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# Revitalizing the HERO within Teachers: An Analysis of the Effects of the PsyCap Development Training

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Revitalizing the HERO within Teachers: An Analysis of the Effects of the PsyCap Development Training

#### **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to investigate middle school teachers' perceptions of the effects of a teacher-targeted intervention, that is, Psychological Capital Development Training Intervention (PCDTI), aiming at enhancing positive psychological capacities of teachers. The PCDTI was prepared and implemented by the researchers at a state university in a large city in Turkey during the academic year of 2014-2015. The implementation of the PCDTI lasted for 2 months, once in a week, and after completing the training intervention, interviews were conducted with twelve teachers who were the participants in the experimental group. Data were gathered through one-on-one interviews and were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The participants stated that the PCDTI had some positive effects in terms of their personal and professional awareness and development. Raising awareness about some key issues in teachers' lives, experiencing positive emotions, cognitions, and attitudes, and experiencing changes in their attitudes towards students and teaching profession were the perceived effects of the training intervention. The participants also made suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the intervention. Some implications are offered for the benefits of enhancing teachers' psychological capital in schools.

#### Keywords

Psychological Capital Development, Training Intervention, Teachers' Perceptions, Perceived Effects of the Intervention, Qualitative Case Study, Turkey

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# Revitalizing the HERO within Teachers: An Analysis of the Effects of the PsyCap Development Training

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The purpose of the study was to investigate middle school teachers' perceptions of the effects of a teacher-targeted intervention, that is, Psychological Capital Development Training Intervention (PCDTI), aiming at enhancing positive psychological capacities of teachers. The PCDTI was prepared and implemented by the researchers at a state university in a large city in Turkey during the academic year of 2014-2015. The implementation of the PCDTI lasted for 2 months, once in a week, and after completing the training intervention, interviews were conducted with twelve teachers who were the participants in the experimental group. Data were gathered through one-onone interviews and were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The participants stated that the PCDTI had some positive effects in terms of their personal and professional awareness and development. Raising awareness about some key issues in teachers' lives, experiencing positive emotions, cognitions, and attitudes, and experiencing changes in their attitudes towards students and teaching profession were the perceived effects of the training intervention. The participants also made suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the intervention. Some implications are offered for the benefits of enhancing teachers' psychological capital in schools. Keywords: Psychological Capital Development, Training Intervention, Perceptions, Perceived Effects of the Intervention, Qualitative Case Study, **Turkey** 

Organizational crises (Probst & Raisch, 2005), increasing workload and responsibilities (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and change (Pryor, Taneja, Humphreys, Anderson, & Singleton, 2008; Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012) are some of the issues which often challenge organizations. Only flexible, effective and dynamic organizations can put up with these challenging issues (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). An organization which can cope with these circumstances in the future needs a new kind of capital, that is, positive psychological capital (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015). Psychological capital takes its scientific bases from positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Youssef & Luthans, 2013) and examines positivity at the individual level (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007a). According to Peterson, Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, and Zhang (2011), psychological capital is critical for motivation, cognitive functioning, striving for success, and performance, and it covers four malleable and manageable constructs: hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). From this perspective, it may offer a paradigm shift in human resources management and development (Luthans et al., 2007a). By enhancing psychological capital, organizations can develop their ability to cope with the hardships and crises. Schools, as other organizations do, encounter hardships, reforms, increasing standards and accountability, which puts pressure on educators (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014). Students' misbehavior and increasing workload (Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington, & Gu, 2007; Barmby, 2006) challenge teachers in their professional life. These factors cause teachers and educators in general to feel stress, pessimism and lack of motivation that may in turn negatively affect their work motivation and performance. Psychological capital, thus, can be of help for school organizations to cope with the difficulties and revitalize the inner resources of the educators via positive psychology-based training programs. With this in mind, the present study attempts to investigate the effects of a training intervention on psychological capital development. The intrinsic case study presented here delves into the perceived effects and experience concerning a training program in an education context, which is lacking in the existing literature. To the researchers' knowledge, this is the first study examining the perceptions of teachers on a psychological capital development training intervention using qualitative methodology. The study may guide both educational researchers and practitioners in the field to develop or use such training programs to improve school performance and nurture work motivation.

#### **Literature Review**

The following literature focuses on positive psychology, its reflection on organizations, the rise of a positive motivational state and capacity, that is, positive psychological capital (commonly known as PsyCap), the positive psychological roots of PsyCap and related positive outcomes and implications for organizations.

The science of psychology has touched upon human functioning through a pathological lens and focused on healing individual disorders since World War II (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Although psychology has made great progress in finding solutions to serious problems, it has lost its links with positive aspects of life (Seligman, 1999). Seligman and colleagues criticized psychology's problem-oriented approaches and perspective and argued that psychologists gave much prominence to mental disorders and pathologies, overlooking two significant missions of the field of psychology: (a) helping healthy people to be happier and more productive, and (b) actualizing human potential. They called for more attention on these two forgotten missions (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Their call has echoed a new movement called positive psychology. The positive psychology movement has emerged as a reaction to some of psychology's predominant assumptions (Nafstad, 2015). Overemphasis on stress, burnout, dissatisfaction, lack of commitment and inadequate performance by academicians, psychologists, and organization development experts, rather than what makes people happy, satisfied and committed, became influential in the inception of the positive psychology movement (Peterson, Balthazard, Waldman, & Thatcher, 2008). The positive psychology movement as a cross-disciplinary approach has manifested itself in various fields including business administration, organization science, management, organizational behavior, health, and education and launched a kind of paradigm shift in these fields. Workplace has been greatly influenced by this paradigm shift beyond other fields, and positive psychology's impactful reflections at work have emerged as new research streams, i.e., positive psychology at work, positive workplaces, positive organizations, positive organizational behavior, positive organizational scholarship and positive occupational health psychology (Donaldson & Dollwet, 2013). All these fields attempt to investigate and enhance positivity in the workplace. In this paper, however, the field of positive organizational behavior is introduced as it has become more influential in the development of the psychological capital concept.

## **Positive Organizational Behavior**

Positive organizational behavior (POB) has its roots in the positive psychology movement and investigates positive psychological states associated with well-being and performance at work and strengths of human resources (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). POB has emerged as a new discipline stressing the role that positive psychological resources and positive

understanding can play in organizational research (Youssef & Luthans, 2013). From this perspective, it can be viewed as an application of positive psychology at work (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Positive organizational behavior (POB) is defined by Luthans (2002a) as "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace" (p. 59). The POB researchers (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Luthans, 2002b; Youssef & Luthans, 2007; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007a; Nelson & Cooper, 2007) argued that research in organizational behavior has dealt with negatively-oriented issues for a long time and proposed that time is ripe enough to redirect organizational behavior's attention to positive characteristics, states, organizations and behavior, and developing theory, conducting research and implementing interventions on these streams of research. According to Luthans et al. (2007a), POB deals with the individual at the micro level, and it only includes a positive resource or capacity which meets the specified criteria for POB. The POB inclusion criteria are as follows:

- Positive and relatively unique for the field of organizational behavior,
- Research and theory based,
- Measurable,
- State-like or open to change,
- Related to performance outcomes (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015).

One of the most fundamental characteristics which differ positive organizational behavior (POB) from positive organizational scholarship and positive psychology is POB's inclusion of state-like capacities (Luthans, 2002a; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007b), and state-trait continuum is an essential part of the theoretical framework of POB (Luthans & Avolio, 2009). Luthans and Youssef (2004) proposed that self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience are the positive capacities or resources that meet the above-mentioned criteria, and they called the amalgam of these capacities psychological capital.

# **Psychological Capital**

The positive psychology movement has played an essential role in laying the foundations of both the field of positive organizational behavior and its positively-oriented derivative, that is, psychological capital. A positive orientation in organizational research has mostly emerged because of the imbalance between organizational theories and practices investigating ineffectiveness, unethical behavior, underperformance and unproductive organizational cultures, strategies, and structures; and how performance and functioning can be enhanced in organizations has received less attention (Luthans et al., 2007a; Luthans et al., 2015). Psychological capital (simply PsyCap) and other positively-oriented approaches offer significant pathways for balancing negativity and positivity in organizational research. Luthans et al. (2007a) defined psychological capital (simply PsyCap) as follows:

PsyCap is an individual's positive psychological state of development and is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) 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)

Psychological capital is a fundamental capacity which is of critical importance for human motivation, cognitive functioning, and thriving for success and performance at work, this new capital directs employees' behavior and cognitive functioning and is hard to imitate (Akçay, 2011; Peterson et al., 2011). Luthans et al. (2015) argued that psychological capital may offer a new paradigm for enhancing and managing human resources in order to improve performance and obtain a competitive advantage.

PsyCap which represents individuals' psychological resources as a whole is made of human strengths and positive capacities which meet the criteria such as being measurable, malleable and impactful on performance and manageable for competitive advantage (Gooty, Gavin, Johnson, Frazier, & Snow, 2009; Luthans et al., 2007b), as presented earlier.

The theoretical foundations of PsyCap are developed using Whetten, Felin, and King's (2009) guidelines on theory-borrowing (Luthans et al., 2015; Peterson et al., 2011). Whetten et al. (2009) suggested that theory borrowing is significant for organizational research, but they cautioned against two critical things in theory borrowing: organizational level and organizational context. Research in positive organizational behavior provides supportive conceptual and sometimes empirical evidence for some psychological capacities such as self-efficacy, resilience, hope and optimism, and thus theory borrowing is suitable for psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2015).

The roots and explanatory mechanisms of psychological capital theory are largely drawn from work motivation (Stajkovic, 2006), positive psychology (Lopez & Snyder, 2009), Bandura's social cognitive (1986, 1997) and agency theories (2008), psychological resources theory (Hobfoll, 2002), Diener's (2000) work on happiness and subjective well-being and Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory (Peterson et al., 2011; Luthans et al., 2015; Youssef & Luthans, 2013; Youssef-Morgan & Hardy, 2014). With its sound scientific base, PsyCap seems promising in terms of opening the door to gaining better insights into work life and workplaces in contributing to well-being under harsh conditions.

Research conducted on PsyCap and some fundamental topics of organizational behavior field has revealed the need for adopting a positive lens towards some key issues in organizational behavior. It was found in the related research that PsyCap is significantly associated with desirable and undesirable variables such as personal/subjective/psychological wellbeing (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010; Ganotice, Yeung, Beguina, & Villarosa, 2016; Li, Ma, Guo, Xu, Yu, & Zhou, 2014), job satisfaction (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011; Kwok, Cheng, & Wong, 2014; Cheung, Tang, & Tang, 2011; Siu, 2013), employee commitment/organizational commitment (Avey et al., 2011; Larson, 2004), job performance (Avey, Nimnicht, & Pigeon, 2010; Avey et al., 2011; Bouckenooghe, Zafar, & Raja, 2015; Choi & Lee, 2014; Ganotice et al., 2016; Peterson et al., 2011; Sun, Zhao, Yang, & Fan, 2012), organizational climate (McMurray, Pirola-Merlo, Sarros, & Islam, 2010; Süral Özer, Topaloğlu, & Timurcanday Özmen, 2013), work happiness (Choi & Lee, 2014), social capital (Larson, 2004), work engagement (Nigah, Davis, & Hurrell, 2012), organizational support (Büyükgöze, 2014; Erdem, 2014), organizational citizenship behaviors (Berberoğlu, 2013; Jung & Yoon, 2015), employees' innovative behaviors (Abbas & Raja, 2015; Hsu & Chen, 2015), social support (Li et al., 2014), empowerment (Avey, Hughes, Norman, & Luthans, 2008), stress/job stress (Abbas & Raja, 2015; Avey et al., 2011; Baron, Franklin, & Hmieleski, 2013), intent to quit (Avey et al., 2011; Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Choi & Lee, 2014) and burnout (Cheung et al., 2011). Furthermore, PsyCap has been shown to be a malleable construct, and it can be enhanced via interventions (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006; Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008; Russo & Stoykova, 2015). As the dynamics of human functioning are better grasped in the future, the research stream concerning positive psychological states and their correlates may extend. In fact, the research on PsyCap has played an exploratory role in evolving positive psychology at the workplaces.

# The Components of Psychological Capital

The positive capacities or states which meet the POB inclusion criteria are self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007a, 2007b; Luthans et al., 2015; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). These four constructs together made up a higher order construct called psychological capital, which has a synergistic impact (Luthans et al., 2006). Each positive capacity or state constituting psychological capital is explained in the following section.

# **Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy draws its bases in Bandura's (1986, 1997) work and research on this construct (Luthans et al., 2015). Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as, "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) adapted Bandura's conceptualization on self-efficacy for workplace and defined it as "an individual's convictions (or confidence) about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context" (p. 66).

Perceived self-efficacy affects human functioning directly and also shows its impacts on human functioning through goals, desires, outcome expectations, emotional tendencies and perceptions regarding barriers and challenges in the social environment (Bandura, 2000). Bandura (2008, 2012) argues that self-efficacy is the foundation of human motivation, wellbeing, and success and that it affects people's thinking styles, outcomes expectations, how they perceive opportunities and barriers, emotional life and vulnerability for stress and depression. Self-efficacy has been a popular research interest in education as well as psychology, organizational behavior, and business administration. A broad body of research in the field of education has dealt with teachers' self-efficacy in educational settings (see Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Kleinsasser, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Teacher self-efficacy is found to have significant links with evaluated teaching performance (Klassen & Tze, 2014), relational satisfaction, emotional professional commitment and change in teacher motivation (Canrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink, & Hofman, 2012), school climate (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014), and students' academic adjustment, teachers' behaviors and practices regarding the quality of classroom processes and psychological wellbeing (Zee & Koomen, 2016).

# Hope

Hope is an internal, non-linear dynamic process (Herth, 2001; Idan & Margalit, 2013). As a core component of PsyCap, hope draws its scientific base from Snyder's (1995, 2000) research and conceptualization (Luthans et al., 2015). According to Snyder, Irving and Anderson (1991, p. 287), hope is "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (1) agency (goal-directed energy) and (2) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (cf. Luthans et al., 2007a). Hope refers to one's determination and energy to progress in line with his or her goals and to persevere for goals, and it refers to the individual's capacity to find alternative ways to reach goals, when necessary (Peterson et al., 2008; Youssef & Luthans, 2006).

The hope model developed by Snyder (1995) is phenomenological and depends on people's cognitive appraisals of their capabilities for attaining their goals. Hope theory requires

simultaneous existence of goal-directed energy and pathways to attain goals. Neither of them can help one to reach a high level of hope alone. Hopeful thinking requires both the capacity to see workable paths and existence of goal-directed energy (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002).

Lazarus (1999) maintains that hope is a key resource in coping with some problems such as depression. Referring to the role that hope can play in organizational life, Adams, Snyder, Rand, King, Sigmon, and Pulvers (2002) proposed that high-hope workers develop clear work goals, are aware of their work performance and double their efforts to find solutions to the problems faced before looking for someone or something to be blamed. In this sense, hope can be regarded as a positive state or capacity proposing impactful potentials for organizations in today's complex, competitive and challenging work contexts.

# **Optimism**

Optimism and pessimism depend on people's expectations about future as noted in dictionary definitions of and scientific approaches to these two concepts (Carver & Scheier, 2002). Optimism and pessimism are effective in how people feel when beset with adversity (Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010). According to Peterson and Chang (2002), there are two perspectives offering two different approaches about the concept of optimism. The first approach is Scheier and Carver's (1985) dispositional optimism which emphasizes positive expectations about the fact that positive events will happen more frequently than negative ones in the future, and this approach proposes that positive expectations of optimistic people are not limited to a behavioral domain or context.

The other approach is Seligman's (2006) explanatory style. Explanatory style revolves around people's way of explaining the reasons why the events occur. The way of explaining events determines whether people will be hopeless or energetic in daily life in the face of adversity or problems (Seligman, 2006). From the expectancy point of view, optimism and pessimism are future-oriented, proactive dispositional tendencies. However, from the explanatory style point of view, optimism and pessimism are immediate, reactive tendencies. They explain the reasons lying behind the events encountered (Boman, Furlong, Shochet, Lilles, & Jones, 2009).

Pessimistic explanations see the events as internal, stable and global. Optimistic explanations, however, attribute negative events to transient environmental and contextual factors which may affect fewer life domains. Positive events are regarded as internal, stable and global in optimistic explanations (Gillham, Shatté, Reivich, & Seligman, 2001).

#### Resilience

Resilience has received increasing attention as a psychological construct in the past years (Bonanno, Romero, & Klein, 2015). Resilience is a complex and multi-dimensional concept; therefore, there is a great variety among the conceptualizations and research on resilience (Griffiths, 2014; Nolan, Taket, & Stagnitti, 2014). Clinical psychology, for example, defines resilience as a set of phenomena which are characterized by the patterns of positive adaptation in the face of adversity or risk (Masten, 2001; Masten & Reed, 2002) or trauma (Luthar, 2006).

From the perspective of organizational behavior, resilience is regarded as a positive psychological capacity which helps to bounce back and rebound from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure or positive change, progress and increasing responsibility (Luthans, 2002a). Resilience is the capacity of coping with serious change, negativity, risks or increasing responsibility successfully as suggested by Peterson et al. (2008). Noble and Mcgrath (2013) argued that there are many definitions of resilience, but all of the definitions emphasize: "the

capacity of the individual to 'overcome odds' and demonstrate the personal strengths needed to cope with some kind of hardship or adversity" (p. 566).

Psychological Capital, Its Components and the PCDTI

As provided in earlier parts of the literature review, psychological capital is a positive psychology-based capacity which is state-like and malleable. The trainings and/or interventions which are prepared based on positive psychology have been shown to be effective in terms of leading to positive outcomes and effects. In this way, positive psychology and related interventions offer a new way of developing positive outcomes for people and organizations. In the same vein, psychological capital as a variant of positive psychology opens a new way of developing the positive motivational states and capacities of people. Considering this, the researchers decided to employ and examine a teacher-targeted positive psychology intervention which mainly focused on psychological capital that is a construct covering four major components, i.e., hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. The intervention or training program was made of eight sessions which were relied upon these components equally; two sessions were allocated for each component. The researchers examined how the four components can be developed or enhanced in the related literature, and they harmonized the strategies, ways and techniques into a practical program. All the activities, scenarios, presentations and examples used were the derivatives of these components included in the Psychological Capital Development Training Intervention (PCDTI). Extended information about how each component was addressed in the PCDTI is given in the following section.

The present research attempts to unearth teachers' perceptions of the effects of the PCDTI from a qualitative perspective, using an interpretative lens. Previous research on developing PsyCap were mostly conducted in other fields than education, such as organizational behavior or management. This research, thus, tried to gain an insight into how a positive psychology-based intervention is perceived by the participants in an education context. The results may be of value for educational researchers interested in enhancing teachers' or educators' positive personal resources and/or capacities. Capacity enhancement seems to be a stunning need and panacea for the schools which are faced with astounding problems, reforms and ever-increasing standards, as it targets to mobilize the existing resources and to get the best out of people via awakening the H(-ope), E(-fficacy), R(-esilience), O(-ptimism) within (Luthans, 2012).

# **Purpose of the Study**

The present study aimed at exploring teachers' evaluations of the Psychological Capital Development Training Intervention (PCDTI) and unearth the perceived effects of the intervention on teachers and potential effects in schools. In line with this aim, the research questions which guided the study were: "How do teachers participating in the PCDTI evaluate the intervention and their experiences of the intervention?" and "How do they perceive the effects of the PCDTI?"

# The Psychological Capital Development Training Intervention

Previous research demonstrated that psychological capital can be developed through micro interventions (Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans et al., 2008; Luthans, Avey, Avolio, & Peterson, 2010). As suggested by Luthans et al. (2010), organizational members can be more resilient when beset with adversity, have higher self-efficacy in carrying out organizational tasks, and become more optimistic for the future and more hopeful for attaining goals by

developing positive psychological capital. Drawing on the previous research and potential effects of developing psychological capital, the researchers thought that a teacher-targeted training intervention could help teachers to become more resilient, self-efficacious, hopeful and optimistic in their professional lives. As known, teachers are exposed to internal and external stressors, face adversity for varying reasons such as students' misbehavior and increasing workload (Barmby, 2006; Day et al., 2007), sometimes feel hopeless in attaining their goals and feel pessimistic about their professional life due to devaluation of teaching profession in the society (TED's report, 2014). Moreover, teachers are under pressure in terms of improving educational standards and performance (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014).

The Psychological Capital Development Training Intervention (PCDTI) included 8 sessions lasting 16 hours in total. Each session lasted for 2 hours every week. Each session covered a different topic which aimed at raising awareness about and developing self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. In some sessions, activities about two components (for example, self-efficacy and resilience) were included in one session due to the synergistic nature of the psychological capital. The PCDTI included presentations by the researchers and the participants, discussions, videos, case studies and scenarios related to educational settings. A teacher was invited to one session to share his life and professional experiences with the participants. Lastly, a psychological counselor participated in the intervention to teach some practical exercises for coping with stress in daily life, which was related to resilience.

The PCDTI was developed based on the strategies and methods suggested by Luthans and Youssef (2004), Luthans, Luthans, and Luthans (2004), Bandura (1997), Snyder (1995), Schneider (2001), Masten (2001), Castro, Kelly, and Shih (2010), Gu and Day (2007), Bullough (2011), and Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2009). The researchers paid attention to mixing up the strategies developed and findings obtained in other fields such as organizational behavior and psychology and education, and thereby make the intervention applicable in educational settings. The activities to be implemented each week were arranged in accordance with the objectives set for that particular week. The objectives and activities were identified for each session prior to the actual implementation of the PCDTI. One sample session and its objectives are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** One Sample Session of the PCDTI and Its Objectives

4 <sup>th</sup> Week	The Components of PsyCap			syCap
The purpose of the session: Goal setting	Self-efficacy	Hope	Optimism	Resilience
<ul> <li>Participants raise awareness about why goal setting is important.</li> </ul>	-	✓	-	-
<ul> <li>Participants explain/order the phases of goal setting.</li> </ul>	-	✓	-	-
<ul> <li>Participants set specific goals regarding their profession.</li> </ul>	-	✓	-	-
<ul> <li>Participants understand how successful they are in terms of achieving their existing goals.</li> </ul>	-	✓	-	-

#### The Role of the Researcher

This study was a part of a doctoral study which examined the malleability of PsyCap and the effects of a training intervention labeled the PCDTI using a mixed research methodology. After conducting a comprehensive literature review and finding out how PsyCap

could help individuals in the organizations, an eight-week program was designed. Experimental studies (see Luthans et al., 2006; Russo & Stoykova, 2015) reporting that psychological capital interventions were found to be effective in terms of enhancing PsyCap motivated the researchers to develop and implement the PCDTI for teachers as teachers work in schools which can be accepted as social organizations. Researcher bias was tried to be neutralized by describing all the details of the research process, giving authentic quotations from the participants' views, and using quantitative methods (Kalman & Summak, 2016) prior to the qualitative strand of the research as well. The quantitative strand of the research indicated that the PCDTI positively influenced the participants' PsyCap (Kalman & Summak, 2016); however, how the positive effects occurred and what the participants thought of the intervention remained unclear. To this end, a qualitative strand of the research was a must to achieve an integrity of the effects of the training.

The researchers managed all the sessions, gave instructions about how to carry out the activities in the program, and organized discussions during the implementation of the PCDTI. Before initiating the research, the researchers visited 20 middle schools, talked to teachers about the objectives and content of the program, and invited them to participate in the program. A form which included two close-ended questions and enough space for writing corresponding address were distributed to teachers. The participants of the PCDTI were chosen from among those who volunteered and filled out the form which secured their intention to participate in the program.

#### **Research Design**

The researchers utilized qualitative research methodology in order to investigate the participating teachers' perceptions of the effects of the PCDTI. The researchers used the intrinsic case study as it was the most suitable design which could help see how the participants of such an intervention perceived the training and their experiences related to it. We wondered if PsyCap training can work in the field of education. As suggested in the related literature, we chose case study as this design can be used to collect comprehensive, systematic and profound information about a bounded system which can be a program, event, or activity involving individuals through a set of qualitative procedures (Luck, Jackson, & Usher, 2006; Patton, 2002; Plano Clark, & Creswell, 2015; Saldaña, 2011) and gather evidence regarding the phenomena which are carefully delineated (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). We examined the effects of a program using this design.

A semi-structured interview protocol consisting of five open-ended questions was used in order to extract teachers' perceptions about the PCDTI. The interview questions were as follows:

- 1. Do you think the PCDTI made any contributions to you? (If yes)
  - a) What kind of contributions did it make?
  - b) Have you observed any changes in yourself before and after participating in the PCDTI?
- 2. What would you suggest to enhance the effectiveness of the PCDTI?
- 3. What effects would the PCDTI have in schools, if implemented?
- 4. Will you recommend the PCDTI to others?
- 5. How would you summarize your perceptions of the PCDTI?

# **Participants**

The study group consisted of 12 participants (9 females and 3 males) working at eight middle schools in a large province in Southeastern Turkey. Purposive and criterion-based sampling was utilized to recruit the participants for interviews. The participants accepting to participate in the interviews were the teachers who volunteered to take part in the PCDTI for 2 months. Having participated in all of the sessions of the PCDTI actively, being a rich informant, and expressing his/her feelings and thoughts precisely were the criteria used to withdraw the interviewees. All of the names provided are anonymous.

# **Data Collection and Analysis**

The researchers conducted individual one-on-one interviews with the interviewees. Qualitative data were tape-recorded after getting the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Each interview lasted about 15-25 minutes. Constant comparison analysis and classical content analysis techniques (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007) were used to analyze the raw data. First of all, the researchers chunked the data into small units. During the coding process, similar categories, themes, sub-themes, and codes were identified and combined into bigger units/patterns. The codes were enumerated to determine the frequency in order to see which codes emerged at most. Thus, it was possible to explore which issues were mostly accentuated by the participants and for what aspects of the interventions their views diverged and converged. After the coding process ended, the categories, themes, sub-themes, and codes were given to an independent researcher to examine the coding. Based on his suggestions, some sub-themes and codes were incorporated. Authentic quotations from the participants' views were presented in relevant places to increase the plausibility of the data analysis.

#### **Findings**

Qualitative data analysis revealed five main themes, several sub-themes, and codes. Based on the participants' evaluations, the findings were presented in 3 tables. Each table represented a different main theme: Table 2 "Contributions of the PCDTI," Table 3 "Suggestions for Enhancing the Effectiveness of the PCDTI," and Table 4 "Effects of Implementing the PCDTI in Schools." The themes regarding the other two questions in the interview protocol were not demonstrated in tables as it was more suitable to present them descriptively. Furthermore, each theme was supported with quotations from the participants' views.

#### Contributions of the PCDTI

The teachers perceived a number of positive effects by participating in the PCDTI. According to the teachers' views, the intervention worked well in terms of raising awareness, experiencing positive emotions, cognitions, and attitudes, problem-solving, changes in attitudes towards students and teaching profession, and opportunity seeking. Teacher views about the perceived effects of the intervention can be categorized into two overarching themes as demonstrated in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Contributions of the PCDTI

Narrative	Main theme	Contributions of the PCDTI			
presentation	<b>Sub-themes</b>	Codes	f		
This category		Raising a general awareness	4		
includes the codes		Raising awareness regarding taking individual	1		
regarding the	Raising	steps			
apprehension of the	awareness	Raising awareness about the capital owned	1		
current		Raising awareness about the shortcomings in goal-	1		
circumstances and		setting			
shortcomings and		Realizing the hidden opportunities in the things	1		
the owned		seeming as burden			
resources.		Cooling the mositive espects of the events			
		Seeing the positive aspects of the events encountered	3		
T 1.		Increase in motivation	2		
In this category, the			2		
perceived emotional,		Thinking more optimistically Increase in self-confidence [see]	2		
cognitive, and	Dagiti	Perseverance/not giving up	2		
attitudinal effects	Positive emotions,	Understanding that things can change if thriving	1		
are presented. As the	cognitions,	Feeling more hopeful	1		
perceptions are generally suggesting	and	Understanding the need to struggle more	1		
the presence of	attitudes	Feeling better [5]	1		
distinguishing	attitudes	Being more perseverant for achieving goals	1		
features in different		Seeing personal incompetencies	1		
aspects, they are		Positive thinking	1		
accepted to be		Being positive	1		
positive.		Being courageous against hardship	1		
<i>F</i>		Feeling more enthusiastic for eliminating the	1		
		shortcomings in goal setting	1		
This category		Looking for different pathways to solve the			
specifies the		problems	2		
participants'		prooteins			
perceptions and	<b>Problem-</b>				
attitudes towards the	solving	Feeling more relaxed in problem-solving	2		
solution of the		reming more remained in problem sorting	_		
problems.					
This category		Shaking oneself up professionally	2		
includes the change	<b>Attitudes</b>	Understanding students better	2		
in teachers'	towards	Controlling anger towards students	1		
perceptions	students and	Believing in the teaching profession	1		
regarding their	teaching	Beginning to love teaching and students	1		
students and	profession	Behaving students more compassionately	1		
profession.		·			

As Table 2 indicates, what teachers stressed regarding the effects of the intervention signified *personal* and *professional* effects and/or contributions. Personal effects can be regarded as the aspects related to self-improvement and self-awareness. Teacher views about the personal effects depended on raising awareness about the capital, or the capacity, owned,

self-improvement in terms of motivation, thinking, confidence, feelings, and understanding. The intervention seemed to have helped them to become aware of their personal shortcomings/deficits, outlook on events and life in general, efforts, and hidden opportunities conceived as burden or hardship. Referring to the personal effects of the intervention, two teachers commented:

The intervention worked really well in terms of raising awareness. We have become aware of our internal power. (Hande)

I realized that I have totally forgotten what I already have because of running behind what I should have in the future. This program helped me see the capital I own. (Ceren)

Hande's and Ceren's focus on the perceived effect of the intervention is related to realistic optimism as they appreciated what is owned at present. In this sense, the intervention can be said to have led to self-awareness. Another teacher emphasized the intervention's effect on her outlook on life and the events faced. She delineated her views:

The PCDTI changed my way of seeing the events. I found more chance to try new ways to find solutions to the problems. I reinforced my opinion that challenges can be overcome with perseverance. This increased my self-confidence. (Sevgi)

The intervention was reported to have an impact on the participants' motivation, thinking, self-confidence and perseverance. Two teachers added:

I am a persistent person, looking for remedies to the problems, and this program bolstered my characteristic of being persistent and motivated me in this way. (İsmail)

The training contributed to my being more optimistic, feeling better and being more persevering. I adopted a new psychological stance in the face of the hardship I encountered. It helped me to re-order my goals and to be more determined to attain them. (Nil)

Professional effects of the intervention were associated with teachers' attitudes towards their students and the teaching profession. It was clearly noted by teachers that the intervention changed some of their attitudes towards their teaching and understanding regarding students. The training was effective in shaking up teachers professionally, namely helping them to alter their attitudes and energizing them. Believing in the moral call of teaching, understanding students better, behaving in a more compassionate way and controlling anger towards students were the professional effects of the training. They also raised awareness about taking personal steps for school improvement and better school outcomes. For the change in attitudes towards students, one teacher noted:

I cultivated different attitudes towards students. Now, at least, I can control my anger towards their misbehaviors. I started to think about the context in which students behave, which I did not before. I try new ways to teach them. (Burcu)

Burcu's views were significant as she was a Math teacher whose students were unsuccessful in Math as reported by her during the intervention. Although it was her 3<sup>rd</sup> year in teaching, she was not happy with teaching students for this reason and seemed so tired to deal with them, which made her angry towards students. After participating in the training, she stated to have experienced a change in her professional life.

Another teacher stated his views about the change in his attitudes:

The training has contributed to my outlook on me and my students. I am more optimistic towards them and try to understand them better. This training shook me up! (İbrahim)

Based on teacher views, it may be suggested that the intervention reached its target in terms of positively affecting teachers' psychological state of development both in personal and professional terms.

Suggestions for Enhancing the Effectiveness of the PCDTI

The researchers inquired the participants' views on the format and activities of the intervention in order to unearth the satisfactory and unsatisfactory aspects on the part of the participants. Their views could also serve to reveal what needs to be done to make the PCDTI more effective in the future. Teacher views were seen to have diverged for this theme. Table 3 shows the related categories and themes.

Table 3.	Suggestions	for E	Enhancing	the	Effectiveness	of the	PCDTI

Narrative	Main theme	Suggestions for Enhancing			
presentation		<b>Effectiveness of the PCDTI</b>			
	Sub-theme	Need for improvement	f		
This category		Lasting for a longer duration	2		
includes the		More invited speakers	2		
participants'		Providing lived experiences	1		
suggestions		Adding educational games	1		
for the aspects		Assigning homework requiring practice	1		
of the training		More fun	1		
program which need to	Codes	Including participants with a wide range of age and experience	1		
be re-		More crowded groups	1		
arranged to		Using visuals in presentations	1		
enhance the effectiveness.		Holding the program on the weekends	1		
	Sub-theme	No need for improvement	f		
This category		Adequately efficient	3		
is related to		Implementing the program continuously	2		
the aspects of	Codes	& at certain intervals	2		
the training		Definitely very successful	1		
which do not					
require any		Already successful in its current form	1		
changes.					

For one group of teachers, there were some aspects which needed improvement for the effectiveness of the training, while another group found the training satisfactory and effective in its current form. Revealing teachers' views about the format of and the activities included in the training can be useful to enhance the format and the content of the PCDTI and to develop new resource-based training interventions for educational settings. It was understood from teacher views that they made suggestions to enhance the format and the content of the training. They did not accentuate anything implying their dissatisfaction with the training. The most frequently voiced aspect was the length of the training. Some teachers found the 8-week duration short for the development of PsyCap. Involving invited speakers for sharing their experiences, giving more lived experiences in the presentations during the sessions, and incorporating new activities such as games to make the training more fun were some of their suggestions. The following statements are illustrative of teachers' views about the intervention in general:

The training could last for a longer time as it was very enjoyable. We could have learned more about various issues. (Hacer)

I am very enthusiastic about participating in such training, I always support discussing school-related problems and sharing experiences. However, this training should have included more teachers to do this. (İsmail)

The sessions must be longer. Practice must be emphasized rather than theory. (Figen)

The duration of the intervention could be longer. Then there will be more time to discuss the problems faced. (Kenan)

The PCDTI seemed to have provided an arena for teachers from different schools to share their experiences and knowledge. However, implementing this training with a more crowded group of teachers from a wide range of age and experience can bolster knowledge and experience sharing among teachers. Making the training more fun through adding enjoyable activities and games can help teachers to relax and better concentrate on the activities during the sessions. Last but not the least, more practices such as giving homework assignments or reflective writing in diaries and/or education blogs can help teachers implement or share what they learned in the sessions.

Besides those suggesting changes in the intervention, a group of teachers believed that the intervention was good enough in its current format and with its activities. They stated that the intervention is already successful, and it must be implemented from time to time in schools. They noted that there is no need to make any changes in the intervention:

The training intervention was really successful. No need for any changes. (İbrahim)

I believe this intervention has reached its goal. It was really effective. (Ceren)

Effects of Implementing the PCDTI in Schools

The future effects of implementing the PCDTI in schools were another interview question posed to the interviewees. Teacher views about the effects of the implementing PCDTI in schools revealed two overarching themes, and it was seen that the two main themes

were in parallel with the effects perceived by the participating teachers based on their actual experiences in the intervention as can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Effects of Implementing the PCDTI in Schools

Narrative	Main theme	Effects of Implementing the PCDTI in		
Presentation		Schools		
This category		Enhancing or cultivating collective efficacy	2	
		Contributing to teachers' and administrators' professional growth	1	
		Enhancing school administrators' and teachers' self-efficacy	1	
covers the		Eliminating learned hopelessness in teachers	1	
perceptions related to the		Forming a more positive and constructive environment in schools	1	
outcomes		Raising awareness	1	
expected to emerge in schools upon implementing the training. This category,	Codes	Cultivating positive attitudes towards students	1	
		Cultivating positive attitudes towards the teaching profession	1	
		Placing more importance on individual endeavor	1	
in general	Codes	Increasing positive attitudes in teachers	1	
terms, identifies the positive emotions,		Enhancing staff's zest for and belief in teaching	1	
		Developing different perspectives in the face of problems	1	
cognitions,		Finding positive solutions to the problems	1	
attitudes at collective organizational level.		Becoming more successful	1	
		Taking steps to change something in schools	1	
		Constructing suitable environments and facilities for students' growth	1	
		A more alive and enthusiastic school staff	1	
		Raising awareness in the face of problems	1	
		School improvement	1	

The two themes emerged were personal development and professional development as shown in Table 4. Personal development included the codes about the future effects of the intervention on school staff's efficacy, hopelessness, awareness, efforts, new perspectives, positive solutions, and success. One teacher commented:

I believe that resilience, hope, and optimism which are the core components of PsyCap are too low in teachers. Something needs to be done for this. My perspective on the school has changed. I had become really nervous about the things regarding the school. (Filiz)

Professional development was the second main theme consisting of the codes such as professional growth, forming a positive learning environment, positive attitudes towards students and the teaching profession, zest for teaching, change in schools, dynamic staff and

school improvement. These codes were related to school-level aspects to be positively affected through implementing the PCDTI in schools. These codes may imply that the intervention can also serve for developing organizational-level PsyCap in schools after making substantial changes. One teacher stressed the importance of implementing the intervention in schools for problem-solving and being successful:

I think the school staff's perceptions of the problems will change. They can find positive solutions to the problems. Such training requires them to work together, which will make them more successful. (Figen)

Another teacher stated his views about professional growth as follows:

PsyCap is really important. Teachers avoid developing themselves professionally. This kind of implementation can be carried out during seminar periods in pre- and post-semesters. Active participation in such training will be beneficial. (Kenan)

Teacher views and evaluations about their actual experiences in the intervention and future effects of implementing the intervention in schools were found to be similar. The participants stated that the PCDTI had two significant contributions which were related to their personal and professional development. Consistent effects were thought to be experienced in schools by teachers. These findings may suggest that although PsyCap examines positive capacities at the individual level, it can also be applied at the organizational level as a collective capacity or resource.

Another determinant of teachers' positive views and evaluations about the intervention manifested itself in teachers' willingness to recommend the intervention to their colleagues. All of the participants (N=12) opined that they recommended or would recommend the intervention to others. Some of them noted that they had already recommended the intervention to their colleagues after the intervention started, and others stated that they would recommend it. Recommending the intervention to others can be seen as a reflection of their satisfaction with the PCDTI. Views of some teachers were as follows:

I will definitely recommend it. Because there are too many teachers who have lost their enthusiasm. (İbrahim)

İbrahim viewed the intervention as a means of feeling more enthusiastic about teaching. Increasing enthusiasm for teaching was the aspect which İbrahim placed stress on regarding the contribution of the intervention. Given that İbrahim was a science teacher working at a school with a low socio-economic background, it can be suggested that such a training intervention may help teachers to feel more enthusiastic towards their work at such schools which are frequently faced with daunting difficulties.

I will, of course, recommend this training. I realized that the things which I thought would never change have changed thanks to this intervention. We need such training to actualize our potential. (Figen)

Yes, I will recommend it to others for personal development and changing their way of looking at events. (Burcu)

I talk to my friends about the intervention. I have recommended it to them. (Filiz)

Figen's and Burcu's views referred to the intervention's effects on actualizing the inner potential, personal development and changing the way of looking at events, namely the point of view. The perceptions of the effects of the intervention diverged among the participants as understood from their views and evaluations.

The fifth question in the protocol revealed how the participants summarized (the effects of) the intervention. Taking teachers' summative evaluations of the intervention was possible through asking such an interview question. The participants mentioned different aspects of the intervention. The most mentioned aspects in teachers' summaries were optimism (N=3), stress management (N=1), problem-solving (N=1), positive thinking (N=1), motivation (N=2), awareness about PsyCap (N=1), contributions to professional life (N=2), awareness about internal power/potential of this kind (N=3) and personal development (N=1). The following examples demonstrate teachers' evaluations:

This is an intervention which shows that there is nothing that people cannot achieve if they realize their potential and turn it into kinetics. (Kenan)

It is a motivating and professionally exciting intervention. (Filiz)

We always talk about the importance of seeing the full half of the glass but we never do that. I charged myself in terms of positive thinking. Thanks. (Hacer)

I can manage my stress and find solutions to my problems more easily. It was, in a word, educative. (Nil)

It was an intervention which helped me bring out the hero within myself; everything was great. Thanks. (Hande)

The overall findings obtained in this study suggested that the implemented training intervention was effective both for teachers' personal and professional lives and development.

#### Discussion

This study attempted to investigate teachers' evaluations of the Psychological Capital Development Training Intervention (PCDTI) which lasted for 2 months using a qualitative methodology. The PCDTI is a teacher-targeted training intervention which aimed at developing teachers' positive psychological capacities labeled psychological capital which comprises of self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience.

The findings of the present study demonstrated that the PCDTI affected teachers positively in many ways. In their evaluations, they emphasized cognitive, affective, motivational and attitudinal changes upon participating in the intervention. It was revealed in this research that the PCDTI had both personal and professional effects on the participants. Personal effects comprised of raising awareness about the capital, or the capacity, owned, self-improvement in terms of motivation, thinking, confidence, feelings, and understanding. A sense of self-awareness about personal shortcomings/deficits, outlook on events and life in general, efforts, and hidden opportunities conceived as burden or hardship was one of the major effects perceived. On the other hand, professional effects were linked to the teaching profession and attitudes towards students. The training was reported to have a *shake-up effect* on teachers

and their attitudes. The professional effects were counted as believing in the moral call of teaching, understanding students better, behaving in a more compassionate way, controlling anger towards students and taking individual steps for the school.

These findings offer significant implications for optimism, self-efficacy, hope and resilience. The findings related to optimism were developing a positive point of view, optimistic thinking and/or being optimistic, and seeing the positive aspects of the events. As suggested in the related literature, optimism generally depends on individuals' cognitive evaluations (Bryant & Cvengros, 2004), and Seligman's (2006) explanatory optimism style offers a framework to better explain individuals' adopting a positive point of view and thinking optimistically. According to this style, people make evaluations and explanations about the causes of the events encountered (Boman et al., 2009). These explanations are significant to understand whether individuals will either be positively or negatively affected by these events (Seligman, 2006). Pessimistic explanations about the events faced view these events as internal, stable and global while optimistic ones regard them as external, temporary and context-specific (Gillham et al., 2001; Peterson et al., 2008). For that reason, teachers making optimistic explanations will tend to regard the adversity or problems encountered in schools such as conflicts and failure as temporary and mostly specific events. Optimism can, therefore, prevent teachers from feeling hopeless and help them to avoid adopting a pessimistic outlook on life. When examined in the light of research results related to optimism, teachers' optimism seems to be really critical. Optimism is reported to significantly predict stress symptoms, burnout, affective commitment, job satisfaction and task performance (Kluemper, Little, & DeGroot, 2009). Furthermore, optimism is significantly related to well-being (Desrumaux, Lapointe, Sima, Boudrias, Savoie, & Burney, 2015) and life satisfaction (Güler & Emeç, 2006), and it is shown to be effective on teachers' individual citizenship behaviors (Schwabsky, 2014). The intervention seemed to have made such an effect as enhancing or activating optimism in teachers.

Positive effects of the intervention on self-efficacy were accentuated to be the increase in self-confidence, the increase in motivation, seeing the personal incompetencies, and understanding the need to struggle more. These aspects were consistent with the characteristics of self- efficacious people as suggested by Luthans et al. (2007a). Teachers in the current study reported to have felt self-confident and motivated. They also stated to have seen their personal incompetencies and the need to struggle more, which might affect their self-motivation to develop themselves. Related literature indicated that enhancing self-efficacy can lead to higher job satisfaction (Viel-Ruma, Houchins, Jolivette, & Benson, 2010), task performance (Duyar & Normore, 2012) and lower burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Self-efficacy affects motivation (Bandura, 2009), teachers' engagement in professional learning activities (Thoonen, Sleegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijsel, 2011), and job performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). The positive outcomes presented from prior research results demonstrate how critical enhancing self-efficacy is for gaining better outcomes in schools, and it can be stated that the intervention was effective in helping teachers to feel more efficacious.

The intervention's effects on the hope dimension of PsyCap were raising awareness about the shortcomings in goal-setting, feeling more enthusiastic for eliminating personal deficits in goal setting and feeling more hopeful. Hope is a significant coping resource (Lazarus, 1999). High-hope people determine work goals, are aware of their job performance and double their efforts when encountered with a problem in their organizations (Adams et al., 2002). These people also focus on thoughts and behaviors which can enhance job performance (Peterson & Byron, 2008). From this perspective, it was observed that the training was effective to raise awareness about goal-setting, make the participants feel more hopeful and make them more enthusiastic to eliminate their deficits in goal-setting. The training can be said to have

triggered the participants, at least cognitively, to make more efforts to reach their personal and professional goals and feel more hopeful about school outcomes.

Lastly, the perceived effects of the training related to resilience were perseverance, looking for different pathways to solve the problems, feeling more relaxed in problem-solving, being courageous against hardship, and understanding that things can change if thriving. Teacher views about the codes related to resilience were about being more determined to face the problems and seek solutions courageously instead of giving up when encountered with difficult tasks or adverse events. From an educational stance, perseverance is a characteristic of resilient teachers (Mansfield, Beltman, Price, & McConney, 2012). Although resilience refers to bouncing back in the face of adversity and problems, it also means teachers' professional commitment in terms of student learning and achievement in accordance with educational purposes and moral values (Gu, 2014; Gu & Li, 2013). Resilience is a vital factor for the teaching profession and teacher effectiveness (Day, Edwards, Griffith, & Gu, 2011; Day et al., 2007). Teacher resilience is linked with a strong work feeling, self-efficacy, and teaching motivation (Gu & Day, 2007). Enhancing teachers' resilience can result in effective teaching and increase in teachers' career satisfaction, and enhanced resilience can help them to adapt to ever-changing conditions in the field of education (Bobek, 2002).

Based on teacher views, it may be suggested that the PCDTI was effective in enhancing teachers' psychological states, that is, optimism, self-efficacy, hope, and resilience. All of the participants' willingness to recommend the intervention for their colleagues can be regarded as another indicator of their positive experiences of the training. It was understood from teacher views that the perceived effects emerged in the form of personal and professional development. One interesting finding was that teachers thought that similar effects would be seen in schools if the intervention were implemented in schools. Some of the teacher views were related to school staff's personal development such as self-efficacy, problem-solving, positive thinking and raising awareness while others were associated with organizational-level effects such as collective efficacy, an active and dynamic school staff, and school improvement. Teacher views about professional development mostly highlighted their attitudes towards the teaching profession and their students. In the light of all of the perceived effects of the intervention, it can be suggested that the PCDTI triggered some positive motivational, affective, cognitive and attitudinal changes in teachers, and it may make similar changes in schools as projected by teachers. PsyCap can serve as a resource which may help teachers to cope with stress in their professional lives (Bradley, 2014). It can be used as a resource to prepare teachers to successfully manage cognitive and emotional challenges of working under challenging conditions, to establish stronger relationships with the colleagues, students, and parents, and to sustain their commitment to educational ideals, sense of self-efficacy and personal agency (Zembylas & Schutz, 2009).

Teachers' summative evaluations of the training also demonstrated that they found the training effective. Based on teacher views, it was revealed that the training was useful in terms of optimism, stress management, problem-solving, positive thinking, motivation, awareness about PsyCap, contributions to professional life, awareness about internal power/potential and personal development. Their summative evaluations of the training were found to be in parallel with their perceptions of the personal and professional effects of the training and also with their future projections about the effects of implementing the training in schools.

Finally, although teachers stated that the training reached its goal in its current form and was useful in terms of offering a platform to share knowledge and experiences, some of them made some recommendations to make the PCDTI more effective for future implementations. Involving a larger group of participants, extending the length of the training, adding more enjoyable activities, and assigning homework that teachers can actually do in their teaching tasks were some of the emerging recommendations.

#### **Conclusion**

An important contribution of this study to the related literature centers on the potential benefits of implementing a teacher-targeted training intervention regarding enhancement of PsyCap. In this study, it was unearthed that a training intervention based on positive psychology can make contributions to teachers' personal and professional development. Previous research demonstrated through using experimental/quantitative designs that PsyCap is a malleable construct (Bauman, 2014; Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans et al., 2008; Russo & Stoykova, 2015). To the researchers' knowledge, this study is the first research delving into a group of teachers' perceptions on a PsyCap development training intervention using a qualitative methodology. The present research adds to this knowledge base through a qualitative report of the perceived effects of a training intervention implemented to develop teachers' PsyCap. As the findings indicated, the training was perceived to be useful in terms of personal development such as self-awareness, self-confidence, positive thinking and a new outlook on life and the events faced and of professional development such as believing in the moral call of teaching, loving teaching, shaking up professionally and understanding students better. Teachers' willingness to recommend the training was a sign of their satisfaction with the training. Teachers' projections of the future benefits/effects of implementing the training in schools were in accordance with their personal experiences, which implies that the PCDTI can make organizational-level contributions as well. Given the positive relationship with and effects of psychological capital on desired individual and organizational outcomes, organizing and implementing similar interventions can make positive contributions to teachers in their professional lives.

#### Limitations

This study is not exempt from some limitations regarding the sample size and methodology. Firstly, the sample was comprised of 12 teachers who volunteered and actively participated in all of the sessions of the intervention. Therefore, the evidence obtained here cannot be generalized. Secondly, the researchers used a case study design and collected data based on the interviewees' perceptions and evaluations regarding the training. Some other techniques and/or methods such as observation, reflexive writing/teacher diaries, and focus group discussions could enhance the validity of the findings. Further research should address these limitations.

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