is a predictor of happiness.

### **3.7. Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a detailed description of the methods used to collect data for this study. Specifically, this chapter discussed the research design, participants, sampling methods, research instruments used, study procedure and how the data was analysed.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results that were obtained from the statistical analysis of the data gathered for the research. It contains the detailed descriptive statistics of the sample by the use of tables. The reliability of all the scales used is examined, the relationships between the constructs are interpreted with the use of Pearson's correlation coefficients and prediction is examined with the use of regression analysis.

#### 4.2. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was conducted on the TSI, PsyCap questionnaire and the OHS to determine the factors that best represent the data. Factor analysis was not conducted on the TIS as it measures one factor – turnover intentions.

Simple components analysis was carried out, eigenvalues and scree plots were studied for all three scales. Cronbach alpha coefficients were computed for all the factors to determine the reliability of the factors. The factors were all found to have reliabilities that were  $\alpha > 0.70$ .

The results are as follows:

Upon review of the initial eigenvalues for the TSI, 7 were above 1, however on examination of the screeplot it could be seen that 2 factors best fit the data. Table 3 shows that 13 out of the 36 items loaded on two factors.

The first factor on the TSI (see Table 3) loaded on items related to organisational management, role ambiguity and job satisfaction. This factor was named work related stress. Specifically, the factor loaded on items such as the following: "I have to buck a rule or policy

in order to carry it out” (organisational management), “I am uncertain on what the criteria for evaluating my performance actually are” (role ambiguity) and “All in all I will say I am extremely satisfied with my job”. It can be seen that this factor refers to management of the organisation, feelings of role uncertainty and job satisfaction which are general everyday work related stressors among the teaching sample.

The second factor found loaded on 6 items related to task stress. Specifically, the factor loaded on the following items: “Trying to complete reports and paperwork on time causes me a lot of stress” and “I find that dealing with student discipline problems puts a lot of stress on me”. It can be seen that the above factor loaded on items referring to stressors in the carrying out of duties and was so named task stressors. The above two factors (work related stressors (19.2%) and task stressors (10.3)) explain a total of 29.5% of the variance.

The results of the factor analysis on the PsyCap questionnaire (see Table 4) found one factor. This factor loaded on 12 items out of 24. Specifically, this factor loaded on the following items: “I feel confident having to set targets or goals in my work area”, “If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of ways to get out of it” and “Right now I see myself as pretty successful”. It can be seen that the following factor loaded on items related to self-efficacy, hope and optimism and was therefore named psychological capital. The above factor explains 30.4% of shared variance.

The results of the factor analysis on the OHS (see Table 4) found a two factor model. The first factor loaded on 8 items out of 18 related to the pleasure (e.g. “Life is too short to postpone the pleasures it can provide”) and the meaning (“My life has a lasting meaning”) life. It can be seen that the above factor loaded on items related to the experience of a pleasurable or meaningful life and was named pleasure and meaning.

The second factor loaded on 7 out of 18 items related to being engaged (i.e. “Whether at work or play I am usually in a ‘zone’ and not conscious of myself”). It is clear that the above

factor loaded on items related experience of being engaged and was thus named engagement.

The above two factors (pleasure and meaning (20.1%) and engagement (12.2%)) explain 32.3% of the shared variance.

Table 2  
*Factor Loadings for the Teacher Stress Inventory*

ITEM	Factor 1	Factor 2
TSI 1	0.265	0.109
TSI 2	0.310	-0.102
TSI 3	-0.189	0.291
TSI 4	<b>0.481</b>	0.107
TSI 5	-0.289	0.304
TSI 6	-0.298	0.302
TSI 7	<b>-0.476</b>	0.158
TSI 8	0.504	-0.239
TSI 9	<b>0.563</b>	0.112
TSI 10	<b>-0.487</b>	0.244
TSI 11	<b>0.584</b>	0.288
TSI 12	<b>-0.480</b>	0.062
TSI 13	<b>-0.454</b>	0.208
TSI14	<b>0.513</b>	-0.002
TSI 15	<b>0.457</b>	0.087
TSI 16	<b>-0.603</b>	0.055
TSI 17	0.312	0.311
TSI 18	0.088	<b>0.533</b>
TSI 19	0.121	0.105
TSI 20	0.138	<b>-0.454</b>
TSI 21	-0.378	0.355
TSI 22	0.320	0.341
TSI 23	0.311	0.294
TSI 24	0.244	0.113
TSI 25	-0.166	0.324
TSI 26	0.210	<b>0.421</b>
TSI 27	<b>-0.575</b>	<b>0.461</b>
TSI 28	0.661	0.210
TSI 29	0.794	<b>0.474</b>
TSI 30	0.746	<b>0.487</b>
TSI 31	<b>-0.473</b>	0.328
TSI 32	<b>-0.499</b>	0.215
TSI 33	0.010	0.308
TSI 34	0.209	0.145
TSI 35	0.110	<b>0.456</b>
TSI 36	-0.197	0.231

Table 3

*Factor Loadings for the Psychological Capital Questionnaire*

ITEM	Factor 1
PCQ 1	<b>0.608</b>
PCQ 2	0.098
PCQ 3	<b>0.605</b>
PCQ 4	<b>0.619</b>
PCQ 5	<b>0.552</b>
PCQ 6	<b>0.623</b>
PCQ 7	<b>0.657</b>
PCQ 8	<b>0.663</b>
PCQ 9	<b>0.705</b>
PCQ 10	<b>0.671</b>
PCQ 11	<b>0.696</b>
PCQ 12	<b>0.624</b>
PCQ 13	0.002
PCQ 14	<b>0.573</b>
PCQ 15	<b>0.583</b>
PCQ 16	0.003
PCQ 17	0.344
PCQ 18	0.087
PCQ 19	-0.112
PCQ 20	0.038
PCQ 21	0.355
PCQ 22	-0.164
PCQ 23	0.232
PCQ 24	-0.272

Table 4

*Factor Loadings for the Orientation to Happiness Scale*

ITEM	Factor 1	Factor 2
OHS 1	-0.009	<b>0.503</b>
OHS 2	<b>0.563</b>	-0.129
OHS 3	<b>0.499</b>	0.344
OHS 4	0.107	<b>0.618</b>
OHS 5	<b>0.585</b>	<b>-0.488</b>
OHS 6	0.202	-0.204
OHS 7	-0.158	<b>0.479</b>
OHS 8	<b>0.501</b>	0.089
OHS 9	0.312	<b>0.579</b>
OHS 10	-0.044	0.025
OHS 11	<b>0.507</b>	0.199

OHS 12	<b>0.512</b>	0.311
OHS 13	-0.208	<b>0.509</b>
OHS 14	-0.012	0.127
OHS 15	0.017	0.112
OHS 16	<b>0.574</b>	0.068
OHS 17	<b>0.537</b>	-0.132
OHS 18	-0.036	0.232

### 4.3. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients for all measures (TSI, PsyCap questionnaire, OHS and TIS) in the study are reported in Table 2. From the data depicted in Table 2 it can be seen that the scores on the TSI, PCQ, OHS and TIS are normally distributed. Upon review of the Cronbach alpha coefficients, it is clear that the scales are reliable as the  $\alpha > 0.70$  which is in line with statistical guidelines (Pallant, 2011). In Table 2 it is evident that the majority of the scores of the variables (General work related stress, task stress and turnover

Table 5  
*Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.	Skew-ness	Kurt-osis	Cron-bach Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
1.General Work Related Stress	91	31	63	44	5.907	0.395	0.683	0.829
2.Task Stress	91	13	29	20	3.810	0.147	-0.665	0.735
3.PsyCap	91	22	66	53	7.362	-1.321	0.870	0.821
4.Pleasure & Meaning	91	16	40	29	5.119	-0.241	0.146	0.740
5.Engagement	91	12	30	22	3.286	-0.338	0.865	0.723
6.Turnover Intentions		3	15	5	2.835	0.940	0.370	0.801

intentions) are clustered to the right at the high values – indicating negative skewness.

Alternately, the scores on PsyCap, pleasure and meaning and engagement indicate a clustering of scores at the low values – positive skewness (Neuman, 2006). From the kurtosis

values in Table 2 it can be seen that the scores on the variables indicate a rather flat distribution as kurtosis values are below 0 (Pallant, 2011). Hence, the descriptive statistics in Table 6 show that the scores on the scales are normally distributed.

#### **4.4. Pearson Correlation Coefficients**

Pearson correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationships among the variables in this study.

The relationships are presented in Table 6 which is as follows. First, a positive relationship was found ( $r= 0.566$ ) between work related stress and task stress, which is statistically ( $p\leq 0.01$ ) and practically significant (medium effect  $> 0.300$ ).

Second, a positive relationship was found between PsyCap and pleasure and meaning ( $r=0.473$ ), which is statistically ( $p\leq 0.01$ ) and practically significant (medium effect  $> 0.300$ ).

Third, a positive relationship was found between PsyCap and engagement ( $r=0.371$ ), which is statistically ( $p\leq 0.01$ ) and practically significant (medium effect  $> 0.300$ ).

Fourth, a negative relationship was found between PsyCap and turnover intentions ( $r=-0.358$ ), which is statistically ( $p\leq 0.05$ ) and practically significant (medium effect  $> 0.300$ ).

Lastly, a positive relationship was found between pleasure and meaning and engagement ( $r=0.516$ ), which is statistically ( $p\leq 0.01$ ) and practically significant (large effect  $> 0.49$ ).

Table 6 *Pearson Correlation Coefficient*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. General Work Related Stress	1	-	-	-	-	-
2. Task Stress	0.566**++	1	-	-	-	-
3. PsyCap	-0.020	-0.050	1	-	-	-
4. Pleasure & Meaning	0.050	-0.124	0.473**+	1	-	-
5. Engagement	-0.095	-0.029	0.371**+	0.516**++	1	-
6. Turnover Intentions	0.003	-0.156	-0.358*+	-0.010	-0.014	1

Note: \* Statistically significant  $p \leq 0.05$

\*\*Statistically significant  $p \leq 0.01$

+ Practically significant (medium effect  $> 0.30$ )

++Practically significant (large effect  $> 0.50$ )

#### 4.5. Regression Analysis

Mediation could not be conducted as Baron and Kenny's (1986) three conditions for mediation to be present were not met by the study constructs

Standard regression was used as opposed to the initial intention to use multiple regression due to the results of factor analysis as it found one factor on PsyCap and two on happiness (pleasure and meaning and engagement). Standard linear regression (see Table 7) was used to explore if PsyCap predicts pleasure and meaning or engagement. The independent variable was PsyCap and the dependent variables were pleasure and meaning and engagement. Only one statistical significant prediction was found, that is PsyCap is a predictor of pleasure and meaning. Specifically, the results showed that PsyCap is a predictor ( $R^2 = 0.223$  and  $p < 0.001$ ) of pleasure and meaning which is statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). The model as a whole contributed to 22.0% ( $R^2$  value) of the variance in pleasure and meaning. As seen below PsyCap is not a predictor of engagement.

Table 7. *Pleasure & Meaning as a predictor of PsyCap*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R squared</b>	<b>Adjusted R squared</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
				0.230	
Pleasure & Meaning	0.473	0.223	0.194		0.002**

Note: \*\* Statistically significant  $p \leq 0.01$

Table 7. *Engagement as a predictor of PsyCap*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R squared</b>	<b>Adjusted R squared</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
				0.230	
Engagement	0.371	0.137	0.194		0.025

Note: \*\* Statistically significant  $p \leq 0.01$

#### **4.6. Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to report the results from the statistical analysis done using SPSS 18. The chapter reported results of biographical information, descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlations and regression analysis.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter aims to discuss the results of this study within the context of previous research. Each research question will be discussed and the practical implications for the present research study will be suggested. The chapter ends in a summary.

#### **5.2. Discussion of Results**

The present study aims were three fold, it aimed to determine if a relationship exists between occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions amongst school teachers. Secondly, the study aimed to understand if psychological capital mediates the relationship between occupational stress and happiness either/or turnover intentions amongst teachers. Lastly, the study aimed to determine if psychological capital is a predictor of happiness among teachers.

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to find the factors that best represent the data on all four instruments (TSI, PCQ and the OHS).

The results of the factor analysis found two factors on the TSI. The first being that the teachers in the study reported experiencing stress in relation to poor organisational management, role ambiguity and poor levels of job satisfaction. This factor was named general work related stress. The above finding is concurrent with studies (Cope, 2003; Wilson, 2002; Gray, 1998; HSRC, 2011; Xaba, 2003) which assert that the teaching profession is characterised by role ambiguity and poor job satisfaction which contribute significantly to the experience of occupational stress. Specifically, within the South African context studies (Gillespie, et al, 2001; HSRC, 2011; Xaba, 2003) have found that the

principle source of occupational stress is the constant change of curriculum, low salaries, poor pupil behaviour and lack of central governmental support. Thus, the above studies cohere with the present study's finding that the teachers in South African context attribute poor organisational management, role ambiguity and poor job satisfaction as stressors due to the rapid change of South African educational curriculum, poor management of the transitioning educational system and the related poor levels of job satisfaction that these stressors evoke (Gillespie, et al, 2001; Xaba, 2003).

The second factor found on the TSI was that teachers in the present study reported that they experience considerable task stress. This finding is supported by studies (Gray, 1998; Wilson, 2002) which have found that daily routine tasks within the teaching profession acts as a significant contributor to the experience of stress amongst teachers.

The results of the factor analysis found one factor on the PCQ which indicated that teachers in the present study reported the experience of self-efficacy, hope and optimism and this factor was named psychological capital. As discussed at the outset there is a gap in research specifically related to the benefits of PsyCap amongst the teaching profession. As studies (Gomez, 2007; Pajeras 2001) have concentrated on how PsyCap can be developed amongst students in educational institutions, however they have not examined the advantages of developing PsyCap amongst teachers. Although there is no support for the findings of the present study, studies (Luthans et al., 2008; Jex, 1998; Luthans et al., 2004; Page & Donohue, 2004) have found PsyCap is an important psychological strength as it helps employees build the critical strengths needed in today's stress-filled workplace, the three key elements to dealing with occupational stress is to plan a course of positive action to limit and contain stress (i.e. hope), to maintain and optimistic attitude (i.e. optimism) and believe that you have control or at least influence over the stress-inducing event (i.e. efficacy) and lastly in the presence of occupational stress the right psychological capital can act as a strength that

promotes positive psychological states. Thus, the development of PsyCap is indeed a vital psychological strength in any occupational field.

The results of the factor analysis on the OHS found two factors that being teachers in the present study reported experiencing engagement and pleasure and meaning.

The first factor is that the teachers reported experiencing pleasure and meaning, this finding is concurrent with studies (Ros, 1999; Larrivee , 2000) which have found that positive emotions such as pleasure and meaning is beneficial to the stress filled teaching profession. The second factor found on the OHS was that the teachers reported experiencing engagement. This finding is supported by studies (Pawan, 2003; Hakanen et al., 2006; Kong, 2009) have found that engagement is valuable in the teaching profession as it maintains positive experiences despite teaching being a stressful occupation. Broadly, research (Martin, 2006; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Van Katwyk et al., 2000) has found that positive emotions in will lead to accelerated learning and the fostering of happiness in students and that they are less likely to engage in voluntary turnover. Thus, it can be seen that positive emotions such as engagement and pleasure and meaning result in positive experiences in the stressful teaching profession.

Factor analysis was not conducted on the TIS as it collects data on one factor that being turnover intentions (Fimian, 1983; Schutz & Long, 1988).

Reliability analysis was conducted on the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI), Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ), Orientation to Happiness Scale (OHS) and the Turnover intention Scale (TIS) and revealed that all the above data collection instruments had reliability coefficients that were considerably high. Specifically, the Cronbach alpha coefficients were used as the estimates of reliability and were found to be acceptable as compared to the guideline of Pallant (2011) ( $\alpha \geq 0.70$ ). Further, the results show that the

scores on all four instruments are normally distributed (see Table 2) and are reliable measures (as discussed above), thus the descriptive statistics have set the stage for inferential statistical analysis.

First the study aimed to examine the relationship between occupational stress, PsyCap, happiness and turnover intentions. It is important to note that factor analysis has identified the factors that best represent the data. Thus, the study will now refer to the above factors (general work stress, task stress, PsyCap, pleasure and meaning, engagement and turnover intentions) as the discussion proceeds.

First, the results showed that a practical and statistically significant relationship was found between general work stress and task stress. As the more the teachers experienced general work related stress (i.e. poor organisational management, role ambiguity and job satisfaction) the more likely they are to experience the daily tasks of teaching as stressful. This finding is concurrent with studies (Conley & Woosley, 1999; Idris, 2011) who have found that role ambiguity increases the experience of stress amongst teachers. More so, study Kyriacou's (2001) states that more than one stressor (i.e. general work related stress and task stress) results in the exacerbated experience of work as stressful amongst a teaching sample. This finding is supported by research (Xaba, 2011; Steyn & Kamper 2006) in South Africa which has found that more than one stressor in the workplace increases the overall experience of teaching as stressful.

Although, no practical and statistically significant relationships were found between occupational stress (i.e. general work stress and task stress) and turnover intentions a wealth of literature (Grey, 1998; Hart & Cooper, 2001; Gillepsie et al., 2001) suggests that occupational stress is a major contributor of turnover intentions amongst teachers. Hence, this is an area in the literature that requires further examination.

Second the results showed that a practical and statistically significant relationship was found between PsyCap and pleasure and meaning. As the more PsyCap teachers have the more likely they are to experience pleasure and meaning at work. This finding is in line with numerous studies (Martin, 2006; Ros, 1999; Larrivee , 2000 Luthans, Avey & Patera , 2008; Jex, 1998; Luthans et al., 2004; Page & Donohue, 2004) which have found that PsyCap is an important psychological strength as it helps employees build the critical strengths needed in today's stress-filled workplace and that the three key elements to dealing with occupational stress is hope, optimism and self-efficacy.

Third, the results showed that a practical and statistically significant relationship was found between PsyCap and engagement. As the more PsyCap teachers have the more likely they are to experience engagement. This finding is supported by studies (Luthans et al., 2008; Hakanen et al., 2006; Kong, 2009; Luthans et al., 2004) which assert that PsyCap acts as a strength in stressful occupations such as teaching as it promotes the experience of positive emotions such as engagement. It is important to note that even though teachers may possess PsyCap they have to be able to constructively use it within their occupational environment in order to reap the benefits of positive experiences (Luthans et al., 2008; Luthans et al., 2004; Page & Donohue, 2004).

Fourth, the results showed that a practical and statistically significant relationship between engagement and pleasure and meaning. As the more teachers experience pleasure and meaning the more engaged they are with their work. This finding coheres with studies (Pawan, 2003; Hakanen et al., 2006; Ros, 1999) which have found that teachers who experience positive emotions such as engagement and pleasure and meaning promote overall positive experiences amongst teachers and are unlikely to engage in voluntary turnover. It is important to note that the above finding is concurrent with the central tenet of Broaden and Build theory as positive emotions are said to 'broaden' and 'build' an individual's sense of

overall wellbeing. Hence, the more positive emotions experienced the more likely the individual is able to experience more positive emotions - ultimately building their enduring personal strengths.

Lastly, the results showed that a practical and statistically significant relationship was found between PsyCap and turnover intentions. As a decrease in the presence of PsyCap amongst teachers the more likely they are to engage in turnover intentions. There is limited available research done on PsyCap in teachers however Jex (1998) and Cheung et al. (2011) assert that PsyCap is an important psychological strength as it helps employees build strengths needed in today's stressful workplace and that the three key elements to dealing with occupational stress is hope, optimism and self-efficacy (i.e. PsyCap). It can be said that PsyCap promotes positive experiences in stressful occupational environments. Hence, the lack of PsyCap has the potential to exacerbate the experience of turnover intentions amongst teachers.

Although, no practical and statistical significant relationships exist between happiness (i.e. engagement and pleasure and meaning) and turnover intentions it is important to note that research (Jex, 1998; Ros, 1999; Luthans et al., 2008) has found that 'happy' teachers are less likely to have turnover intentions – thus this is an area that requires further study from a positive psychological standpoint.

It can be seen that the present research study has aptly explored the relationships between occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions.

Secondly, the study aimed to understand if psychological capital mediates the relationship between occupational stress and happiness either/or turnover intentions amongst teachers. However, Baron and Kenny (1986) conditions for mediation could not be met, thus mediation was not possible in the present study.

Lastly, the study aimed to determine if PsyCap is a predictor of happiness amongst teachers. The results show that PsyCap is a predictor of pleasure and meaning. This finding is concurrent with numerous studies (Luthans et al., 2008; Luthans et al., 2004; Page & Donohue, 2004; Nistor, 2004; Diener & Seligman, 2002) have found that PsyCap can predict positive emotions in stressful occupational environments.

It is important to note that the above finding coheres with the central premise of the Broaden and Build theoretical framework as positive strengths such as PsyCap increases the experiences of positive emotions such as engagement and pleasure and meaning amongst teachers in a stressful occupational environment.

### **5.3. Summary**

In this chapter the results of the empirical study was discussed and conclusions were drawn from them. All research questions were addressed with reference to the results of the research study. In the next chapter, conclusions, limitations and recommendations regarding this study are discussed.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, contribution and conclusions about the literature findings and the results of the research study are made, limitations are discussed and recommendations and future research are presented.

#### 6.2. Conclusions

This study aimed to understand what aspects of psychological capital contributes to happiness and/or turnover intentions within the stressful occupational field of teaching. The study examined the relationships between occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions amongst teachers. This study found that the majority of teachers reported the experience of general work stress (poor organisational management, role ambiguity and poor job satisfaction), task stress, PsyCap (hope, optimism and self-efficacy) pleasure and meaning and engagement. Importantly, the present study found that PsyCap stimulates the experience of positive emotions (engagement and pleasure and meaning) amongst teachers despite teachers reported stressful occupation. Suggesting, that PsyCap if developed in teachers can promote positive emotions and ultimately may have the potential to alleviate turnover intentions among teachers.

Thus, this study acted as a starting point (from a positive psychological stance) for research in the area of teacher turnover intentions experienced by South Africa, as an in-depth understanding of the problem is a start to finding an appropriate solution (e.g. training programs to develop PsyCap of teachers).

### **6.3. Contributions**

This study has contributed to an understanding of the research constructs in the following manner:

Firstly, this research study contributes to the existing literature in positive psychology as an increased understanding of how teachers use positive in demanding occupational environment that is plagued by high turnover rates is beneficial. In addition, this study has examined psychological capital amongst a teaching study sample, which addresses the gap in the literature. As there is a significant gap in the literature that examines the psychological capital amongst teachers.

Second, this study is valuable within the South African context, as it draws attention to the problem of turnover intentions amongst South African teachers and examines how positive emotions may help alleviate the problem. Hence, it helps form a better understanding of turnover intentions within a stressful occupation such as teaching and acts as a point of departure for research on a larger scale from a positive psychological standpoint.

Lastly, the study has practical value as it has found that psychological capital (hope, self-efficacy and optimism) and positive emotions (pleasure, meaning and engagement) can act as frameworks to develop interventions that help teachers utilise these strengths to the full capacity and possibly promote positive emotions which will ultimately lead to an alleviation of turnover intentions.

### **6.4. Limitations**

As with all research studies this study too has limitations. First, a considerable limitation of the study is the poor response rate (65%), thus reducing the sample size of the study to 91. Second, this study used a cross-sectional research design as opposed to a longitudinal

research design. Therefore, the results of this study cannot determine causality between the variables. Lastly, the data came from self-reported questionnaires, this can affect the reliability and validity of the data. As the participants may have answered the questions to reflect more socially acceptable responses rather than responses which reflect their real opinions.

## **6.5. Recommendations**

There has been much research done on the causes of turnover intentions among teachers however limited research has been conducted from a positive psychological perspective and on the constructs occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness and turnover intentions. Hence, this study acts as a starting point however there is a need for considerable research in this area. Specifically, studies should focus on examining and developing hope optimism and self-efficacy amongst teachers as the present study found that the above three constructs of PsyCap contributed to positive emotions such as engagement amongst teachers. As an improved understanding of the above constructs is a step toward alleviating turnover intentions amongst teachers and possibly other occupational fields.

## **6.6. Summary**

The research has been completed with the completion of Chapter 6. The research study objectives and questions were addressed and attained within the study.

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**APPENDIX A**

**LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

Date: ..... /..... /2012

Dear

Research Participant

*The purpose of this document is to notify you that you have been randomly selected to participate in a research study and to attain informed consent if you decide to participate.*

The focus of the study is to understand the relationship between occupational stress, psychological capital, happiness, flow and turnover among teachers.

You have been **randomly** selected to participate in this research study, participation in this study is **voluntary** and requires you to complete three questionnaires which are **NOT** a test of ability but only ask **your opinion**. This research study poses **no harm** of any kind to you and your wellbeing (you are free to contact the researcher at anytime to address any concerns). Complete **confidentiality and anonymity is guaranteed**, as the results of the study is only available to the researcher and does **not** require any identifying information from participants. Please note if you choose not to participate it will not result in any disadvantage to you. **If you wish to obtain information on your rights as a participant, please contact Ms Phumelele Ximba, Research Office, UKZN, on 031 360 3587.**

**DECLARATION**

I..... (full names of participant) on this day.....of..... 2012 at..... hereby, confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

**Thank You**

**Serena Kesari**

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**Tel:** 031-578-1557

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**Details of Supervisor**

University of Kwazulu Natal – HC

**Prof. J.H. Buitendach**

**Tel:** 031-260-2022

**APPENDIX B**  
**INSTRUMENTS**

**Biographical Questionnaire**

*Please tick the box that applies to you*

**Gender**

---

Male  Female

**Age**

---

21 – 26 yrs  27 – 32 yrs  33 – 38 yrs

39 – 44 yrs  45 – 50 yrs  51 – 65 yrs

**No. of years of teaching**

---

1 – 5 yrs  6 – 11 yrs  12 – 17 yrs  18 – 30 yrs

**Qualifications**

---

Diploma  Degree  Honours  Masters

**What level of students do you teach?**

---

Primary  Secondary

## Teacher Stress Inventory – Revised

The Teacher Stress Inventory-Revised is used to measure the types of stressful events that teachers encounter. Please answer all of the following questions using this guide:

**1= never, 2 = rare, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = always**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I can predict what will be expected of me            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| in my work tomorrow.                                    |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. I am unclear on what the scope and responsibilities  |   |   |   |   |   |
| of my job are.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I am uncertain what the criteria for evaluating my   |   |   |   |   |   |
| performance actually are.                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I receive enough information to carry out my job     |   |   |   |   |   |
| effectively.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. When asked, I am able to tell someone exactly what   |   |   |   |   |   |
| the demands of my job are.                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I find that I have extra work beyond what should     |   |   |   |   |   |
| normally be expected of me.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The criteria of performance for my job are too high. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I am given too much responsibility without           |   |   |   |   |   |

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| adequate authority to carry it out.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I receive conflicting demands from two or more<br>people or groups in the school setting.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry<br>it out.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I have a hard time satisfying the conflicting<br>demands of students, parents, administration, and<br>teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I am given school-related duties without adequate<br>resources and material to carry them out.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I have influence over what goes on in my<br>school.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I'm informed of important things that are happening<br>in my school.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. My administrative head asks my opinion on<br>decisions that directly affect me.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. All in all, I would say that I am extremely satisfied<br>with my job.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. My job is extremely important in comparison to  |   |   |   |   |   |

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| other interests in my life.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Knowing what I know now, if I had to decided all<br><br>over again whether to take this job, I would<br><br>definitely do so.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. In general, my job measures up extremely well with<br><br>the sort of job I wanted before I took it.                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. My administrative head brings me together with<br><br>other faculty in joint meetings to make decisions<br><br>and solve common problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. My administrative head gives me full information<br><br>about the things which directly involve my work.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. I currently find my life very rewarding.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. My life is currently quite lonely.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. I currently find my life quite enjoyable.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. I currently find my life quite boring.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. My life is currently very hopeful.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Trying to complete reports and paper work on time<br><br>causes me a lot of stress.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. I find that dealing with student discipline problems  |   |   |   |   |   |

puts a lot of stress on me.	1	2	3	4	5
29. There is a lot of stress just keeping up with					
changing professional standards.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Trying to keep my work from being too routine					
and boring puts a lot of stress on me.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Having to participate in school activities outside					
of the normal working hours in very stressful to					
me.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I find that trying to be attentive to the problems					
and needs of fellow faculty is very stressful.	1	2	3	4	5
33. When I really need to talk to my administrative					
head, (s)he is willing to listen.	1	2	3	4	5
34. My administrative head pays attention to what I					
am saying.	1	2	3	4	5
35. My administrative head stands up to outsiders for					
the people (s)he supervises.	1	2	3	4	5
36. When I have conflicts with parents or students my					
administrative head gives me the kind of support					
I need.	1	2	3	4	5

## PsyCap Questionnaire

Below are statements that describe how you may think about yourself right. Use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree)

1. I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I feel confident contributing to discussions about the company's strategy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I feel confident helping to set targets/goals in my work area.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I feel confident contacting people outside the company (e.g., suppliers, customers) to discuss problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I feel confident presenting information to a group of colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6

8. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. There are lots of ways around any problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I can be “on my own,” so to speak, at work if I have to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I usually take stressful things at work in stride.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I can get through difficult times at work because I’ve experienced difficulty before.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I feel I can handle many things at a time at this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6

19. When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. If something can go wrong for me work-wise, it will.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. In this job, things never work out the way I want them to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I approach this job as if "every cloud has a silver lining.	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Turnover Intention Scale

Please read the items and tick the box that applies to you. Use the following scales to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement:

**1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3 = neither disagree/agree, 4 = somewhat agree, and 5 = strongly agree**

1. I will likely actively look for a new job in the next year	1	2	3	4	5
2. I often think about quitting	1	2	3	4	5
3. I probably will look for a new job in the next year	1	2	3	4	5



## **APPENDIX C**

### **ETHICAL CLEARANCE**