

Teacher Retention in South Africa's Marginalised Schools: Interplay of Psychological Capital, Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

The education sector is struggling to retain top-tier teachers, a challenge that can lead to disorder and instability in public schools. Since teachers are key to driving change, it is essential to find effective ways to keep them in the profession, maximise their impact and meet societal needs. This study therefore examines the role of psychological capital in the link between work engagement and job satisfaction, with the aim of tackling retention challenges and improve service delivery. This research, which involved a quantitative cross-sectional survey of 309 teachers in the Tshwane South District of South Africa, finds that psychological capital, which is a teacher's psychological state that include hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy, significantly mediates the positive connection between work engagement and job satisfaction. Although these results are limited to the sample studied, they highlight the importance of psychological capital in understanding teacher retention. The study suggests that developing strategies to enhance psychological capital could improve both engagement and job satisfaction. Future research should include larger sample sizes to strengthen the external validity of the findings.

Keywords: job satisfaction, psychological capital, retention, work engagement.

1. Introduction

The issue of retaining high-quality personnel and the significant expenses involved in replacing those who choose to leave has become a pressing concern in modern organisations (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Khan, 2020; Mahadi et al., 2020; Springer et al., 2016). As a result, several scholars have extensively explored the idea of retention, with the objective of providing organisations with effective solutions to address staff turnover (Alshamrani et al., 2023; Das & Baruah, 2013; Son et al., 2023; Yumnam & Singh, 2019). Within the teaching profession, the scarcity of proficient teachers and the difficulties they face in their professional environments have also been especially notable in worldwide headlines during the last decade. Hence the increased focus on this issue, which has led researchers to recognise and explore the aspects that impede retention (Arthur & Bradley, 2023; Brunzell, Stokes & Waters,

2018; Gerlach & Gockel, 2018; Sabina et al., 2023; Springer et al., 2016). Since teachers are crucial agents of change and the cornerstone of each generation's education system, understanding how to keep them in the profession is extremely valuable for improving their impact and satisfying the needs of society (Abu-Tineh, et al., 2023; Danish et al., 2019; Iliya & Ifeoma, 2015). This highlights the current need to explore techniques for retaining teachers that can improve teaching methods and also improve educational results (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Mvana, 2024; Springer et al., 2016).

African scholars have acknowledged the importance of retention and its strong connection with psychological factors (Baloyi, 2016; Janik & Rothmann, 2015; Magudu & Gumbo, 2017; Makhuzeni & Barkhuizen, 2015). The psychosocial resource of work engagement and the retention-related disposition of job satisfaction have been found to have a favourable impact on employees' retention behaviours, organization's success and sustainability (Firuzjaeyan et al., 2015; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017; Lim et al., 2017; Sypniewska et al., 2023). Psychological capital, a concept rooted in the conservation of resource theory, has also gained recognition in literature as a valuable human asset with the ability to alleviate negative impacts and promote the growth of other personal resources. With this valuable asset (characterized by the integration of four fundamental components of hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy) individuals are able to set goals, take initiative, effectively accomplish tasks, and bounce back from challenges (Borowski, 2018; Dehaloo & Schulze, 2013; Fidelis et al., 2021; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Newman et al., 2018).

Although the literature extensively examines the psychosocial resources of psychological capital and work engagement, there is still a lack of information regarding how their interconnections especially affect the job satisfaction of teachers in marginalised communities. This study therefore seeks to address this knowledge gap by examining the dynamics of the relationship between these concepts, by critically evaluating the mediating role of psychological capital in the link between work engagement and job satisfaction. The paper provides significant insights to experts in the field of education and practitioners in human resources. It provides unique viewpoints that can assist them in developing policies and initiatives aimed at retaining teachers.

2. Literature review

The issue of teacher retention is of great significance in the South African education system, since there has been a noticeable rise in teacher turnover rates over the previous decade (Department of Basic Education, 2017; Hofmeyer, 2015). Although turnover rates saw a significant decline from 35.29% in 2017 to a more satisfactory level of 6% in 2019, there was a notable increase to 15% in the year 2020, as reported by the Department of Basic Education's Annual Report. This rise may be ascribed to a range of variables including resignations, retirements, expired contracts, and fatalities within the basic education sector, with a significant majority of terminations affecting Black staff members. Hence, stakeholders from both within and outside the Department of Basic Education (DBE) have expressed a strong interest in creating

inventive approaches to enhance teacher retention and advance excellent public education that aligns with the 2030 vision of the National Development Plan (ETDP-SETA Statutory Bodies Sub-Sector, 2020). In this study I specifically examine the idea of work engagement, which has been shown to be important in predicting desirable outcomes linked to employee retention (Bakker et al., 2003; Houssein et al., 2020; Van Wingerden et al., 2017; Zigarmi et al., 2009).

Work engagement as a psychosocial resource

Work engagement, a subject of substantial research in the field of social science, pertains to an individual's personal resource that is characterised by their affective-cognitive state and defined by three fundamental aspects: vigour, dedication, and absorption (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Schaufeli et al., 2002). With vigour representing individuals' level of mental and physical energy exerted in tasks, and dedication referring to their emotional commitment towards work, while absorption denoting their state of complete concentration on activities (Schaufeli et al., 2002). According to research, these highly engaged individuals possess a clear and focused mindset and have a high level of competency (Cai et al., 2018). Their main focus is on work-related duties (Borowski, 2018). It also appears that being in a state of work engagement can further facilitate the acquisition of additional resources that enhance positive work-related behaviours (Houssein et al., 2020; Tafvelin et al., 2019).

In a teaching context, engagement is demonstrated through teacher's ability to proactively and effectively utilise their physical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities (Dehaloo & Schulze, 2013; Greenier et al., 2021). Researchers agree that a teacher's strong sense of calling, vigour, enthusiasm, and dedication enable them to create favourable work environments, achieve positive outcomes, and sustain these over time (Mvana & Louw, 2020; Ugwu & Onyishi, 2018). Previous studies have also revealed that engaged individuals find their professional duties meaningful, hence they go beyond the scope of teaching (Falout & Murphey, 2018; Kahn, 1990). Also, the element of psychological safety has been highlighted in literature as the key factor that enables teachers to effectively participate in their duties (Gerlach & Gockel, 2018). Nevertheless, it is imperative to establish unambiguous descriptions of their respective functions. Additionally, the school environment must cultivate an atmosphere of trust, while granting teachers the freedom to carry out their duties in a safe environment that also provides supportive structures for relationship building. It is in such favourable and dynamic work environments that teachers are able to sustain their momentum and get to experience job satisfaction (Maleka et al., 2020). The significance of investing in work engagement as a personal resource and preventing its decline is emphasised on the basis of the aforementioned (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Investing in such endeavours can yield significant benefits, especially in terms of teachers' overall well-being and, more importantly, in creating favourable outcomes related to their job satisfaction (Van Wingerden et al., 2017).

Job satisfaction as a retention-related disposition

Studies indicate that job satisfaction is a complex concept that includes emotions, attitudes, and actions, which represent employees' overall evaluations of their work

setting and tasks (Alegre et al., 2016; Locke, 1969). In essence, job satisfaction relates to employees' favourable emotional reaction to different elements of their employment (Kasbuntoro et al., 2020). This concept seems relevant within the field of education, where it has been associated with teachers' overall emotional orientation towards the demands and resources made available to them (Kalleberg, 1977; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). The demands inherent in the teaching profession, such as workload and student motivation levels, seem to predict teachers' job satisfaction and the likelihood of resignation. Feeling pressured by time (work overload), for instance, can be viewed as a motivating aspect that promotes job satisfaction, work engagement and the ability to keep teachers in their jobs (Skaalvik, 2020), notwithstanding its incongruity. It is when not effectively managed, that work overload can cause burnout and increase the likelihood of resigning, especially in schools where students lack discipline and show no enthusiasm to learn (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Research also suggested that teachers who feel satisfied with their work are prone to react favourably towards their supervisors and school culture (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). Such teachers will remain in the profession, especially if they have the freedom to pursue personal growth, the school environment is conducive, and they are actively engaged in the decision-making processes. Equally important to teachers' job satisfaction is having adequate resources, which include access to information and tools required to do their jobs properly (Kalleberg, 1977). Sadly, if teachers detect mismanagement and unfair practices regarding the distribution of resources, they may experience dissatisfaction and consider resigning (Shoab & Khalid, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Literature furthermore emphasised the significant role played by work values and job rewards in determining job satisfaction. Work values serve as tools for assessing the aspects of work that contribute to job satisfaction (Fute et al., 2022). They include beliefs and principles that individuals hold dear in the workplace. Shaped by both personal and societal circumstances, work values highlight the core elements of work that individuals value the most (Kasbuntoro et al., 2020; Thukar et al., 2019). Alignment of values (person-job fit) may result in teachers' inclination to engage in tasks, cooperation, and acceptance of any changes introduced to them by governing bodies or education authorities (Ali et al., 2020; Fute et al., 2022). Job rewards on the other hand, relate to intrinsic and extrinsic benefits that employees derive from their work, which can be tangible (salary, bonuses, benefits) and intangible (recognition, status, respect, opportunities, satisfaction) in nature (Judge et al., 2021; Robbins et al., 2022). When perceived as fair, these rewards can contribute positively to individuals' overall job satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Judge et al., 2004; Kahn, 1990; Ng et al., 2005). Therefore, specific focus on these areas could improve teachers' job satisfaction and likewise improve to their schools' academic outcomes (Sahito et al., 2020). While there has been considerable research on job satisfaction, limited attention has been given to its influence on retention and how it might be affected by psychological resources such as work engagement and psychological capital, particularly among teachers in marginalised communities.

Psychological Capital Resource

Psychological capital is a personal asset that actively promotes favorable organizational outcomes (Du Plessis & Boshoff, 2018). The concept is depicted in the literature as a resource that not only needs to be preserved but also has the potential to generate additional psychological resources, leading to positive organizational results (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Luthans & Broad, 2022; Newman et al., 2018; Raja et al., 2020). Studies indicate that psychological capital is a dynamic resource, defined by the four key attributes of hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, when these traits are cultivated, they can help replenish or restore a person's depleted work engagement resources and enhance their likelihood of achieving favourable outcomes (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Research on educators has shown that cultivating the psychological capital trait of hope enables teachers to persevere and tackle challenges arising from their surroundings. This development allows them to explore various strategies in pursuit of their objectives. Enhanced resilience also equips teachers to navigate adversity and manage stressful situations (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Youssef-Morgan & Petersen, 2019). Additionally, studies have found that teachers who possess a strong sense of optimism are more likely to maintain a positive outlook on their current and future situations, which leads to higher levels of engagement and commitment to their work (Luthans & Broad, 2022). Furthermore, research indicates that individuals with a well-developed sense of self-efficacy (self-confidence) tend to experience improved overall well-being, set more ambitious goals, participate more actively in various activities, maintain job satisfaction, and contemplate quitting less frequently (Avey et al., 2011; Luthans et al., 2013).

Drawing from the findings in the literature mentioned above, it is anticipated that psychological capital may serve as a mechanism to clarify how the work engagement of Black high school teachers affects their job satisfaction. Consequently, this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a statistically positive significant interrelationship between work engagement (the antecedent), psychological capital (the mediator), and job satisfaction (the retention outcomes).

H2: Psychological capital mediates the positive link between work engagement and job satisfaction.

Research Objective

The core objective of this study was to determine whether teachers' psychosocial resource of psychological capital explains the positive link between their work engagement and job satisfaction. The conceptual mediation model examined in this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

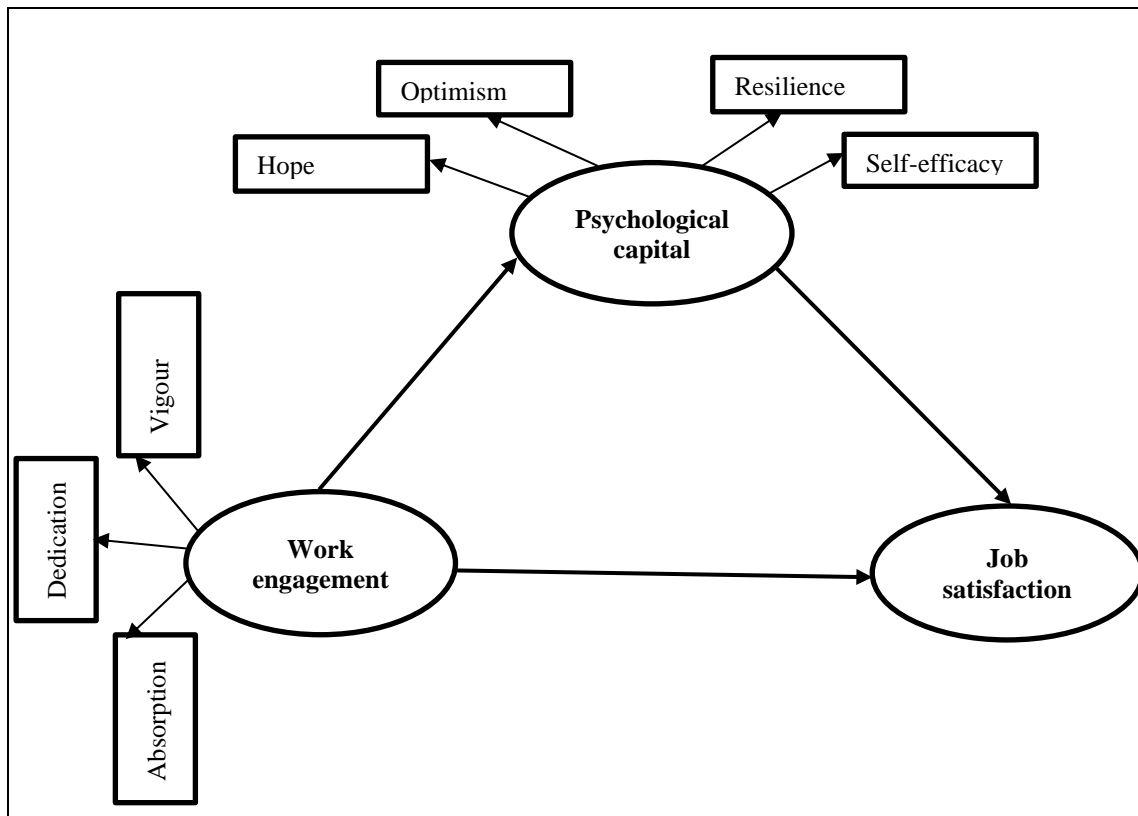


Figure 1 - Conceptual Mediation Model

3. Method

A quantitative approach to examine associations between variables through generated numerical data was adopted (Saunders et al., 2019). The study utilised a convenience sampling method on a purposively selected population. A cross-sectional survey to collect data and draw conclusions relating to the population at a single point in time was also used in this study (Ewing & Park, 2020).

Participants

The population in this study consisted of permanently employed Black high school teachers from 26 previously disadvantaged schools (with approximately 780 teachers) within the Tshwane South region in Gauteng, South Africa. The sample (n = 309) consisted of both female (58%) and male (42%) participants of various age groups (ages 21-30 = 33%; ages 31-45 = 22%; ages 46-65 = 44%; and older than 65 = 1%). The sample was further represented by single (50.5%); married (44%); divorced (4.9%) and separated (.6%) participants. The tenure distribution of the participants was as follows: less than one year (12.3%); 1-2 years (10.7%); 3-4 years (14.9%); 5-6 years (6.8%); and 6 years and above (55.3%). The response rate of 62% was achieved from 500 questionnaires that were distributed.

Measuring Instruments

Work engagement: The construct was measured by means of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002). The UWES consists of three subscales of vigour (six items, e.g., "At work, I feel bursting with energy"), dedication (five items, e.g., "I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose"),

and absorption (six items, e.g., "I am immersed in my work") scored on a seven-point Likert scale, varying from 0 (almost never) to 6 (every day). Schaufeli et al. (2002) confirmed Cronbach's alpha above the benchmark of .7 ($\alpha = .8$ for vigour; $\alpha = .91$ for dedication; and $\alpha = .75$ for absorption).

Psychological capital: The construct was measured using the psychological capital questionnaire (PCQ) developed by Luthans et al. (2007). The PCQ consists of four subscales of hope (six items, e.g., "At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals"), optimism (six items, e.g., "I am optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work"), resilience (six items, e.g., "I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work"), and self-efficacy (six items, e.g., "I feel confident helping to set targets and goals in my work area") scored on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Luthans et al. (2007) confirmed Cronbach's alpha above the benchmark of .7 ($\alpha = .8$ for hope; $\alpha = .72$ for resilience; $\alpha = .85$ for self-efficacy; and $\alpha = .79$ for optimism).

Job satisfaction: The construct was measured using the overall job satisfaction scale (JSS) developed by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011). The JSS consists of only four items ("I enjoy working as a teacher"; "I look forward to going to school every day"; "Working as a teacher is extremely rewarding"; and "When I get up in the morning, I look forward to going to work") scored on a six-point Likert scale, varying from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2020) confirmed a Cronbach's alpha that is above the benchmark of .7 ($\alpha = .9$).

Statistical Analysis

The IBM SPSS Statistics, version 27, and SAS, version 9.4, were used to carry out the descriptive analysis of this study. Mean scores, standard deviations, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for internal reliability, and bivariate correlation which assessed the interrelationship between variables were calculated. Furthermore, Harman's single factor test and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) one-factor solution were applied to assess common method bias and variance, while a two multi-factor CFA was performed on each measurement scale to establish the construct validity of the measurement scales (Aguirre Urreta & Hu, 2019; Kline, 2015).

Herman's single factor accounted for less than the threshold of 50% on both UWES (9.07%) and PsyCap (10.43%). The JSS measured a global construct of job satisfaction (with four items) and was therefore excluded from the common method bias analysis. When loading the items on the subscales onto a single construct in the one-factor CFA, the fit indices showed that the single factor did not fit the data as CFI values were below .90 and RMSEA values of above .10 for both UWES (chi-square/ $df = 3.23$; $p < .001$; RMSEA = .12; SRMR = .07; CFI = .86) and PsyCap (chi-square/ $df = 3.32$; $p < .001$; RMSEA = .12; SRMR = .07; CFI = .86). The lack of model fit therefore suggested that the scales are multi-factor scales, and that common method bias was not a serious threat in interpreting the research findings. When performing the two multi-factor CFA, items with a loading less than .50 were omitted in the second CFA model and modification indices were used to correlate some of the error terms. As a result, the

data had an acceptable fit with CFI value above the thresholds for both UWES (chi-square/ df = 1.56; p = .001; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .05; CFI = .98; and AIC = 15831.67) and PsyCap (chi-square/ df = 1.66; p < .001; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .05; CFI = .95; and AIC = 16511.61), confirming the construct validity of the measurement models.

Hayes' PROCESS Procedure for SPSS, version 3.5.3 (2020), was performed to achieve the main objective of this study through mediation analysis. A bootstrapping approach was deemed necessary in reducing the likelihood of type I error (Brough, 2018). The confidence interval (CI) bootstrap procedure was applied repeatedly (5 000 times) to a bootstrap sample in order to estimate indirect effects at 95% confidence interval. The CI containing a zero-value suggested insignificant effects, while CI excluding a zero indicated significant connections (Hayes & Rockwood, 2020).

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Gauteng Department of Basic Education, the Tshwane South District Office, and the management of the participating schools. An ethical clearance certificate with reference number 2019_CEMS/IOP_004 was obtained from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology at UNISA. Questionnaires were hand-delivered to participating schools wherein neutral individuals were identified and requested to facilitate the process. Attached to each questionnaire was information relating to anonymity, confidentiality, freedom to opt out, the agreement, and an indication that its completion and submission constitutes agreement to use the results for research purposes. All completed questionnaires were safely locked up and could only be accessed by the researcher.

4. Results

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlation

Table 1 provides a summary of descriptive statistics and bivariate correlation between variables. The measurement scales obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficients and composite reliability ($\alpha \geq .89$; CR $\geq .89$) above the cut-off of .70, indicating good internal consistency reliability (Abu-Bader, 2021). Psychological capital correlated positively with the overall work engagement and its three components, and with the overall job satisfaction ($r \geq .52$; large practical effect; $p \leq .01$). A positive correlation was also evident between work engagement and the overall job satisfaction ($r = .55$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect).

Table 1 - Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlation between variables

Variable	Mean	SD	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6
No.									
1 Work Engagement	4.52	1.23	.95	1					
2 Vigour	4.50	1.28	.85	.94**	1				
3 Dedication	4.62	1.29	.89	.89**	.78**	1			
4 Absorption	4.45	1.31	.83	.94**	.84**	.78**	1		
5 Psychological Capital	4.70	.78	.94	.63**	.61**	.54**	.61**	1	
6 Hope	4.77	.88	.89	.60**	.59**	.52**	.59**	.91**	1
7 Optimism	4.72	.86	.79	.60**	.59**	.53**	.58**	.83**	.73**
8 Resilience	4.48	.88	.78	.37**	.34**	.33**	.38**	.77**	.58**
9 Self-Efficacy	4.81	.96	.90	.55**	.55**	.48**	.52**	.87**	.77**
10 Job Satisfaction	4.42	1.26	.89	.55**	.56**	.52**	.48**	.52**	.52**
				7	8	9	10		
7				1					
8				.56**	1				
9				.63**	.52**	1			
10				.51**	.27**	.48**	1		

Note: N = 309; SD = standard deviation; CR = composite reliability; *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$

Hypothesis Testing: Mediation Analysis

Table 2 indicates that both work engagement ($\beta = .49$; $p = .000$; bootstrap LLCI = .36; ULCI = .64), and psychological capital ($\beta = .20$; $p = .003$; bootstrap LLCI = .11; ULCI = .54) had positive significant relationships with job satisfaction. The mediation regression model explained 41% ($R^2 = .41$; $F = 127.71$; $p = .000$; large practical effect) of the variance in job satisfaction.

Table 2 - Results of mediation analysis: Job satisfaction as dependent variable

Variable	β	SE	T	P	Bootstrap 95% CI		F	Model info	
					LLCI	ULCI		P	R ²
Constant	.63	.33	1.94	.053	-.01	1.27	127.71	.000***	.41+++
Work engagement	.49	.07	6.96	.000***	.36	.64			
Psychological capital	.20	.11	2.96	.003**	.11	.54			
Indirect effect of psychological capital in the work engagement - job satisfaction link									
	β	Boot SE	-	-	Boot LLCI	Boot UCLI			
Psychological capital	.13	.05			.04	.24			

Note: N = 309; *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$; CI, confidence interval; LLCI, lower-level confidence interval; ULCI, upper-level confidence interval; SE, standard error; + $R^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect size) ++ $R^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$ (moderate practical effect size) +++ $R^2 \geq .26$ (large practical effect size)

Table 2 further indicates that an indirect effect of psychological capital on the link between work engagement and job satisfaction was positively significant ($\beta = .13$; SE = .05; bootstrap LLCI = .04; ULCI = .24), since the bootstrap LLCI and ULCI confidence interval range does not include zero.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to assess whether the psychosocial resource of psychological capital serves as a mediator in the relationship between individuals' work engagement and their job satisfaction. While the selected variables have been extensively studied, the mediation relationship investigated here appears to be less explored, particularly among public high school teachers in historically disadvantaged Black communities. Consequently, this study offers a fresh perspective on the existing body of knowledge related to retention theory.

The bivariate correlation results revealed positive associations between work engagement, psychological capital, and job satisfaction, suggesting that highly engaged individuals are likely to exhibit high levels of psychological capital attributes (hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy), and tend to be generally satisfied with their jobs. This finding aligns with numerous other studies that have demonstrated connections between enhanced psychological resources, such as work engagement and psychological capital, and improved job satisfaction (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Dehaloo & Schulze, 2013; Fernandes et al., 2019; Hakanen et al., 2006; Hobfoll, 2018; Luthans, 2002; Luthans & Broad, 2022; Sypniewska et al., 2023).

The results of the mediation analysis indicated that psychological capital serves as a significant intermediary mechanism for explaining the positive relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction. They highlight the vital role of psychological capital in replenishing and enhancing teachers' diminished work engagement resources such as vigour, dedication, and absorption, while also helping them thrive in the workplace (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Luthans & Broad, 2022). They offer evidence regarding the significance and effectiveness of psychological capital in enhancing teachers' personal resources, ultimately leading to improved retention outcomes. This study not only supports but also expands the discussion on the development, restoration, and enhancement of personal resources (Hobfoll, 2018), which can amplify teachers' positive emotional responses to different facets of their work. Additionally, it provides fresh insights into how education specialists and practitioners can actively promote the retention of Black high school teachers.

Limitations

The study has several limitations and potential directions for future research that should be acknowledged. Its cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between the variables examined. Additionally, the use of convenience sampling raises concerns about the representativeness of the sample. Furthermore, since the sample consisted solely of Black high school teachers from the Tshwane South District in South Africa, the findings cannot be generalized beyond this specific group.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future investigations, it is advisable to use a larger, randomly selected sample of participants. Additionally, conducting replication studies in different districts,

provinces, and government departments is encouraged. The current study serves primarily for explanatory purposes, so future researchers may utilize its findings to inspire ideas for longitudinal research designs focused on evaluating causal relationships between variables.

Implications

The implications drawn from this research highlight that psychological capital plays a significant role in understanding the positive relationship between Black teachers' work engagement and their job satisfaction. This finding suggests that psychological capital serves as a vital psychological factor related to retention, indicating that maintaining this positive resource is essential for designing effective retention interventions.

Human resource initiatives aimed at fostering and enhancing psychological capital could be beneficial in revitalizing the depleted personal resources of Black teachers within the Department of Basic Education. Such interventions might help reduce stress levels among teachers and increase their engagement at work (Fu, 2015; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Furthermore, these practices could aid in building teachers' mental resilience and perseverance skills (Costantini et al., 2017), allowing them to recover from stressful situations and actively participate in their roles to the extent that the teaching profession becomes too rewarding to leave (Fernandes et al., 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Song et al., 2018).

It is also crucial for school management to create a comfortable environment for teachers (Gerlach & Gockel, 2018). This is because a supportive and dynamic school atmosphere that is characterized by well-defined roles, a positive climate that fosters trust, autonomy in task execution, a risk-free environment with established structures that encourage interpersonal relationships can help teachers sustain their momentum and enhance their job satisfaction (Maleka et al., 2020). Therefore, the significance of investing in teachers' personal resources and protecting them from depletion cannot be overstated, especially since these resources contribute to teachers' well-being and lead to favorable retention outcomes (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Van Wingerden et al., 2017).

Contribution and Value of the Study

The findings of this research expand upon Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018), which stresses the significance of safeguarding against losses in psychological resources. Furthermore, this study contributes to the ongoing discussion surrounding retention theory by emphasising the necessity for intervention strategies and practices focused on developing and strengthening individuals' personal resources to enhance their retention behaviors.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study lends support to the principles of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory by offering new insights into how investing in work engagement and psychological capital resources could enhance the retention outcome of job satisfaction. The findings validate the utility of psychological capital resources in

explaining the positive link between Black teachers' engagement in their teaching roles and their job satisfaction. Based on these results, the study recommends that retention interventions aimed at developing and strengthening psychological capital resources, such as hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy, can help restore Black teachers' depleted work engagement resources and effectively advance retention outcomes within the Department of Basic Education.

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Note:

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