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Academic performance in polytechnic: The role of psychological capital and emotional intelligence

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Abstract

This research aims to test whether psychological capital and emotional intelligence can influence academic performance in the context of the Business Administration Department. The population in this study was 120 students who had taken project management courses. A total of 92 samples were determined using the Krecjie Morgan table and using stratified random sampling techniques. The data collection method uses an offline survey and the data analysis method is carried out in two ways, namely descriptive analysis and inferential statistical analysis using the SPSS for Windows version 26 application. The results of the research show that psychological capital influences academic performance, emotional intelligence influences academic performance and Lastly, psychological capital and emotional intelligence simultaneously influence academic performance. To the Department of Business Administration and Malang State Polytechnic in general, project-based learning is a major requirement in vocational education institutions today considering the complexity of the business and industrial world which requires student skills in studying company culture.

Keywords: Academic performance, Emotional intelligence, Psychological capital

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, academicians in higher education institutions have devoted considerable attention to the development of positive psychological resources, including emotional intelligence and psychological capital, which are incorporated into the university curriculum (Thompson et al., 2020). These two psychological resources are intriguing for research purposes, as they have the potential to significantly enhance the academic performance of students, as well as the employability and career success of graduates in the future (Gomes da Costa et al., 2021).

A substantial amount of research has illustrated the beneficial effects of these psychological resources on the well-being of workers, job satisfaction, career success, and individual performance in a variety of countries (Pinto & Ramalheira, 2017). PsyCap comprises four psychological attributes: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2014). On the other hand, EI encompasses various attributes such as the ability to recognize, handle, and regulate our own and others' emotions to influence behavior (Salovey & Mayer, 1989). These two factors are crucial in overcoming the difficulties encountered by students and serve as the foundation for overcoming barriers to the personal and professional success of graduates (Shepherd et al., 2008).

Although several studies have shown that PsyCap and EI can develop in higher education environments and can be taught in the classroom, theoretically there is a gap regarding the effectiveness of Higher Education (HE) interventions to develop students' PsyCap and EI particularly through project management courses (Hazan-Liran & Karni-Vizer, 2023). Previous research results have assessed the development of PsyCap and EI separately, but the effectiveness of educational interventions targeting both simultaneously has not been widely discussed (Bonesso et al., 2020). Most research results do not provide sufficient details about EI intervention strategies, or whether EI-related competencies and attitudes or EI as a whole (such as motivation, coping, empathy, and social skills) are related to the development of an academic culture. Apart from that, the interaction of PsyCap and EI and the influence of both on students' academic performance has not yet been widely discussed. As far as PsyCap and EI are primary psychological resources that are open to change and development, either variable cannot operate in isolation (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). This competency is highly needed because it plays an important role in preparing individuals to face the challenges of daily life and supports employability and career success (Zhang et al., 2021).

To bridge these research gaps, we tried to carry out this research by analyzing the relationship between psychological capital and emotional intelligence on academic performance which was carried out in the context of students majoring in Business Administration, State Polytechnic of Malang, with the limitation being students who had taken project management courses. This is important considering that the demand for graduate achievements from students majoring in business administration has increased over time. Those who were previously able to graduate by utilizing theoretical graduate achievements have shifted to graduate achievements by incorporating a project-based learning-based curriculum. This study seeks to examine the extent to which psychological capital and emotional intelligence impact academic performance within the Business Administration Faculty at State Polytechnic of Malang, Indonesia.

2. Hypotheses Development

Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

Psychological capital, often known as PsyCap, is a beneficial human asset that has the potential to contribute to both individual and organizational achievements (Lupșa et al., 2020). Wu & Nguyen (2019) define PsyCap as a composite of four individual attributes: self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. Gomes da Costa et al. (2021) provide a clear explanation of the markers of psychological capital as follows: Self-efficacy encompasses individuals' confidence in their capacity to utilize motivational and cognitive resources to accomplish desired objectives. Hope entails the capability to identify, clarify, and navigate the path towards success. Optimism pertains to having broad expectations of favorable outcomes. Resilience refers to the ability to confront and rebound from challenges, conflicts, failures, or circumstances that encompass greater accountability. PsyCap is a multivariate construct that is domain-specific and permanent over time, and previous research has found support for some boundary characteristics (Avey et al., 2009). In other words, PsyCap is more open to change than personality but more stable than emotions.

Performance can be predicted by PsyCap, which can also be assessed through self-report (Ma et al., 2021). Luthans et al. (2014) posit that students with high PsyCap are (i) optimistic and effective in achieving personal and academic goals; (ii) consider many methods to solve a problem; and (iii) resilient in achieving these goals, which can be determined by these attributes (PsyCap academic). Higher education has the potential to significantly enhance students' academic performance by fostering the development of their PsyCap, provided that it is amenable to change and growth. From the theory above, the first hypothesis could be posits as follows:

H_1: psychological capital could affect academic performance

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Despite its widespread use in research, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has no clear definition. Some authors define EI as the ability to monitor one's own emotions and understand and respond to others' (Salovey & Mayer, 1989). EI mobilizes cognitive skills to comprehend and use emotions for emotional expression and self-motivation in social interactions (Nguyen, 2022). Other prominent EI theories combine motivation, personality, temperament, and social skills to go beyond emotional awareness and management and influence how people handle complicated and difficult situations (Cho et al., 2015). The authors concluded that training was quite effective in improving EI scores. With regard to EI interventions in educational contexts, direct post-training measurements have demonstrated training effects. Gilar-Corbí et al. (2018) and Thompson et al. (2020) found that EI can be developed through a one-year MBA curriculum and tested the effectiveness of curricular interventions during a study aimed at improving students' EI in three different countries (i.e. Spain, Moldova, and Argentina). Findings showed significant increases in EI at post-test and for all experimental groups, thus supporting the notion of cross-cultural EI development through training (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). Based on the theory explained above, hypothesis 2 can be explained as follows:

H_2: emotional intelligence could affect academic performance

Academic Performance

Numerous studies have examined the correlation between academic performance, emotional intelligence (EI), and psychological capital (PsyCap). Recent research has demonstrated that academic performance and engagement among students are positively impacted by PsyCap and EI (Li et al., 2023). In India, a study was conducted to investigate the relationship between competitive exam results, emotional intelligence, and PsyCap. The results indicated that PsyCap acted as a comprehensive mediator in the relationship between academic engagement and academic performance.

Additional research conducted in China indicates that the enhancement of emotional intelligence (EI) can have a positive impact on students' academic performance by reducing tension, resolving conflicts, and enhancing their social lives (Xu & Choi, 2023). Additionally, a study published in Frontiers in Psychology examined the impact of emotional intelligence on job performance and fatigue, with a particular emphasis on the mediating role of psychological capital (Gong et al., 2019). Despite the fact that this research is not explicitly related to academic performance, it offers a perspective on the connection between EI, PsyCap, and performance in a professional setting. In conclusion, current research indicates that academic performance in university contexts can be positively impacted by psychological capital and emotional intelligence when among students. The significance of these factors in enhancing student engagement, mental

health, and overall performance is underscored by the study. The third hypothesis could be described as follows:

H_3: psychological capital and academic performance could affect academic performance simultaneously

3. Methods

This research is conducted at the Business Administration Faculty at State Polytechnic of Malang, Indonesia. The population was all of students from each department including marketing management, business administration diploma, archives management and also travel management that taking project course. The research sample was determined using a probability method with cluster sampling using Krecjie Morgan Table. A total of 92 research questionnaires were filled out and calculated. Questionnaires were administered in Bahasa to remove any potential language barriers for each respondent. Each variables could be measured as follows: (1) Psycholgical capital measured by four indicators and eight items from Gomes da Costa et al. (2021). (2) Emotional intelligence assessed by three indicators and nine items from Thompson et al. (2020). (3) Four indicators and eight items to measuring the academic performance from Shepherd et al. (2008).

The data analysis method used in this research is descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis methods with a quantitative approach are used to obtain an overview of the demographic elements inherent in the characteristics of respondents such as gender and age. In the process of inferential statistical analysis, various kinds of tests are carried out including instrument validity tests, instrument reliability tests, normality tests, heteroscedasticity assumption tests, and multiple linear regression tests, coefficient of determination, and also hypothesis tests which are carried out using the SPSS version 26 application.

4. Results and Discussion

Statistical Results

Based on the descriptive analysis results, which included multiple items, the goal of the performed analysis was to define the profile of respondents who filled out the questionnaires, namely, the gender of respondents. Table 1 showed that female respondents were 60 people (65%), whereas male respondents were 32 (35%). There were 92 respondents in all who responded to the surveys. The range of respondents' age were dominated by ages of 19 until 24 years old. As a result, we can conclude that the assumption of normality, a crucial requirement for statistical analyses, is met in our study. In other words, it suggests that respondents who participated in the questionnaire survey align with the established criteria and do not significantly deviate from a normal distribution in terms of their responses, strengthening the validity of our research findings.

Table 1.
Instrument validity tests

Variable	Indicator	Item	Value of r	r table	Conclusion
Psychological Capital (Gomes da Costa et al., 2021)	Hope	X1.1.1	0.596	0.207	Valid
		X1.1.2	0.665	0.207	Valid
	Realistic	X1.2.1	0.609	0.207	Valid
		X1.2.2	0.645	0.207	Valid
	Efficacy	X1.3.1	0.684	0.207	Valid
		X1.3.2	0.585	0.207	Valid
	Resillience	X1.4.1	0.566	0.207	Valid
		X1.4.2	0.723	0.207	Valid
Emotional Intelligence (Thompson et al., 2020)	Basic Emotions	X2.1.1	0.717	0.207	Valid
		X2.1.2	0.634	0.207	Valid
	Concrete emotions	X2.2.1	0.760	0.207	Valid
		X2.2.2	0.702	0.207	Valid
		X2.2.3	0.594	0.207	Valid
		X2.2.4	0.547	0.207	Valid
	Reflective Emotions	X2.3.1	0.605	0.207	Valid
		X2.3.2	0.653	0.207	Valid
		X2.3.3	0.625	0.207	Valid
Academic Performance (Shepherd et al., 2008)	Analytical Performance	Y3.1.1	0.507	0.207	Valid
		Y3.1.2	0.734	0.207	Valid
	Integrated Reasoning Performance	Y3.2.1	0.689	0.207	Valid
		Y3.2.2	0.693	0.207	Valid
	Quantitative Reasoning	Y3.3.1	0.648	0.207	Valid
		Y3.3.2	0.528	0.207	Valid
	Verbal Reasoning	Y3.4.1	0.587	0.207	Valid
		Y3.4.2	0.635	0.207	Valid

Reliability shows the accuracy, consistency and precision of a measuring instrument in making measurements (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Reliability testing in this research was carried out in two stages. The first stage was carried out on 30 respondents to ensure that each question and statement contained in the instrument could be properly understood by the respondents used as research samples. The reliability test in this research used the SPSS version 26 application by paying attention to the Cronbach's Alpha value. The reference value for alpha or composite reliability as stated by Hair et al. (2017) must be greater than 0.7 although a value of 0.6 is still acceptable. Based on the results of the first stage of reliability testing, it is known that all items in the research instrument can be declared reliable and capable of being used as data collection tools in this research. The results of the instrument reliability test can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2.
Instrument reliability tests

Variable	Value of Alpha Cronbach's	Conclusion
Psychological Capital	0.764	Reliable
Emotional Intelligence	0.765	Reliable
Academic Performance	0.769	Reliable

The heteroscedasticity assumption is employed to ascertain whether the residuals exhibit a homogenous (constant) variance or not. When testing the assumption of heteroscedasticity, we anticipate that the residuals will exhibit a uniform variance. The heteroscedasticity assumption can be assessed by examining the scatter plot. Ghozali (2013) states that the degree of heteroscedasticity can be determined by seeing a specific

pattern in the data, such as dots creating a regular pattern that alternates between broadening and shrinking. If there is no identifiable trend and the data points are distributed both above and below the number 0 on the Y axis, then heteroscedasticity is not found.

The objective of the normality assumption test is to determine whether the residual variables in the regression model are normally distributed. A probability plot can be employed to determine whether the residuals are normally distributed. The residual is considered normal if the residual points are in accordance with the diagonal line. The results of the normality assumption test show that the residual points adhere to a diagonal line. This implies that the residuals are normally distributed. In this manner, the assumption of normality is satisfied, or in other words, respondents responded to the questionnaire in accordance with the predetermined criteria. As a result, we can conclude that our study meets the normalcy assumption, which is a critical prerequisite for statistical analysis. In other words, it indicates that respondents to the questionnaire survey met the set requirements and did not depart considerably from a normal distribution in terms of their responses, hence improving the validity of our research findings.

Table 3.
Coefficient Value

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Coefficient (b)	Sig
Academic Performance (Y)	Psychological Capital (X_1)	0.337	0.000
	Emotional Intelligence (X_2)	0.390	0.000
Constant		8.672	0.000
R		0.788	0.000
Adjusted R Square		0.612	0.000

Based on Table 3, the multiple linear regression test was used to test the influence of the psychological capital (X_1) and emotional intelligence (X_2) variables on the academic performance variable (Y). This regression analysis is intended to determine changes in the value of the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. Based on Table 3 of the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.788, which means that the variable psychological capital (X_1) and emotional intelligence (X_2) have a fairly strong relationship with acedemicy performance (Y). The coefficient of determination/adjusted R^2 is 0.612 = 61%, meaning that the diversity of the academic performance (Y) variable can be explained by the psychological capital (X_1) and Emotional intelligence (X_2) variables of 62%, and the remaining 1-0.612 = 0.388 or 38% is a contribution from other variables not discussed in this research. Then the results of the multiple regression test can be formulated into a regression line equation as follows:

$$Y = 8.672 + 0.337X + 0.390X + e \text{ (Eq 1.)}$$

From Eq 1., the following explanation could be drawn α = 8.672, this value means that if the psychological capital (X_1) and emotional intelligence (X_2) variables have not been changed or are assumed to not exist, then the academic performance (Y) is equal to 8.672. The constant states that the rate of change in academic performance will be greater if the psychological capital (X_1) and emotional intelligence (X_2) have a constant value of 8.672. The regression coefficient of 0.337 indicates a positive relationship between psychological capital (X_1) and academic performance (Y). This means that as the level of psychological capital increases, academic performance also tends to rise. When students at Business Administration Program from State Polytechnic of Malang consistently prioritize increasing the level of psychological capital, it positively affects their academic performance in their assigned areas. The regression coefficient of 0.775 suggests a positive relationship between employee satisfaction (X_2) and safety performance (Y). In simpler

terms, when emotional intelligence increases, it tends to lead to an increase in academic performance. When students at business administration program are content with their project course, it can positively impact their academic performance in their designated areas.

Hypothesis Testing

In this research, the first hypothesis (H1) suggests that psychological capital (X_1) can impact academic performance (Y). The results indicate that the significance value (0.01 < 0.05) and the calculated t value (3.563 > 1.66) meet the criteria for acceptance, confirming the first hypothesis. Similarly, the second hypothesis (H_2) posits that emotional intelligence (X_2) influences academic Performance (Y). The significance value (0.000 < 0.05) and the calculated t value (3.862 > 1.66) satisfy the criteria, leading to the acceptance of the second hypothesis. Lastly, the third hypothesis (H_3) suggests that both management psychological capital (X_1) and emotional intelligence (X_2) together influence academic performance (Y). The combined significance value (0.000 < 0.05) and the calculated f value (72.565 > 2.71) meet the necessary conditions for accepting the third hypothesis. In summary, all three hypotheses are accepted as they fulfill the comparison assumptions, indicating that both individual and combined factors of psychological capital and emotional intelligence have a significant influence on academic performance.

Discussion

Psychological Capital towards Academic Performance

Psychological Capital is a composite of four personal attributes: resilience, optimism, hope, and self-efficacy (Wu & Nguyen, 2019). The indicators of psychological capital are clarified by Gomes da Costa et al. (2021) as follows: Self-efficacy encompasses individuals' convictions regarding their capacity to mobilize cognitive and motivational resources to accomplish their objectives; hope is the capacity to identify, define, and direct the course of success; optimism pertains to comprehensive expectations of favorable results; and resilience is the capacity to confront and recover from challenges, conflicts, failures, or circumstances that necessitate increased accountability. Regarding the initial research hypothesis, the results indicate that the Psychological Capital variable has the potential to impact academic performance. This is demonstrated by the largest mean result in this research, which is "the implementation of study planning to address the challenges of global needs." Project courses are developed by the Department of Business Administration in accordance with the standards of the KKNI. Students are granted access to the Company to conduct observations and documentation during the project course. In order to enhance students' capacities for integrating theory and practice and for effectively communicating information based on precise data, project courses are designed to offer novel experiences. This research is consistent with the findings of Gomes da Costa et al., (2021), which demonstrate that Academic Performance can be significantly and positively impacted by Psychological Capital. This research is also consistent with the research conducted by (Luthans et al., 2014), which demonstrates that the variables hope, realistic, efficacy, and resilience can substantially and positively impact sustainable academic performance in the context of Midwestern University.

Emotional Intelligence towards Academic Performance

According to Salovey & Mayer (1989) emotional intelligence is the capacity of an individual to comprehend and respond appropriately to the emotions of others and to monitor their own emotions accurately. This perspective on emotional intelligence (EI)

utilizes cognitive abilities to comprehend and apply emotions as a means of self-motivation and emotional expression in interpersonal interactions (Nguyen, 2022). Regarding the second research hypothesis, the results indicate that the Emotional Intelligence variable has the potential to impact academic performance. This is corroborated by the most significant mean result in this study, which is "Students are capable of increasing social awareness among colleagues and work groups in relation to their competence." Students are required to conduct observations of a designated public company as part of the project course offered by the Department of Business Administration at State Polytechnic of Malang. The Company necessitates robust group collaboration throughout the entire process, from the correspondence to the exhibition. In the context of emotional intelligence, each student in the project group is capable of dividing the primary tasks and functions that are "the right man on the right place" or the placement of members according to competency. This approach enables students to reduce each other's ego and increase social awareness in the process of resolving the task from their project. Gilar-Corbí et al. (2018); Gomes da Costa et al. (2021); Nurzaman & Amalia (2022) and also Thompson et al. (2020) have conducted research that demonstrates the potential of emotional intelligence to impact academic performance. This research is also consistent with them.

Psychological Capital and Emotional Intelligence towards Academic Performance

Both psychological capital and emotional intelligence have an impact on academic performance. Several research have examined the association between psychological capital (PsyCap), emotional intelligence (EI), and academic success. According to research, PsyCap and EI improve academic outcomes such as student performance and engagement (Li et al., 2023). Other research in China suggests that enhancing EI can help students reduce stress, resolve conflicts, and improve their social life, all of which can have an impact on academic achievement (Xu & Choi, 2023). Students' academic performance can increase when they have high psychological capital from project courses and are supported by trained emotional intelligence since they are actively participating in groups.

In the context of higher education, the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory that posits by Holmgreen et al. (2017) that the availability of resources in an academic context can affect emotional well-being, the attainment of graduate competence, and the potential for individual involvement with related institutions. This is particularly true when individuals attempt to acquire, maintain, and safeguard resources. The research findings indicate that students majoring in business administration at Malang State Polytechnic are capable of enhancing their academic performance by participating in project courses. This is due to the fact that students are granted access to study companies in detail, which fosters psychological capital. Additionally, emotional intelligence is improved as a result of the group-based nature of project courses. It is anticipated that they will collaborate to finalize the course's burden. The findings of this study lend credence to the theory of resource conservation in the context of vocational higher education.

The practical implications of this research pertain to the Department of Business Administration and Malang State Polytechnic, specifically emphasizing the necessity of project-based learning in contemporary vocational education institutions. This is due to the intricate nature of the business and industrial sectors, which demand students to possess skills in comprehending company culture, analyzing work workflows, and understanding interaction patterns with consumers. Project courses are crucial for connecting students' interests with the act of observing and presenting at internal school activities, serving as an interactive learning tool. Policy managers at the Malang State Polytechnic are expected to enhance the capacity of project courses, enabling students to have greater access to the industrial world. Additionally, it is important to raise the proportion of industrial practicum courses to adequately prepare students for their entry into the industrial sector.

Research limitations are inextricably linked to a research project. Initially, the research object is restricted to the Malang State Polytechnic's scope. Further investigation is required to ascertain the academic performance of vocational-based institutions, as these findings cannot be applied to other research objects. This is crucial in light of the substantial distinctions between university curricula, which emphasize individual academic outcomes, and vocational curricula, which emphasize project-based learning outcomes. The second limitations of the research is to the variable of academic performance. In future research, it is important for researchers to not only assess academic performance based on cognitive outcomes using a perception-based interval scale, but also consider measuring it through the number of learning outcomes or by enhancing psychomotor scores, in order to obtain a comprehensive measurement of academic performance.

5. Conclusion

The research conducted on student respondents from the Business Administration Department of Malang State Polytechnic who participated in project course activities has yielded conclusive results. This study presents three hypotheses, all of which provide positive and statistically significant outcomes. These hypotheses examine the impact of psychological capital on academic achievement, the influence of emotional intelligence on academic performance, and the combined effect of psychological capital and emotional intelligence on academic success. The project course executed by the Business Administration Department has a substantial influence on the academic environment of students, as it offers several advantages, including the acquisition of knowledge pertaining to work culture, workflow, and interpersonal connections. Moreover, the greater students' comprehension of the actual requirements of the job market, the more profound the influence on their academic performance, with the expectation that the quality of their study outcomes will align with industry expectations.

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