

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN LIGHT OF SOME VARIABLES

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ABSTARCT

The current study aimed at identifying the reality of psychological capital and professional competence among public school teachers in the Eastern Region, and examining the relationship between them. The study is based on the descriptive, survey-based method. A questionnaire was developed to measure psychological capital and professional competence across their various dimensions. This questionnaire was administered to a stratified random sample of (504) public school teachers in the Eastern Region. The study found out a high level of psychological capital and its various dimensions, as well as professional competence and its different aspects, among public school teachers in the Eastern Region. In addition, it indicated a positive correlation between psychological capital and professional competence among teachers. Furthermore, the results showed no statistically significant differences in overall psychological capital and professional competence among teachers based on gender or the grade level they teach. However, statistically significant differences were found out based on years of teaching experience, with those having more than 10 years of experience demonstrating higher levels of both psychological capital and professional competence. The study recommended further research to examine the relative contribution of psychological capital to professional competence.

Keywords: Psychological Capital, Professional Competence, Demographic Variables.

1. Introduction:

The teaching staff represents one of the pillars of education at all levels, particularly in pre-university education; in fact, from the researchers' perspective, they are the most important pillar of the educational process. They play a crucial role as role models and mentors for their students, demonstrating professionalism and ethical conduct in their work and interactions with students and colleagues. They contribute to fostering and instilling positive values and ethics in their students, and to constructing their self-confidence and respect for others.

The academic and professional lives and performance of faculty members and teachers are influenced by various factors, including psychological capital. Psychological capital plays a significant role in enhancing the quality of interactions between teachers and students. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy (confidence in their ability to succeed), as well as optimistic teachers (realistic and resilient), exhibit positive interactions with their students. Furthermore, psychological resilience (the ability to recover and move forward) helps them cope effectively with challenges and difficulties. This positive interaction contributes to creating a supportive and motivating academic environment for both students and faculty, which in turn improves the overall performance of the academic institution (Bell et al., 2017).

Psychological capital refers to a set of positive psychological resources that an individual possesses, which significantly influence their performance and professional life. It includes elements such as self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. Psychological capital plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' professional competence and psychological well-being (Luthans et al., 2007).

In addition, psychological capital has a significant impact on teachers' academic performance. Hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy, which constitute psychological capital, are linked to improved academic skills and professional performance of teachers; enabling them to effectively achieve their goals (Luthans, et al., 2016).

The research by Avey et al. (2011) indicated that psychological capital has a direct impact on teachers' academic performance; they found that teachers with high levels of optimism and resilience are better able to handle both academic and professional challenges.

The study results by Saif et al. (2017) also highlighted the importance of retaining university faculty members with high levels of psychological capital, as they can serve as role models and sources of inspiration for their students and colleagues.

It can be said that psychological capital plays an important role in enhancing the professional competence and academic performance of teachers at all educational levels, particularly in pre-university education. Having a high level of psychological capital provides teachers with the necessary psychological support to cope with the challenges of their work and achieve the best possible academic performance.

Based on the above, it is obvious that there is an important relationship between psychological capital, academic performance, and professional competence among teachers. Psychological capital encompasses a set of positive personal qualities and skills, such as self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience, which often help teachers overcome challenges in their work and achieve optimal academic performance. This, in turn, positively impacts their professional competence in terms of academic, cognitive, interpersonal, and managerial skills, as well as their ability to adapt to the demands and pressures of the academic work environment.

In light of this, the current study was initiated to answer the primary research question: What is the current status of psychological capital and professional competence, in their various dimensions and total levels, among public school teachers in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Region? Is there any relationship between these two factors?

The current study aims to investigate the current state of psychological capital and professional competence, in their various dimensions and overall levels, among public school teachers in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia, and to examine the relationship between these two factors. The significance of the current study lies in the fact that there are few studies that have attempted to link study variables among pre-university level teachers.

2. Study Background:

2.1. Psychological Capital:

The psychologist Martin Seligman is considered one of the pioneers in the field of positive psychology. He was the first to use the term "Psychological Capital"; focusing on the positive aspects of an individual and emphasizing the importance of possessing strong psychological resources to support well-being and enable effective adaptation to environmental

changes. This made the concept of "Psychological Capital" one of the key concepts in positive psychology.

Fredrickson et al. (2003) defined it as: "The ability to adapt to psychological and social stressors and to solve problems effectively". Lorente (2014) defined it as an individual's ability to adapt effectively to changes and circumstances in their environment.

Hussein (2019) explained that psychological capital refers to an individual's ability to maintain a positive mood, which helps them achieve their goals and cope with life's difficulties and challenges.

2.1.1. Psychological Capital Dimensions:

According to various interpretations of psychological capital, it is a multi-dimensional concept. The following are some of its dimensions that were discussed by researchers:

- **Self-Efficacy (Confidence in Success):** Self-efficacy refers to the individual's belief in his ability to organize and direct the actions necessary to achieve a high level of performance in specific situations. Four main sources influence the individual's perception of his capabilities: personal experiences, observing the others' successes, feedback from others, and the individual's physiological and psychological state in the given situation (Stajkovic & Sherman, 1994).
- **Hope (Willpower and Path):** Snyder (2002) defined hope as a cognitive system that includes personal abilities such as willpower and determination, setting alternative goals, developing various strategies to achieve those goals, and striving to attain them despite facing difficulties.
- **Optimism (Realistic and Resilient):** Scheier and Carver (1994) stated that optimism is a relatively stable belief held by individuals that future events will be positive and successful, and that the future, with all its various happenings, will unfold in their favor, even in the face of obstacles.
- **Resilience (Recovery and Growth):** Masten (2001) pointed out that resilience means the ability to recover from challenges and problems, and to move forward by transforming negative experiences into opportunities for growth and development.

2.2. Professional Competence: Its Concept and Types

In the modern era, there has been increasing emphasis on developing the professional skills of individuals to keep pace with scientific and technological advancements in the production process. Societies have focused on improving educational and training systems, and on establishing training centers to equip workers with knowledge and skills necessary to apply best practices, adapt to scientific and technological changes, and effectively utilize these advancements. This has led to a growing focus on the concept of teacher professional competence, ensuring that teachers are able to perform their core duties as organizers and facilitators of the learning process.

The definitions of teacher professional competence have varied and differed depending on the researchers and their areas of specialization. Debrah (2021) defined it as: "A measurable set of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to successfully perform job roles or professional functions." Al Jurani and Al Gharawi (2021) defined it as a set of knowledge, concepts, attitudes, and skills that guide an individual's behavior and help them perform their tasks with a certain level of proficiency, enabling them to complete their work with minimal cost, effort, and time. Without these, they cannot perform their duties effectively. This proficiency can be measured using precise standards or indicators.

Al Kandari (2017) defined it as a teacher's beliefs about his ability to effectively use teaching methods, influence their students, improve their academic performance, and address their learning difficulties. Meanwhile, Al-Shaf'i (2005) defined it as a teacher's beliefs about his ability to positively impact his students, enhance their overall development, solve their problems, and master various teaching and assessment methods.

Professional competence refers to a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a teacher possesses; enabling them to perform their duties and fulfill their roles. This competence can be observed and evaluated by students and educational leaders. It has a significant impact on all aspects of the educational process. The more competent a teacher is, the more effectively they can deliver lessons and impart knowledge.

Al Ammar (2016, p. 767) illustrated that developing teachers' professional skills and enhancing their competence achieves several objectives, such as bridging the gap between theoretical and practical aspects of education, and keeping abreast of the latest developments in their field of expertise.

2.2.1 Types of Professional Competencies:

The types of professional competence of teachers are as follows:

- **Personal and Social Competence:** This refers to a set of qualities and abilities that educators aspire for a good teacher to possess, and which can be observed or measured. These qualities enable the teacher to achieve their educational and pedagogical objectives in the best possible way, and to foster positive interpersonal relationships with students and colleagues, thus motivating them to work more productively and effectively (Al Jurani & Al Gharawi, 2021, 165-166).
- **Cognitive and Scientific Competence:** This refers to the teacher's adequate knowledge of their academic discipline and the subject matter they will be teaching, at a level that enables them to perform their teaching role with the highest possible efficiency (Al Jurani & Al Gharawi, 2021, 167-168).
- **Teaching and Technological Competence:** This refers to the set of abilities, skills, and attitudes that a teacher possesses, enabling them to use modern teaching and assessment methods and strategies, design and produce educational materials, utilize and evaluate them, operate various educational devices, and effectively employ social media and modern technologies in the educational process (Al Jurani and Al Gharawi, 2021, 167-168).
- **Health and Mental Competence:** This refers to a teacher's ability to maintain good physical and mental health, protect himself from infectious diseases, cope with stress and psychological crises at work, resolve his own psychological issues, and have confidence in his abilities and professional and academic skills.
- **Administrative Competence:** This refers to the teacher's ability to lead the school, allocate roles, tasks, and responsibilities, plan educational activities, propose new administrative ideas and methods to improve the educational process, and understand the regulations, rules, and laws related to their field of work.

3. Previous Studies:

This part will include reviewing research studies that have examined both psychological capital and professional competence among teachers in addition to studies that have addressed both psychological capital and professional competence.

Mahmoud (2025) conducted a study aimed at identifying the psychological capital level and its relationship to professional self-concept among special education teachers. The sample consisted of (65) teachers. The main results indicated that the psychological capital level was high among the study participants. There was a positive correlation between psychological capital and professional self-concept. The study found out significant differences in psychological capital based on gender in favor of females.

A study by Mohammed (2021) aimed to identify the psychological capital level and its relationship to job satisfaction and burnout among kindergarten teachers. The sample consisted of (110) teachers. The main results indicated that the psychological capital level and job satisfaction was high among the study sample. There was a positive correlation between psychological capital and job satisfaction, while a negative correlation existed between psychological capital and burnout. Furthermore, no significant differences in psychological capital were found based on years of experience or educational qualifications.

A study by Mutawalli (2021) aimed to investigate the relationship between psychological capital, job satisfaction, and mindfulness among special education teachers. A random sample of (88) special education teachers was selected. The main results of the study indicated a relationship between psychological capital, mindfulness, and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study found out no significant differences in psychological capital based on gender.

A study conducted by Al-Siddiq (2021) aimed to investigate the level of positive psychological capital and job quality of life at Al-Rassafah Directorate of Education in Baghdad Governorate, a sample of (300) employees from that directorate was selected. The main results of the study indicated that the level of positive psychological capital was very high. There was a positive correlation between positive psychological capital and the dimensions of job quality of life. Furthermore, the study revealed a strong impact of the dimensions of positive psychological capital on job quality of life.

Richard's study (2019) examined the relationship between teachers' psychological capital and predictive factors of school leadership. A random sample of (109) teachers was selected. The main results indicated that teachers possessed an average level of psychological capital. There was a relationship between psychological capital, school leadership, and school structure.

Chen's study (2018) aimed to examine psychological capital, work stress, and burnout among special education teachers. A random sample of (30) teachers was selected, and the key results indicated that the teachers possessed an average level of psychological capital.

A study by Abu Maati and Ahmed (2018), which aimed to identify the levels of psychological capital and professional commitment among teachers, included a sample of (340) teachers. The main results indicated that the level of psychological capital was average, while the level of professional commitment was below average. A positive relationship was found between psychological capital and professional commitment among teachers. Moreover, significant differences in psychological capital were found based on gender in favor of females and significant differences were found based on the educational level in favor of primary school teachers as well.

A study by Cimen and Ozgan (2018), which aimed to identify factors that negatively impact teachers' psychological well-being, used a qualitative sample of (14) teachers. The study found out that school climate, communication, collaboration, parental support, positive experiences, and physical environment all contribute to higher levels of psychological well-being, and conversely, the absence of these factors leads to lower levels of well-being.

A study by Wang et al. (2011) aimed to investigate the relationship between psychological capital in primary school teachers and teaching effectiveness. The results showed that teachers with high levels of psychological capital have a positive impact on their teaching effectiveness and the quality of their instruction.

A study by Lauermann and König (2016) aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers' professional competence and certain demographic variables. The sample consisted of (119) teachers of both genders, with their years of experience ranging from (1) to (41) years. The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in teachers' professional competence based on gender. Furthermore, the study found out a positive correlation between teachers' years of experience and their level of pedagogical knowledge.

A study by Mohammed (2018) aimed to enhance the teachers' professional competence. The study used a questionnaire to assess teachers' professional skills and to identify areas for improvement. The researcher employed a descriptive research method. The study concluded that the professional competence level among teachers in UNRWA schools in Gaza Governorate was generally high, and that statistically significant differences in professional competence existed between male and female teachers in favor of female teachers.

A study by Thirumorthy & Sivakumar (2020) aimed to measure the levels of professional competence and personality traits among teachers in Namakkal, India, and to determine the relationship between them. The sample consisted of (238) male and female teachers. The researchers used a self-developed scale to measure teachers' professional self-efficacy. The study indicated statistically significant differences between male and female teachers regarding their personality traits related to social interest, emotional stability, assertiveness, communication skills, and self-awareness, with males scoring higher. However, female teachers scored higher in leadership, self-confidence, stress management, interpersonal skills, and overall personal competence.

The study by Al Shmaileh and Al Nawaiseh (2024) aimed to identify the level of psychological capital and its relationship to perceived professional competence among educational counselors in the First Zarqa Educational District. The study employed a descriptive research methodology and used the Psychological Capital Scale and the Perceived Professional Competence Scale. The sample consisted of 150 counselors, selected using a convenience sampling method. The findings revealed that the level of psychological capital and perceived professional competence among the sample was high, and that there was a statistically significant relationship between the dimensions of psychological capital and the overall score, as well as between the dimensions of perceived professional competence and the overall score. Furthermore, the study found no significant differences in psychological capital or perceived professional competence based on gender, years of experience, or educational degree.

A study by Al-Shmaileh and Al-Nawaiseh (2024) aimed to identify the psychological capital level and its relationship to perceived professional competence among educational counselors in the First Zarqa Educational District. The study employed a descriptive research method and used the Psychological Capital Scale and the Perceived Professional Competence Scale. The sample consisted of (150) counselors, selected using a convenience sampling method. The results revealed that the psychological capital level and perceived professional competence among the sample was high. There was a statistically significant relationship between the dimensions of psychological capital and the overall score, as well as between the dimensions of perceived professional competence and the overall score. Furthermore, the study found out no significant differences in psychological capital or perceived professional competence based on gender, years of experience, or educational degree.

4. Study Methodology:

4.1. Study Method: The study was based on a descriptive survey method, as it was deemed most appropriate for its nature.

4.2. Study Sample: The study sample consisted of (504) public school teachers in the Eastern Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling. This is illustrated in the following table:

Table (1) Characteristics of the Study Sample

Variable		N	Percentage
Gender	Male	303	60.1
	Female	201	39.9
Educational Stage	Primary School Stage	219	43.5
	Preparatory School Stage	156	31.0
	Secondary School Stage	129	25.6
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	105	20.8
	Between 5 to less than 10 years	108	21.4
	More than 10 years	291	57.7

4.3. Study Instruments:

To achieve the study's aims, an instrument was designed comprising two main sections. The first section focused on psychological capital and consisted of (20) items, equally distributed across four dimensions: self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. The second section addressed teacher professional competence and comprised (26) items, divided into five dimensions: cognitive competence (6 items), performance competence (5 items), personal and social competence (6 items), health competence (4 items), and administrative competence (5 items). A five-point Likert scale was used for responses to the questionnaire items as it follows: (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree).

4.4 Validity and Reliability:

The questionnaire validity was assessed by presenting it to (13) jury members from diverse fields. They recommended some modifications to the wording, which were implemented, and the level of agreement on these modifications exceeded 90%. The

questionnaire was then administered electronically to a pilot sample of (40) public education teachers in schools within the Eastern Region. Internal consistency was calculated for the questionnaire, both overall and for each subscale. The correlation coefficients between the items and the overall scores for the first dimension, psychological capital, ranged from (0.65) to (0.86), while for the second dimension, professional competence, they ranged from (0.76) to (0.88). All of these correlation coefficients were high and statistically significant at (0.01) level. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The reliability coefficient for the first dimension, psychological capital, was (0.93), and for the second dimension, professional competence, it was (0.94). These reliability coefficients are very high, which indicates the reliability of the questionnaire's results.

5. Study Results:

5.1. To answer the first study question: What is the current status of psychological capital and its various dimensions among public education teachers in schools in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia? Means and standard deviations were used to initially rank the main dimensions, and then to rank the statements within each dimension.

5.1.1 The Mean and Standard Deviation of the Psychological Capital Dimensions:

Table (2) Mean and Standard Deviation of the Psychological Capital Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	SD	Rank
Self-Efficacy (Confidence in Success)	4.26	0.68	2
Hope (Willpower and Path)	4.31	0.64	1
Optimism (Realistic and Resilient)	4.18	0.59	3
Resilience (Recovery and Growth)	4.09	0.72	4
Psychological Capital Reality Dimension	4.21	0.57	

As shown in Table (2), the mean score for the overall psychological capital reality dimension was (4.21), with a standard deviation of (0.57). The study participants' responses indicated strong agreement. The mean scores of the psychological capital dimensions ranged from (4.09) to (4.31), with standard deviations ranging from (0.59) to (0.72), indicating a high degree of consensus among the participants. Hope ranked first with a mean score of (4.31), followed by self-efficacy with a mean score of (4.26), and optimism in third rank with a mean score of (4.18). Resilience ranked last with a mean score of (4.09).

5.1.2 Mean and Standard Deviation of Statements Related to the Psychological Capital Dimensions:

Table (3) Mean and Standard Deviation of Statements related to the Psychological Capital Dimensions

Rank within Dimension	Statement	Mean	SD
First Dimension: Self-Efficacy (Confidence in Success)		4.26	0.68
1	I feel confident sharing my expertise with my colleagues.	4.46	0.71

2	I feel confident representing my school at meetings with various departments.	4.29	0.84
3	I feel confident in contributing to the school's strategy, administration, and the policies of the Ministry of Education.	4.249	0.82
4	I feel confident in helping to set goals for my school.	4.199	0.96
5	I feel comfortable reaching out to people outside of school to discuss educational issues.	4.12	0.93
Second Dimension: Hope (Willpower and Path)		4.31	0.64
3	I think of many ways to overcome any problems I encounter at work.	4.36	0.73
1	I strive to achieve my work goals.	4.49	0.69
5	I consider myself very successful in my work.	4.13	0.94
2	I use a variety of methods to achieve my current goals.	4.38	0.69
4	I am currently achieving the work goals that I set for myself.	4.20	0.81
Third Dimension: Optimism (Realistic and Resilient)		4.18	0.59
2	I deal with challenges at work in one way or another.	4.28	0.82
1	I can work independently if necessary.	4.38	0.78
4	I remain calm when faced with stressful situations at work.	4.13	0.77
3	I can overcome difficult times at work	4.18	0.74
5	I can handle many things at once.	3.92	0.97
Fourth Dimension: Resilience (Recovery and Growth)		4.09	0.72
3	I can expect good things to happen in my work	4.17	0.81
1	I always look at the positive side of things regarding my job.	4.32	0.84
4	I am optimistic about what the future holds for me in my work.	4.14	1.05
5	Things are going the way I want them to in my work.	3.65	1.07
2	I approach my job with the attitude that "every cloud has a silver lining".	4.19	0.85
The Dimension as a Whole		4.21	0.57

As shown in Table (3), the mean scores of the statements related to *Self-Efficacy* ranged from (4.12) to (4.46), indicating very high responses from the study sample. The standard deviation ranged from (0.71) to (0.96), suggesting a high degree of consensus among the participants regarding their self-efficacy. Statement 1, "I feel confident sharing my expertise with my colleagues.," ranked first with a mean score of (4.46). Statement 2, "I feel confident representing my school at meetings with various departments" came in second rank with a mean score of (4.29). Statement 3, "I feel confident in contributing to the school's strategy, administration, and the policies of the Ministry of Education" ranked third with a mean score of (4.24). Statement 4, "I feel confident in helping to set goals for my school,"

followed with a mean score of (4.19). Finally, Statement 5, "I feel comfortable reaching out to people outside of school to discuss educational issues" ranked last with a mean score of (4.12).

Regarding the statements related to the second dimension, *Hope*, the mean scores ranged from (4.13) to (4.49), indicating very high responses from the study sample. The standard deviation ranged from (0.70) to (0.94), suggesting a high level of agreement among the sample regarding this dimension. Statement 7, "I strive to achieve my work goals" ranked first with a mean score of (4.46). Statement 9, "I use a variety of methods to achieve my current goals" came in second rank with a mean score of (4.38). Statement 6, "I think of many ways to overcome any problems I encounter at work" ranked third with a mean score of (4.24). Statement 10, "I am currently achieving the work goals that I set for myself" came in fourth rank with a mean score of (4.19). Finally, Statement 8, "I consider myself very successful in my work" ranked last with a mean score of (4.12).

Regarding the statements related to the third dimension, *Optimism*, the mean scores ranged between (3.92) and (4.38), indicating very high responses from the study sample. The standard deviation also ranged between (0.74) and (0.96), suggesting a high degree of consensus among the participants. Statement 12, "I can work independently if necessary" ranked first with a mean score of (4.38). Statement 11, "I deal with challenges at work in one way or another" came in second rank with a mean score of (4.27). Statement 14, "I can overcome difficult times at work" ranked third with a mean score of (4.17). Statement 13, "I remain calm when faced with stressful situations at work" came in fourth rank with a mean score of (4.13). Finally, Statement 15, "I can handle many things at once," ranked last with a mean score of (3.92).

Regarding the statements related to the fourth dimension, *Flexibility*, the mean scores ranged from (3.64) to (4.32), indicating very high responses from the study sample. The standard deviation ranged from (0.57) to (1.06). Statement 17, "I always look at the positive side of things regarding my job" ranked first with a mean score of (4.32). Statement 20, "I approach my job with the attitude that "every cloud has a silver lining" " ranked second with a mean score of (4.19). Statement 16, "I can expect good things to happen in my work" ranked third with a mean score of (4.17). Statement 18, "I am optimistic about what the future holds for me in my work," ranked fourth with a mean score of (4.14). Finally, Statement 19, "Things are going the way I want them to in my work" ranked last with a mean score of (3.64).

5.2 To answer the second research question: What is the current status of professional competence among teachers in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia?

Means and standard deviations were used to initially rank the main dimensions of the Teacher Professional Competence Scale in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia; Tables (4) and (5) show the results regarding attitudes towards internet use.

5.2.1. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Teacher's Professional Competence Dimensions:

Table (4) Mean and Standard Deviation of the Teacher's Professional Competence Dimensions

	Dimension	Mean	SD	Rank
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Cognitive Competence	4.18	0.63	5
Performance Competence	4.28	0.65	3
Personal and Social Competence	4.63	0.46	1
Health Competence	4.33	0.62	2
Administrative Competence	4.23	0.59	4
Total Score of the Professional Competence Dimension	4.33	0.51	

Table (4) shows that the mean score of teachers' responses regarding the overall dimension of Professional Competence was (4.33), with a standard deviation of (0.51), indicating a very high level of agreement. The mean scores for the sub-dimensions of Professional Competence ranged from (4.18) to (4.63), with standard deviations ranging from (0.46) to (0.65), confirming a high degree of consensus among the study sample. Personal and Social Competence ranked first with a mean score of (4.63), followed by Health Competence (4.33), then Performance Competence (4.28), and Administrative Competence (4.23). Cognitive Competence ranked last with a mean score of (4.18).

5.2.2 Mean and Standard Deviation of Statements Related to the Teacher's Professional Competence Dimension:

Table (5) Mean and Standard Deviation of the Statements Related to the Teacher's Professional Competence Dimensions

Rank	Strongly Agree	Mean Score	SD
First Dimension: Cognitive Competence		4.18	0.63
3	I strive to stay informed about the latest developments in my field of expertise.	4.30	0.77
1	I can apply scientific knowledge and information to real-life situations.	4.36	0.73
4	I have the ability to generate new ideas and knowledge in my field of expertise.	4.25	0.72
5	I have the ability to predict future developments in my field of expertise.	3.91	0.93
6	I constantly strive to acquire new knowledge and information related to other disciplines.	3.89	0.98
2	I strive to continuously develop my abilities, skills, and scientific knowledge.	4.35	0.67
Second Dimension: Performance Competence		4.27	0.65
7	I can effectively utilize social media and modern technology in the educational process.	4.24	0.86
8	I effectively utilize educational resources, technologies, and tools in the teaching process.	4.33	0.84
9	I focus on using a variety of teaching strategies and activities that are appropriate for different learning situations.	4.34	0.72

10	I use modern and diverse methods and techniques in the assessment process.	4.22	0.82
11	I have the ability to identify talented and gifted students and nurture their potential.	4.23	0.83
Third Dimension: Personal and Social Competence		4.63	0.46
12	I strive to uphold the ethical standards of the teaching profession.	4.64	0.59
13	I strive to build positive and professional relationships with my students and colleagues at school.	4.59	0.70
14	I strive for punctuality and excellence in my work.	4.70	0.59
15	I respect the opinions and viewpoints of others, even if they differ from my own.	4.57	0.67
16	I strive to cooperate and work as part of a team with others at school.	4.53	0.77
17	I pay attention to my appearance and personal hygiene.	4.74	0.48
Fourth Dimension: Health Competence		4.33	0.62
18	I exercise regularly to maintain my physical fitness and good health.	4.01	1.08
19	I follow preventive measures to protect myself from infectious diseases.	4.33	0.83
20	I have the ability to cope with stress and psychological crises in the workplace.	4.33	0.76
21	I value myself and I am confident in my abilities.	4.64	0.54
Fifth Dimension: Administrative Competence		4.23	0.59
22	I have the ability to manage administrative processes both within and outside the school.	4.18	0.81
23	I have the ability to distribute roles, tasks, and responsibilities fairly.	4.31	0.74
24	I proactively offer new ideas and management approaches to improve the educational process.	4.15	0.85
25	I have sufficient knowledge of the regulations, rules, and laws relevant to my field of work.	4.14	0.77
26	I have the ability to organize tasks and work, and to make good decisions about them.	4.36	0.56
The Dimension as a Whole		4.33	0.51

Table (5) shows that the mean scores for the statements related to *Cognitive Competence* ranged between)3.89(and)4.36(, indicating very high responses from the study sample. The standard deviation ranged between)0.66(and)0.99(, suggesting a high degree of consensus among the sample regarding this dimension of cognitive competence. Statement 2, "I can apply scientific knowledge and information to real-life situations" ranked first with a mean score of)4.36(. Statement 6, "I strive to continuously develop my abilities, skills, and scientific knowledge" came in second rank with a mean score of (4.35). Statement 1, "I strive

to stay informed about the latest developments in my field of expertise" ranked third with a mean score of (4.30). Statement 3, "I have the ability to generate new ideas and knowledge in my field of expertise" came in fourth rank with a mean score of (4.25). Statement 4, "I have the ability to predict future developments in my field of expertise" ranked fifth with a mean score of (3.91). Finally, Statement 5, "I constantly strive to learn new information and knowledge related to other disciplines," ranked last with a mean score of (3.89).

Regarding the statements related to the second dimension, *Performance Competence*, the mean scores ranged from (4.22) to (4.34), indicating very high agreement among the study sample. The standard deviation ranged from (0.72) to (0.86), suggesting a high level of consensus within the sample regarding this dimension. Statement 9, "I focus on using a variety of teaching strategies and activities that are appropriate for different learning situations" ranked first with a mean score of (4.34). Statement 8, "I effectively utilize educational resources, technologies, and tools in the teaching process" came in second rank with a mean score of (4.33). Statement 7, "I can effectively utilize social media and modern technology in the educational process" ranked third with a mean score of (4.24). Statement 11, "I have the ability to identify talented and gifted students and nurture their potential" came in fourth rank with a mean score of (4.23). Finally, Statement 10, "I use modern and diverse methods and techniques in the assessment process" ranked last with a mean score of (4.22).

As shown in the same table, the mean scores for the statements related to *Personal and Social Competence* ranged between (4.53) and (4.74), indicating very high responses from the study sample. The standard deviation ranged between (0.47) and (0.77), suggesting a high degree of agreement among the sample regarding this dimension of *Personal and Social Competence*. Statement 17, "I pay attention to my appearance and personal hygiene," ranked first with a mean score of (4.74). Statement 14, "I strive for punctuality and excellence in my work," came in second with a mean score of (4.35). Statement 12, "I adhere to the ethical standards of the teaching profession" ranked third with a mean score of (4.64). Statement 13, "I strive to build positive relationships with my students and colleagues at school," came in fourth with a mean score of (4.59). Statement 15, "I respect the opinions and perspectives of others, even if they differ from my own," ranked fifth with a mean score of (4.57). Finally, Statement 16, "I strive to cooperate and work as part of a team with others at school" ranked last with a mean score of (4.53).

Regarding the statements related to the fourth dimension, *Health and Mental Competence*, the scores ranged from (4.01) to (4.64). The responses from the study sample were very high, and the standard deviation ranged from (0.53) to (1.07). These values indicate a high level of agreement among the study sample regarding this dimension of *Health and Mental Competence*. Statement 21, "I have self-esteem and confidence in myself and my abilities," ranked first with a mean score of (4.64). Statements 20 and 19 ranked second with a mean score of (4.33); these statements were, respectively, "I have the ability to cope with

stress and psychological crises in the workplace" and "I follow preventive measures to protect myself from infectious diseases". Statement 18 ranked last with a mean score of (4.02): "I exercise regularly to maintain my physical fitness and good health".

As shown in the previous table for the statements related to the fifth dimension, *Administrative Competence*, the mean scores ranged from (4.14) to (4.36), indicating very high agreement among the study sample. The standard deviation ranged from (0.56) to (0.85), suggesting a high level of consensus within the sample regarding this dimension. Statement 26, "I have the ability to organize tasks and activities and make sound decisions," ranked first with a mean score of (4.36). Statement 23, "I have the ability to distribute roles, tasks, and responsibilities fairly" came in second rank with a mean score of (4.31). Statement 22, "I have the ability to manage administrative processes both inside and outside the school" ranked third with a mean score of (4.18). Statement 24, "I proactively offer new administrative ideas and methods to improve the educational process" came in fourth rank with a mean score of (4.15). Finally, Statement 25, "I have sufficient knowledge of the regulations, rules, and laws relevant to my field of work " ranked last with a mean score of (4.14).

5.3. To answer the third research question: What is the relationship between psychological capital and professional competence among public education teachers in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia?

To answer this question, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the degree of correlation between total psychological capital and total professional competence. Table (6) shows the results regarding the relationship between these two study variables.

Table (6) Correlation Coefficient between Psychological Capital and Teacher Professional Competence

Psychological Capital	Teacher Professional Competence	
	P. Correlation	0.860
	Sig	0.000
	N	504

Table (6) clearly shows a positive correlation between the total score of psychological capital and the total score of teachers' professional competence, with a correlation coefficient of (0.86), which is significant at (0.001) level.

5.4 To answer the fourth study question: Are there statistically significant differences in the mean responses of teachers regarding psychological capital and professional competence, based on gender, educational level, and years of experience?

5.4.1 Differences in the Mean Responses of Teachers Regarding Psychological Capital and Professional Competence According to Gender:

Table (7) Results of the t-Test Comparing the Mean Scores of Male and Female Teachers in Terms of Psychological Capital and Professional Competence

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	sig
Psychological Capital Reality Dimension	Male	303	4.22	0.53	.285	502	0.776
	Female	201	4.20	0.63			
Professional Competence Dimension	Male	303	4.39	0.48	1.99	502	0.05*
	Female	201	4.23	0.53			

* Significant at (0.05).

Table (7) shows that there were no statistically significant differences between males and females in terms of psychological capital. However, statistically significant differences were found between males and females in the psychological capital reality dimension, at a significance level of (0.05) in favor of males.

5.4.2 Differences in the Mean Responses of Teachers Regarding Psychological Capital and Professional Competence According to Educational Stage (Primary, Preparatory, and Secondary):

Table (8) Results of the ANOVA Test to Determine the Differences in Mean Scores of Teachers' Responses Regarding Psychological Capital and Professional Competence, across Different Educational Stages

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Psychological Capital Reality	Between Groups	0.124	2	0.062	0.187	0.830
	Within Groups	54.509	165	0.330		
	Total	54.632	167			
Teacher's Professional Competence	Between Groups	0.420	2	0.210	0.821	0.442
	Within Groups	42.190	165	0.256		
	Total	42.610	167			

Table (8) clearly shows that there are no statistically significant differences between teachers based on the educational stage variable, in terms of both psychological capital reality and professional competence.

5.4.3. Differences in the Mean Responses of Teachers Regarding Psychological Capital Reality and Professional Competence According to Years of Experience:

Table (9) Results of the ANOVA Test to Determine the Differences in Mean Scores of Teachers' Responses Regarding Psychological Capital Reality and Professional Competence According to their Years of Experience

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Psychological Capital Reality	Between Groups	1.580	2	0.790	2.456	0.089
	Within Groups	53.053	165	0.322		
	Total	54.632	167			
Teacher's Professional Competence	Between Groups	3.210	2	1.605	6.722	0.002***
	Within Groups	39.400	165	0.239		
	Total	42.610	167			

*** Significant at (0.001)

Table (9) shows that there were no statistically significant differences between teachers based on their years of experience in terms of psychological capital. However, statistically significant differences were found between teachers based on their years of experience in terms of professional competence ($p < 0.01$). To determine the direction of these differences, the Least Significant Difference (LSD) test was used. The results of the LSD test indicate that significant differences were found only between teachers with less than 5 years of experience and those with more than 10 years of experience, with the latter group showing higher levels of professional competence. No statistically significant differences were found among the other groups of teachers based on years of experience.

6. Results Discussion and Interpretation:

6.1. Level of Psychological Capital: The results showed that psychological capital level was high and prevalent among public education teachers ($M=4.21$). These findings are consistent with the efforts of the Saudi Ministry of Education to foster high levels of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience, and digital literacy among teachers. This result is consistent with the findings of the following: Mahmoud (2025), who concluded that teachers had a high level of psychological capital, Al Shamaileh and Al Nawaiseh (2024), who found out that teachers had a high level of psychological capital, Mohammed (2021), who concluded that the study sample had a high level of psychological capital, Cimen and Ozgan (2018), who found out that teachers had high psychological capital, and Wang et al. (2011), who found out that teachers possessed a high level of psychological capital. This result partially agrees with Abu

Al Maati and Ahmed (2018), who found out that the psychological capital level was moderate. This high level of psychological capital can be explained by the presence of several positive psychological attributes. First, their high self-efficacy (confidence in their ability to succeed) makes them more confident in dealing with professional and personal challenges. In addition, they possess very high levels of optimism (realistic resilience) and hope (willpower and path), which motivates them to pursue their goals. Furthermore, they have high levels of psychological resilience (recovery and growth), indicating their ability to adapt to difficult situations.

6.2. Level of Teacher Professional Competence: The results indicated a high level of professional Competence among public education teachers ($M=4.33$). These findings are consistent with the efforts of the Saudi Ministry of Education to ensure high levels of performance and professional skills, which are reflected in the various dimensions of professional Competence (cognitive, interpersonal and social, performance, administrative, and psychological and health competencies). This result is in agreement with the findings of Mohammed's study (2018), which concluded that teachers have a high level of professional Competence, and with the study by Thirumoorthy and Sivakumar (2020), which found out a high level of professional Competence among teachers. This can be explained by the fact that these teachers possess a high level of commitment, performance, and various professional skills, which enhances their overall professional Competence and motivates them to achieve their goals. These findings partially differ from those of Chen's study (2018) and Richard's study (2020), which indicated that teachers possess only a moderate level of psychological capital, not a high level.

6.3. The Relationship between Psychological Capital and Teachers' Professional Competence:

The results indicated a strong positive correlation between the total score of psychological capital and the total score of professional competence among public education teachers. These findings are consistent with reality, as teachers with higher levels of psychological capital tend to exhibit higher levels of professional competence and performance. This aligns with the studies of Al Shamaileh and Al Nawaiseh (2024), which indicated a positive relationship between psychological capital and perceived professional competence; Abu Al Maati and Ahmed (2018), which showed a positive relationship between psychological capital and teachers' professional commitment, Wang et al. (2011), which indicated a relationship between psychological capital and teaching effectiveness among primary school teachers, and the studies of Mahmoud (2025) and Mohammed (2021), which found out a positive correlation between psychological capital and teachers' professional self-concept and job satisfaction. However, this differs from the study by Shaheen (2019), which indicated no relationship between quality of life, job performance, and psychological capital among faculty members. It can be concluded that higher levels of psychological capital

among public education teachers at all levels directly and indirectly influence their performance, skills, and professional competence.

6.4. Differences in the Mean Scores of Students' Psychological Capital and Professional Competence According to Demographic Variables (Gender, Educational Level, and Years of Experience): The results showed no significant differences in the total score of psychological capital based on gender, teachers' educational level, or years of experience. This finding is consistent with the studies of Al Shamaileh and Al Nawaiseh (2024), which indicated no differences in psychological capital and professional competence based on gender, years of experience, or academic degree, and with the study of Metwally (2021), which found out no differences in psychological capital based on gender. However, these findings differ from the studies of Mahmoud (2025) and Abu Al Maati and Ahmed (2018), which indicated significant differences in psychological capital based on gender, with females scoring higher. This suggests that the level of psychological capital among teachers in Saudi Arabia is not dependent on their gender, the educational level they teach at, or their years of experience.

The results indicated that there were no significant differences in overall professional competence based on gender or the teachers' educational level. This is consistent with the findings of Lauermann and König (2016), which indicated no statistically significant differences in professional competence among teachers in relation to gender. In addition, it aligns with the study by Al Shamaileh and Al Nawaiseh (2024), which found out no differences in professional competence based on gender or educational qualification. However, these findings differ from those of Mohamed (2018), who found out statistically significant differences in teachers' professional competence levels based on gender in favor of female teachers. Thirumoorthy and Sivakumar (2020) found out significant differences between male and female teachers in terms of personal competence in favor of female teachers.

The results indicated a significant difference in overall professional competence based on years of experience, which is consistent with the findings of Lauermann and König (2016), who indicated that a teacher's years of experience have a positive correlation with their level of pedagogical knowledge. However, this differs from the findings of Al Shmaileh and Al Nawaiseh (2024), who found out no significant difference in professional competence based on years of experience. This can be explained by the fact that the more experience a teacher has, the greater their professional competence and performance will be.

7. Suggestions and Recommendations:

- Conducting a study to determine the relative contribution of psychological capital to professional competence.

- Investigating the relationship between psychological capital and various negative factors among public education teachers.

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