Teachers' Perceptions of Positive Psychological Capital: A Mixed Method Approach

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Article Info	Abstract
	This study first investigated the teachers' perceptions of positive psychological capital. Then, barriers negatively affecting teachers' positive psychological capital in educational organizations and the practices possible to be implemented were examined. The convergent parallel mixed method research design was used as the research methodology. The study group consisted of the teachers working in Kilis province in the 2019-2020 academic year. Demographic information form, positive psychological capital scale, and an interview form were used to collect data. Results of this study indicated that the teachers were strongly agree with psychological capital. Furthermore, the results indicated that the factors that prevented teachers from positive psychological capitol were related to administrators, teaching profession, parents, colleagues, students, institutions, and teachers themselves. This study concluded that providing social, academic, and economic support to teachers would increase their positive psychological capital, and the following practices could ensure this support: improvement of working conditions, increasing the prestige of the profession, and providing in-service training.

Introduction

The ability of organizations to be effective and efficient depends on the quality of their human resources. It is necessary to take into consideration the psychological needs of employees such as being happy, loved, understood, noticed, satisfied with job, and motivated as well as their economic needs in order to make the human resources of an organization qualified. The studies in recent literature have focused on human factor, and with the advent of positive psychology, it has gained importance to develop individuals by focusing on the strengths of human beings. Caprara & Cervone (2003), Gable & Haidt (2005), Luthans & Youssef (2004) and Seligmen & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) contributed to the development of the positive psychology approach by emphasizing the examination of the methods to improve the social and psychological characteristics of the people in an organization rather than examining the negative human behaviors and theories.

Positive psychology approach purports that researches should discuss not only how to eliminate the negative characteristics of individuals but also how to develop positive psychological characteristics necessary for human life (Brandt et al., 2011; Luthans et al., 2008; Seligmen & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Luthans et al., (2006a)

assert that organizations need a positive psychology approach to realize their potential and be more productive. Positive psychology approach (Sheldon & King, 2001), in which positive characteristics of individuals are examined scientifically, refers to an approach of effective study and practice in increasing the performance and psychological capacities of employees (Luthans, 2002; Wright, 2003). Positive psychology approach has some effects in both organization and individual dimensions. It includes positive personality traits such as professional capacity, courage, interpersonal communication, aesthetic sensitivity, originality, and wisdom in the individual dimension. On the other hand, in the organizational dimension, it refers to the characteristics of citizenship, responsibility, altruism, civility, tolerance, and work ethics (Seligmen & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In other words, since it defines the characteristics that make the individual more positive, positive psychology science contributes to both the individual and the organization (Brandt et al., 2011).

The wave of positive organizational behavior that developed as a reflection of the positive psychology on organizational life contributed to the creation of the concept "positive psychological capital" (Luthans et al., 2006a). Luthans first introduced the concept of positive psychological capital into the literature in 2002. Psychological capital, defined as the personality traits contributing to the productivity of individual (Gohel, 2012), focuses on the questions "who is the individual?", "what strong traits they have?", and "who can they be?" (Luthans et al., 2006a). In general, psychological capital is a state of positive development of individuals (Luthans, 2002). Envick (2005), on the other hand, defines the psychological capital as the individuals' ability to successfully reflect their economic, social, and human capital to the organization with the purpose of productivity. In other words, positive psychological capital focuses on the individuals' positive sides and strengths rather than their negative sides and weaknesses.

While at the individual level, the psychological capital is a psychological resource that increases performance; at the organizational level, it is a management tool that contributes to the competitive advantage by means of increasing employees' performance (Luthans et al., 2005). That is why many studies support psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2010). The measurable and improvable dimensions of psychological capital are examined by four qualities in the literature: optimism, self-efficacy, psychological resilience, and hope (Avey et al., 2006; Luthans et al., 2006a). Based on the fact that these dimensions can be developed and may have some cultural features, Tösten (2005) added two dimensions, that is, "extroversion" and "confidence" to the psychological capital. The dimensions of positive psychological capital are explained as follows.

Optimism: Optimism is explained as the tendency to look on the bright side (Belcher, 2009). It refers to a state where individuals have an optimistic point of view that they will be successful in time and in future (Akçay, 2011). Previous studies have shown that optimistic individuals have a higher level of motivation and job satisfaction in their business and are more patient with challenges (Keleş, 2011).

Self-efficacy: The cognitive resources that individuals needs in fulfilling their responsibilities successfully are defined as the ability to motivate themselves and to take action (Luthans et al., 2006a; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Being aware of the one's own abilities and using these abilities contribute to the increased work performance, motivation, and self-confidence. So, self-efficacy is considered as a

construct that contributes to both the individual and the organization (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

Resilience: Resilience is the positive psychological capacity that enables individuals to overcome negative situations successfully (Luthans et al., 2010). It has been reported that highly resilient individuals cope with negative situations more successfully and adapt to the environment more quickly (Luthans et al., 2006b).

Hope: What enables an individual to succeed are energy and planning (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). Hope is a positive psychological construct for future. Thanks to hope, individuals can have the belief to overcome barriers by setting important goals for themselves (Çetin & Basım, 2012). In this way, hope contributes to individuals in terms of feeling themselves powerful.

Extroversion: It includes the personality traits such as being lively, social, talkative, sociable, active, and excited (Tösten, 2015). Extroverted individuals are defined as being outspoken, sensitive, and open to change as well as being social (Ehigie & Akpan, 2006).

Confidence: In their study, Tösten & Özgan (2014) suggest that confidence is an important component of psychological capital. Confidence is important both in the individual and organizational dimensions. Creating confidence among employees and between employees and managers in organizations not only increases the individuals' happiness and the quality of life but also contributes positively to the organization with its returns (Tösten, 2015).

Organizations assume responsibilities at the point of developing the dimensions of positive psychological capital, which is important for both the organization and the individual. However, there have been studies in the literature that determined that there are many factors that prevent positive psychological capital in institutional and individual dimensions. It has been determined that factors such as cynicism, turnover intention, and job stress, especially depending on the organization and the job, negatively affect the positive psychological capital (Avey et al., 2009; Avey et al., 2006). On the other hand, it is known that positive psychological capital is negatively affected by the negative attitudes and behaviors of managers on employees (Çimen & Özgan, 2018; Tösten, 2015). The elimination of these barriers will create more peaceful work environment and increase the effectiveness within the organization.

It is important also for educational organizations to work with individuals having the constructs of positive psychological capital (optimism, hope, resilience, self-efficacy, extroversion, and confidence). Educational organizations take an important task in raising future generations. The role and importance of teachers in fulfilling this task are beyond any doubt. In order to have an educational system that achieves its objectives, it is important to have teachers who are aware of their own characteristics, look at the future with hope, are able to struggle against difficulties without giving up, are role models for their students and society with their social behaviors, are reliable, and have the potential to develop these characteristics. Looking from this perspective, this study is important to identify teachers' perceptions of positive psychological capital, the situations that

prevent them from developing their positive psychological capital, and the works to be done to remedy these situations. This study sought answers to the following questions:

- What is the level of teachers' perceptions of positive psychological capital?
- What are the situations that prevent teachers' positive psychological capital?
- What kind of practices are needed to strengthen teachers' positive psychological capital?

Methodology

This study was designed using a convergent parallel mixed method research design. In this design, both quantitative and qualitative stages are applied simultaneously, the analysis is carried out independently, and the results are combined in the general interpretation phase (Creswell & Plano-Clarck, 2018). In this study, positive psychological capital scale and structured interview form were employed simultaneously, analyzed separately, and merged and compared in the final analysis.
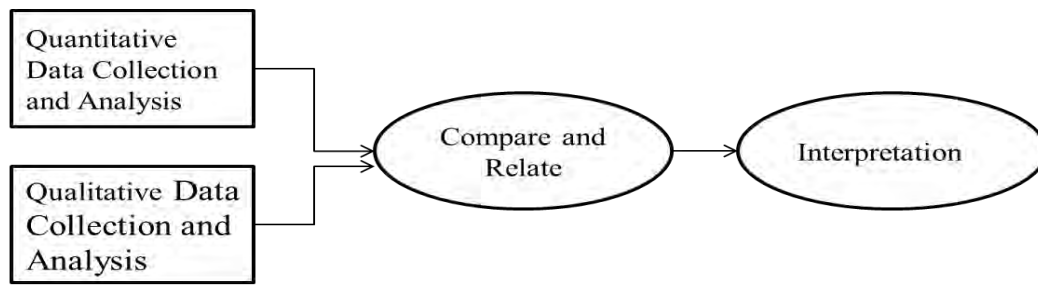

Figure 1. The Research Process in This Study Using the Convergent Parallel Mixed Method Research Design (Creswell & Plano-Clarck, 2018)

This study consists of two parts. In the first part, the teachers' level of perception of positive psychological capital was examined using a quantitative method. In the second part, the situations that prevented the teachers' positive psychological capital in schools were identified and the teachers were asked their opinions on what kind of practices to be carried out to strengthen their positive psychological capital.

Participants

The study group consisted of the teachers working in Kilis in the 2019-2020 academic year. Kilis is a province located near the Turkish-Syrian border in the southeastern part of Turkey. Kilis, a small province with a population of 97,561 and a different socio-economic structure, received intense immigration flows due to the war in Syria and opened its doors to a number of Syrian citizens that surpasses the population of the province itself.

For the quantitative part of the study, the teachers working in the primary and secondary schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in Kilis province center were determined as the population of the study. Sampling was carried out using the random sampling method. The sample consisted of 270 teachers. The data of 13 participants who failed to fill the scale completely were excluded from the study, so the analysis was carried

out using the data of 257 teachers. Of those 257 teachers, 56% of them were female and 44% of them were male. Majority of teachers were majored in a specific field such math, science, and social studies (41.6%) and their professional experiences were between 1 and 5 years (39.3%).

For the qualitative part of the study, 20 primary and secondary school teachers working at public schools in Kilis province center were selected. Convenient sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to select the sample. The reason for using this method is that, considering the suspension of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, it provides the opportunity to reach the participants who are close to the researcher and who can be reached via email and phone. Convenient sampling method is quick and practical to apply (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The demographic information of the teachers interviewed within the scope of qualitative research is given in the Table 1.

Table 1. The Demographic Information of the Teachers who participated in the Quantitative Research

Variable	Group	f
Gender	Female	11
	Male	9
Professional Seniority	1-5 years	4
	6-10 years	5
	11-15 years	5
	16-20 years	4
	21+	2
Profession place	Center	9
	District	7
	Village	4

When the information on the teachers participating in the qualitative part of the study is examined in the Table 2, it is seen that they were working in the central districts and villages and had various professional experiences. In the findings section of the study, for the purpose of confidentiality, each participant was given a unique code (P1, P2, etc.) while they were expressing their opinions.

Data Collection

The data were collected in January and April in the 2019-2020 academic year. Three different measurement tools were used to collect data. All different measurement tools were employed simultaneously. Personal information form and positive psychological capital scale were used in the quantitative part. In the qualitative part, the data were collected using an interview form that includes the situations that prevent the teachers' positive psychological capital and the suggestions for improvement.

The quantitative measurement tools were applied to the teachers with the necessary explanations provided by the researcher upon receiving the permissions from the school administrators. The demographic information

form created by the researcher includes the information such as gender, age, and professional experience, etc. The positive psychological capital scale was developed by Tösten & Özgan (2014) in order to measure teachers' perceptions of positive psychological capital. The 5-point Likert scale consists of 6 dimensions and 26 items. The mean score for the scale is calculated using the following criteria: 1.00-1.79 = Totally Disagree, 1.80 - 2.59 = Slightly Agree, 2.60 - 3.39 = Undecided, 3.40 - 4.19 = Strongly Agree, and 4.20 - 5.00 = Totally Agree. As a result of validity analysis, for the explanatory factor analysis, the scale's KMO value is . 91 and the total explained variance is % 61.6. Tösten & Özgan (2014) were found Cronbach's Alpha to be 0.92. The scale was found to be reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.96 for this study.

The structured interview form was prepared by the researcher. The form includes 7 questions in total, 6 questions for identifying the factors negatively affecting teachers' positive psychological capital and 1 question for their suggestions for increasing their positive psychological capital. The some questions in the interview form are as follows:

-Are there any situations in the school environment that negatively affect your psychological resilience? Could you give an example?

-What would you like to be done to increase your positive psychological capital?

The data were collected by the researchers. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic constrains, in order not to risk the health of the researchers and participants, all interviews were conducted using audio and video communication apps (WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, etc.). Interviews were conducted at times determined by the participants and researchers. The interviews took about 15-20 minutes and were recorded using the chosen communication apps.

Data Analysis

SPSS software package was used in the analysis of quantitative data. The teachers' scores for the positive psychological capital and its sub-dimensions were determined by calculating the mean. MAXQDA-20 software package was used in the analysis of qualitative data. Content analysis was carried out for the analysis of qualitative data. First, codes were identified by examining the participants' opinions and then the codes expressing the same or similar situations were put under the same category.

Validity and reliability of study were also performed. To ensure the internal validity of the study, after the interview data were transcribed, the interviews were frequently provided the feedbacks to prevent misunderstandings or misinformation during the interviews. After the interview data were transcribed, the interview notes were sent to their e-mails and their feedbacks for the content of the interviews were confirmed. To ensure external validity, all practices in data collection and analysis of data were explained in detail and the findings were enriched with extracts from the interviews.

Results

Within the scope of the first sub-problem of the study, the teachers' perceptions of positive psychological

capital were identified. The results in this regard are given in the Table 2.

Table 2. The Teachers' Scores for the Perception of Positive Psychological Capital

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	ss	Values
Optimism	257	4.03	.519	Strongly Agree
Self-efficacy	257	3.96	,783	Strongly Agree
Extroversion	257	3.96	.783	Strongly Agree
Confidence	257	3.87	.839	Strongly Agree
Hope	257	3.65	.798	Strongly Agree
Resilience	257	3.96	.783	Strongly Agree
Total	257	3.86	.650	Strongly Agree

As it is seen in the Table 2, the teachers' perception of positive psychological capital is at the level of "strongly agree" ($\overline{X}$ =3.86). As for the sub-dimensions of positive psychology, they were found to be at the level of "strongly agree" with ($\overline{X}$=4.03) for optimism, ($\overline{X}$=3.96) for self-efficacy, ($\overline{X}$=3.96) for extroversion, ($\overline{X}$=3.96) for psychological resilience, ($\overline{X}$=3.87) for confidence, and ($\overline{X}$=3.65) for hope. Based on these results, it can be asserted that the teachers had a good level of positive psychology and they found themselves sufficient in this regard.

In order to determine how school environment affects this process positively or negatively, the barriers in front of teachers in terms of positive psychological capital were identified within the scope of the second problem of the study. The categories obtained based on the question "What are the situations that prevent teachers' positive psychological capital?" are presented in the Table 3.

Table 3. Situations that Prevent the Teachers' Level of Positive Psychological Capital

Category	n
Administrator-related barriers	43
Occupational barriers	30
Colleague-related barriers	21
Student-related barriers	19
Parent-related barriers	18
Institution-related barriers	15
Personal barriers	13

As seen in the Table 3, the situations that prevent the teachers' levels of positive psychological capital fall under 7 categories. The barriers originating from administrators appear as the most recurring obstacle, followed by the barriers caused by the profession, colleagues, students, parents, and institutions and personal barriers. The barriers caused by administrators and the corresponding codes for these barriers are given in Figure 2.
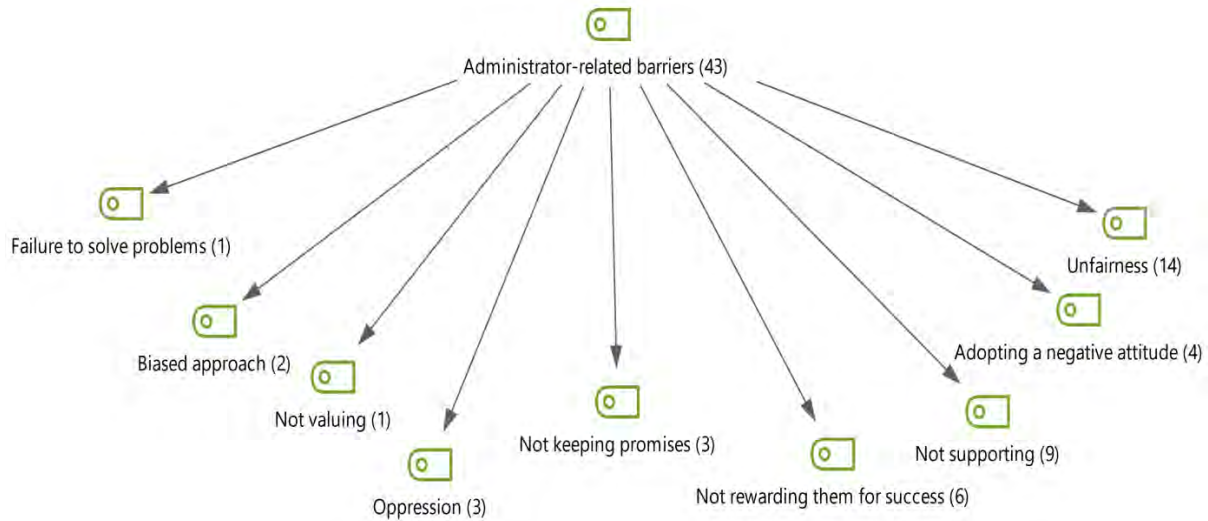
Figure 2. Administrator-Related Barriers Preventing the Teachers' Levels of Positive Psychological Capital

The situations caused by administrators that prevent teachers' positive psychological capital and the corresponding codes are as follows: unfairness (14), not supporting (9), not rewarding them for success (6), adopting a negative attitude (4), not keeping promises (3), oppression (3), biased approach (2), not valuing (1), and failure to solve problems (1). The code most frequently repeated by the teachers is the one corresponding to the unfairness of administrators. One of the participants (P6) said the following in this regard: "*The fact that the school administration is very biased and they admit doing this on purpose causes me to lose my hope about the school I work for.*" Another participant (P17) said, "*The school administration shows favoritism in that they ask the teachers who are close to them about their requests for planning classes and lessons, and they are not aware of the potential of their own teacher; and all these make me lose my belief that I will perform this profession better.*" Based on these opinions, it can be asserted that the school administration's not acting negatively affects the teachers' good intentions towards the school and their self-efficacy.

Some of the participants who were not supported by the school administration expressed this situation as follows. The participant P11 said, "*I always try to organize social activities in the school, but our principal does not support me, she even tries to prevent it by saying „there is no need." After a couple of times, we lose enthusiasm.*" It is observed that when the participants did not receive sufficient support from the school administration, they were not willing to work. It can be assumed that this decreased their positive psychological capital.

One of the participants (P9) said the following about the code "adopting a negative attitude": "*One of the things that hurt me is some behaviors of the principal. I think our principal is obsessed with us, we had a verbal conflict before, and ever since then he's been treating me like blaming for everything.*" As can be understood from the teachers' remarks, such a situation may cause adverse events for the employees.

The teachers interviewed with stated that the school administration generally ignored their achievements and often did not reward them for their success. The participants expressed the following in this regard: "*The*

teaching profession really requires sacrifice. We do extra activities for the education of children; we give some thought to what to do out of working hours. But it is perceived as if these works are already a part of my job; the administration does not even thank me!" (P16). Considering these opinions, it can be stated that the teachers need to get feedback about their works, and being appreciated for their work will positively affect their positive psychological capital.

Some of the participants stated that administrators' failure to keep their promises, oppressing, not valuing teachers, being prejudiced, and failure to solve the existing problems negatively affected their psychological capital. One of the participants (P8) emphasized the administrator's oppression and said, *"The school principal imposes some issues, does not ask for my ideas, and wants me to do some administrative works against my will."* The participant P9 emphasized that he was approached with prejudice and said, *"I have a different political identity and personality at school, I still have not been able to explain to the administration that this difference cannot prevent my job."* Based on the participants' opinions, it can be asserted that the school administration has an effect on the positive psychological capital levels of the teachers.

The second category includes the occupational barriers that affect teachers' positive psychological capital. The codes for this category are given in Figure 3.
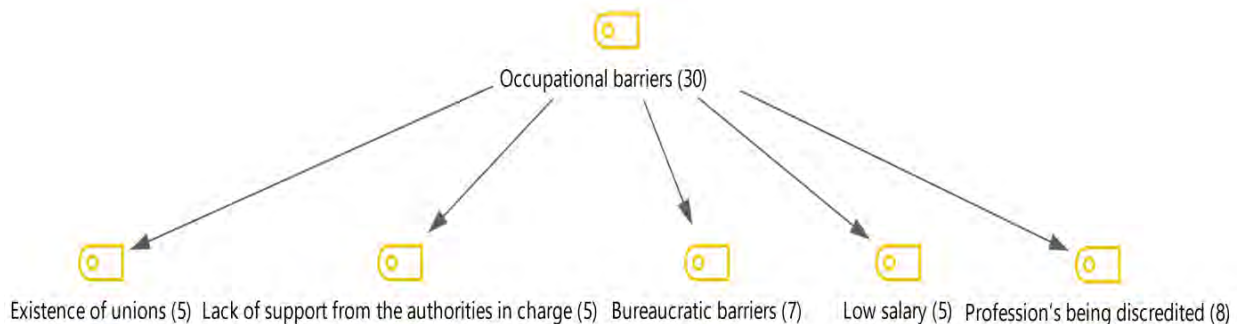

Figure 3. Occupational Barriers Preventing the Teachers' Levels of Positive Psychological Capital

The occupational barriers that prevent the teachers' positive psychological capital are as follows: the profession's being discredited (8), bureaucratic barriers (7), low salary (5), lack of support from the authorities in charge (5), and existence of unions (5). The teachers interviewed with frequently mentioned about especially the code "the profession's being discredited" in this category. One of the participants (P14) said, *"Unfortunately, on the press and social media, people get down on teachers a lot... they have three months of vacation, they go to school for half a day... Nobody sees that we put heart and soul into our work."* Another participant (P13) stated, "*Cases such as violence and abuse committed by some teachers are attributed to all teachers. This decreases our prestige."*

The participants who highlighted the bureaucratic barriers said the following: "*We want to improve ourselves and our students, and we don't want them to stick to a single book, etc. However, the ministry prevents us from using a different resource for students" (P4). "We face a lot of problems especially in official correspondence,*

once our official letter is sent, we wait for a response for a few months, this can be a permission letter or request letter, this process wears us out a lot" (P2).

Some of the teachers also put forward the low salary as a barrier. The participant P14 emphasized that low salary negatively affected teachers' psychological resilience and said, "*We earn less than other professions, which reduces my resilience to the profession. Going on a vacation, buying a car, or buying a house almost means working for a lifetime for us.*" One of the participants (K20) putting forward unionization as a barrier said: "*The teachers' room is like [a place of] political sessions. There is too much polarization. People without any qualifications get their jobs done seamlessly through unions.*"

Based on the remarks of the participants, it can be assumed that the teachers had some occupational problems and their positive psychological capital was negatively affected especially due to the reasons such as that their profession is being discredited by most of people, unions intervene into the education and training process, and they have low salaries.

Another barrier that negatively affects the teachers' positive psychological capital is the colleague-related situations. The codes for this category are given in Figure 4.
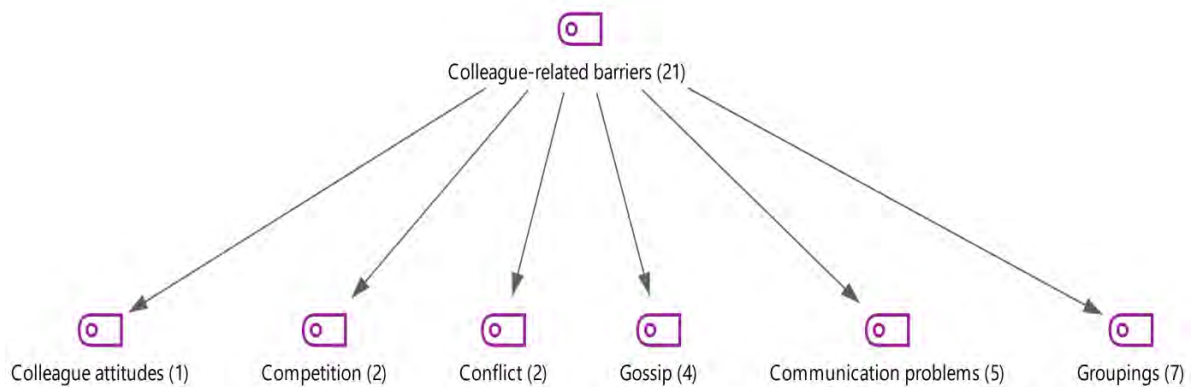

Figure 4. Colleague-related Barriers Affecting Teachers' Positive Psychological Capital

Colleague-related barriers are as follows: groupings (7), communication problems (5), gossip (4), conflict (2), being dragged into competition (2), and colleague attitudes (1). Some participants stated that the existence of groupings among teachers at schools prevents them from being extroverted in the positive psychological capital. One of the participants (P10) explained this as follows: "*In general, there is an atmosphere of grouping in the teachers' room, I am a reserve teacher and I cannot join the groups formed by the permanent and contractual teachers, in short I am alienated*" (K10). The participant P19 who considered communication problems as a barrier among her/his colleagues said, "*My conversations with my fellow teachers are very limited, some of them do not even communicate at all, no matter how extroverted I am, I also live in an introverted mood in this environment at school.*" The participant P6 who emphasized that gossip also damaged their communication and caused them to become introverted said, "*There are many people among my fellow teachers who will use my words against me and spread them, sometimes I don't even speak at all in order not to give them this*

opportunity." Considering the teachers' opinions overall, it can be asserted that the relationships between colleagues affected the teachers' communication and tendency to be extroverted.

The codes for the student-related barriers affecting teachers' positive psychology capital are shown in Figure 5.
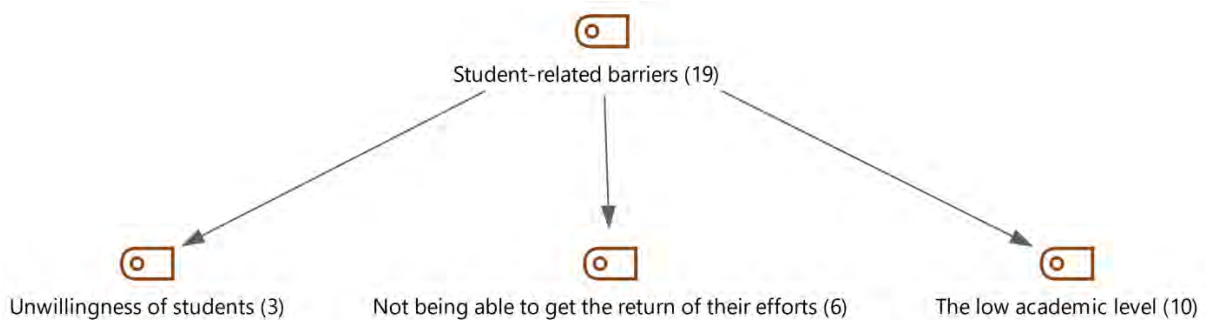

Figure 5. Student-related Barriers Affecting Teachers' Positive Psychological Capital

The teachers who participated in the interview stated that the student-related barriers are as follows: students' mostly being insufficient, not being able to get the return of their efforts or getting the return in the long term, and unwillingness of students. The participant P13 stated the following about the level of students: *"I have to explain the subject to some students two, three, four times so that they can understand or they don't understand at all, I doubt myself whether I am not sufficient"* (P13). A participant (P10) said the following about not being able to get the return of her/his efforts: *"Throughout the year, we teach the subject in the finest detail, I carry out sessions of questions and answers, I answer their questions during breaks, sometimes they find me on social media and I solve their questions, but I look at the exam papers, as if I have never taught the subject."*

The teachers who participated in the interviews stated that there were also some barriers caused by parents. The codes for the category of barriers caused by parents are given in Figure 6.
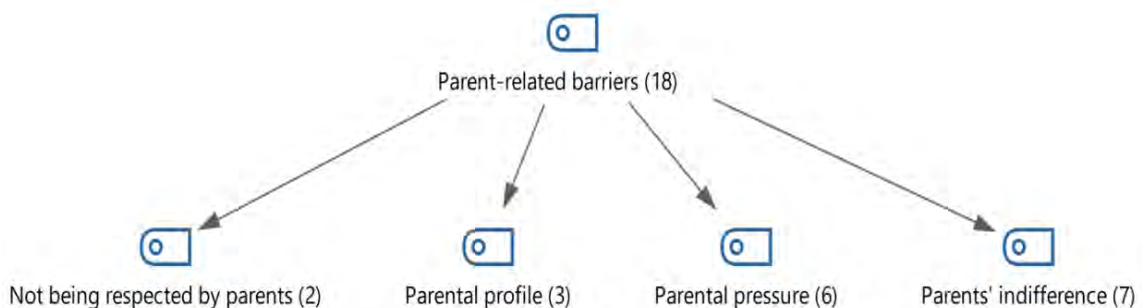

Figure 6. Parent-related Barriers Affecting Teachers' Positive Psychological Capital

Parent-related barriers and the corresponding codes are as follows: parents' indifference (7), parental pressure (6), parental profile (3), and not being respected by parents (2). The teachers interviewed with generally stated that the parents' not being interested in their children's education tired them more. The participant P15 explained this situation as follows: *"The primary school students cannot content themselves with only the teacher; no doubt, they should consolidate what they learned at school with their families. However, there are such families*

that do not care about their children in any way, try to force them to go to school, in short, our workload increases and we get worn out more" (P16). Some participants also stated that their psychological resilience was damaged due to the pressure from parents. One of the participants (P18) stated the following in this regard and emphasized the parental pressure: *"I have a parent, if she can, she will enter the class and teach the lesson, she searches the Internet and says, „apply this or that method so that children learn better." This much intervention in my job bothers me of course" (P18).*

The findings about the institution-related barriers that prevent the teachers' positive psychological capital are given in the Figure 7.
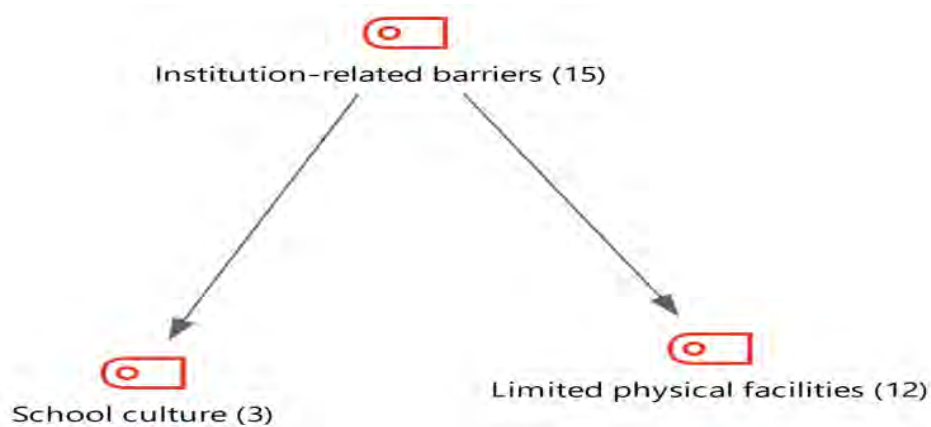

Figure 7. Institution-related Barriers Affecting Teachers' Positive Psychological Capital

The institution-related barriers affecting the teachers' positive psychological capital and the corresponding codes are as follows: limited physical facilities (12) and school culture (3) Most of the teachers put forward the limited physical facilities as a barrier. The participants said the following in this regard:

> *"I want to carry out digital activities with my students in my classroom, but there is no computer or projector in the classroom" (P17).*
> *"I work at ... school [she gives the name of the disadvantaged school], sometimes we don't even have a package of A4 paper" (P1).*

The participant P14, one of the participants who emphasized the school culture, said, *"Everyone at school acts individually, there is no unity and solidarity, maybe we do not even have a goal, it is not clear what we do according to what and how we educate, since we do not have criteria, I cannot make out whether I consider myself sufficient or not."* It can be said in general that the structure and physical facilities of schools pose an obstacle for the teachers and prevent them from showing their competencies.

The last category to be discussed is the personal barriers. The codes for the personal barriers affecting the teachers' positive psychological capital are given in Figure 8.
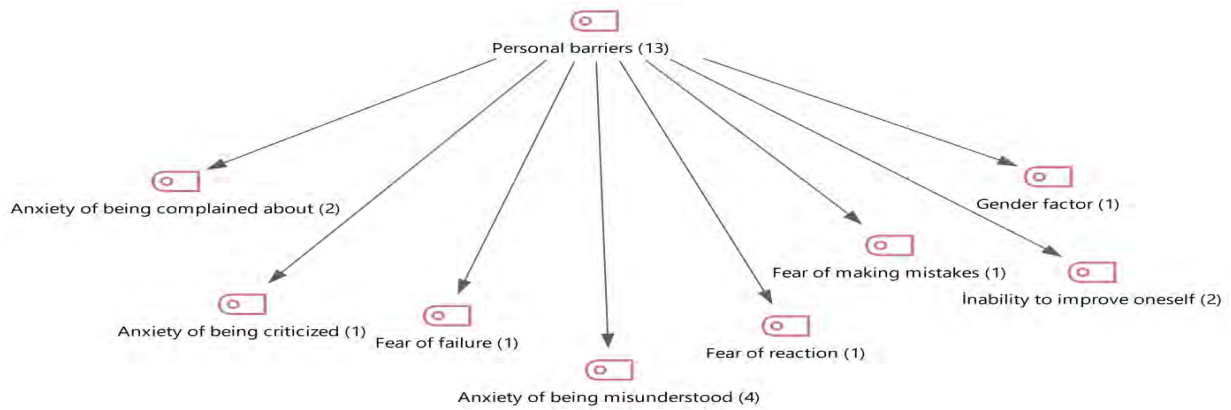
Figure 8. Personal Barriers Affecting Teachers' Positive Psychological Capital

The personal barriers and the corresponding codes are as follows: anxiety of being misunderstood (4), inability to improve oneself (2), anxiety of being complained about (2), anxiety of being criticized (1), fear of making mistakes (1), fear of failure (1), gender factor (1), and fear of reaction (1). The majority of the participants stated, regarding the personal barriers, which they experienced cases of not being able to speak in a group or join the group due to anxiety of being misunderstood, and this prevented them from being extroverted. The participant P18 said, *"Normally I am a social person, but I prefer to remain silent when I come together with both the teachers and the administrators, they try to make something out of every word."* One of the outstanding situations is the fear of making mistakes. The participant P11's views on this issue are noteworthy: *"I am quite careful with the issues related to students. I am very concerned that something will happen to them. For example, I can organize a trip to a historical place in our city and explain the history of that place better, and this takes an hour or two and can provide a more permanent learning; however, I do not organize any trips due to anxiety that something may happen to my students on the way or they may get harmed, so I teach every subject in the classroom."*

There are many different barriers affecting teachers' levels of positive psychological capital in schools. The teachers' opinions were taken on what path to follow against these barriers. The teachers who participated in the study made some suggestions for improving their positive psychological capital. These suggestions were grouped and examined under two categories: suggestions related to professional development and institution. The results in this regard are given in the Figure 9 and Figure 10.
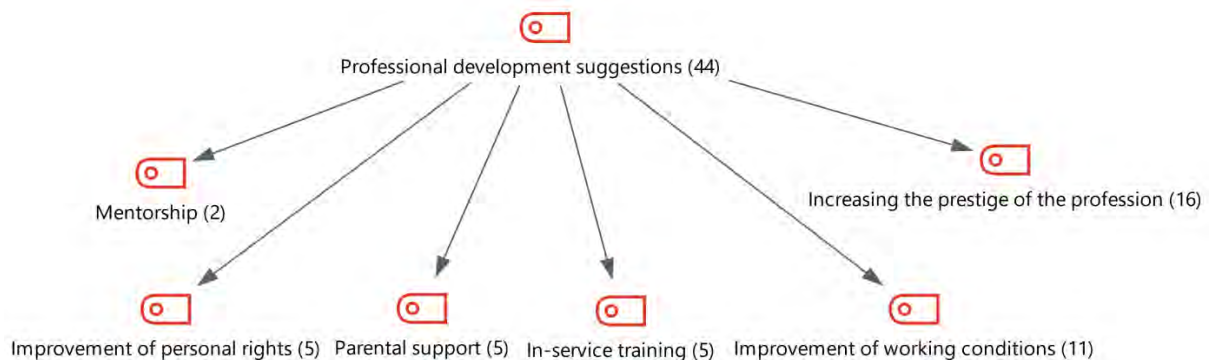

Figure 9. Professional Development Suggestions for Increasing the Positive Psychological Capital

The suggestions related to professional development consist of in-service training, mentorship, improvement of personal rights, improvement of working conditions, increasing the prestige of the profession, and parental support. The participant P10 said the following about the improvement of working conditions: *"If the number of students in classrooms is reduced, we will have the opportunity to have one-to-one interaction with each student, in this way, we can educate students better and have professional satisfaction."* Regarding increasing the prestige of the profession, the participant P16 emphasized the need to change the teacher profile and said: *"There is a need for teachers who are more conscientious, intellectual, and open to change. I think, [some measures should be taken] starting from the education faculties, teachers should not be graduated and appointed without reading [books] and carrying out projects etc., they are supposed to.* The participant K14 explained her/his suggestion about mentorship as follows: *"A mistake made by our new teachers can spread to all teachers. To prevent this, they should be placed under the supervision of our experienced teachers. Planning and supervision are a must for effectively realizing this practice."* The suggestions related to institution are given in Figure 10.
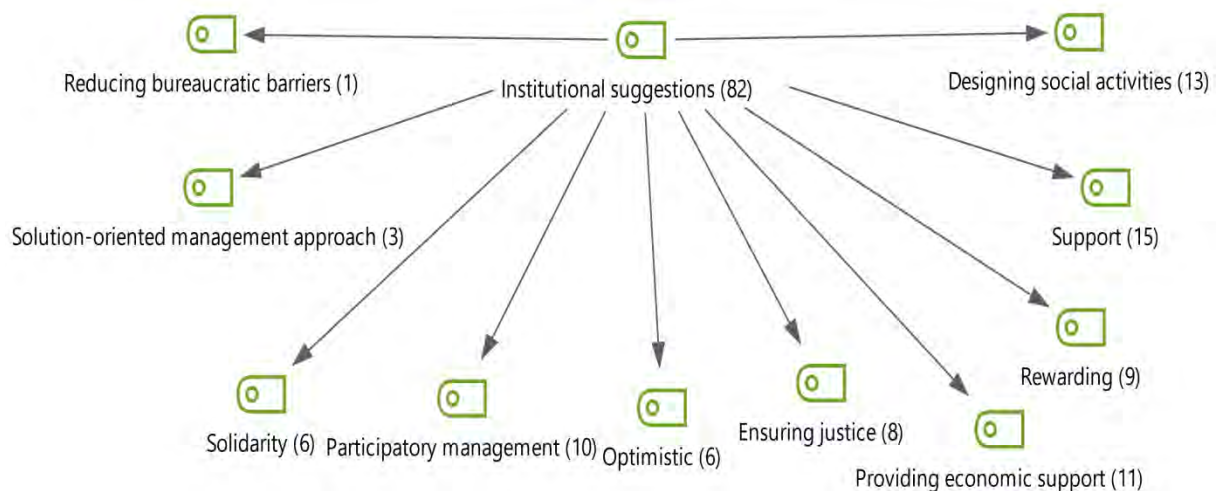

Figure 10. Institutional Suggestions for Increasing the Positive Psychological Capital

The suggestions related to institution are as follows: support by the administrators; designing social activities; rewarding; providing economic support; ensuring justice; participatory management, optimistic, and solution-oriented management approach; ensuring solidarity within the institution; and reducing bureaucratic barriers. The participants who made suggestions about the institution generally stated that some regulations in the institution would positively affect the teachers' positive psychological capital. The participants said the following in this regard.

"Our administrators should stand behind and support us; especially the teacher complaint line should be abolished. It is a practice that completely kills the teaching profession" (P11).

"As an educator, I need to have a say in decisions that will affect me" (P11).

Teachers have some concerns, such as economic concerns, I think there should definitely be a salary increase, you put in that much effort but you don't get in return for your efforts" (P18).

"I think nobody can overwhelm us psychologically in an institution where both administrators and teachers behave fairly" (P10).

Based on the participants' opinions, it can be asserted that the teachers' positive psychological capital can increase in an environment where justice is ensured, professional prestige is increased, and there is support and solidarity.

Discussion

In this study, the teachers' perceptions of positive psychological capital were identified and the barriers negatively affecting their positive psychological capital in educational organizations and the practices possible to be implemented were examined. In this part of the study, the findings will be discussed by comparing them with those in the literature. Regarding the first problem of the study, it was found that the teachers' perceptions of positive psychological capital were at the level of "strongly agree" that is the highest level. Based on the results, it can be asserted that it is a promising result for the education system to have teachers who have a high level of perception of positive psychological capital. It is thought that teachers, the most important and effective stakeholder, can contribute to the development of the education system in case they can look to the future with hope, be optimistic despite negative conditions, be a social model, have a reliable structure and feel themselves safe, be aware of their own capacities and abilities and try to improve themselves.

Furthermore, these characteristics are also important in terms of creating role models for students and spreading the synergy created thereby to the student groups. When the previous studies on identifying the positive psychological capital of teachers in the literature are reviewed, it is seen that there are similar results. In their studies, Altınkurt et al., (2015), Akman (2016), Anık & Tösten (2019), Büyükgöze & Kavak (2017), Çakmak & Arabacı (2017), Ganotice et al., (2016), Keser & Kocabaş (2014), Tösten (2015), Wang et al., (2014) found that teachers' positive psychological capital was perceived to be at a high level.

Another noteworthy result is that the teachers had the highest mean scores for optimism, self-efficacy, extraversion, and psychological resilience. It is thought that this result stems from the characteristics of the teaching profession. Since it takes a certain amount of time for students to be raised, teachers get the rewards for their efforts in the long run, and this contributes to teachers' psychological resilience. Education system is a system where students with different physical, sociological, psychological, and economic characteristics are brought together and developed through education. In this system, teachers may face many challenges in adaptation and integration in terms of educating and developing students in line with the needs and demands of the society. Moreover, due to the changes in the education system, teachers' adaptation to these changes and efforts to constantly renew themselves in order to be more effective also provide teachers with the opportunity to be aware of their own potential and to improve themselves, and it can be asserted that this affects their self-efficacy.

In the literature, it has been reported that positive psychological capital is associated with many positive behaviors such as commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, job performance, psychological well-being, confidence, and support (Akçay, 2011; Akdoğan & Polatçı, 2013; Avey et al., 2011; Büyükgöze & Kavak, 2017; Erkuş & Fındıklı, 2013; Ganotice et al., 2016; Hodges, 2010; Keleş, 2011; Luthans

et al., 2005; Luthans et al., 2008; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Polatçı, 2014). Considering the characteristics of positive psychological capital and its individual and institutional contributions, it is thought that having teachers who have a high level of positive psychological capital is an advantage. However, previous studies have showed that positive psychological capital does not always stay at the same level and can be improved (Luthans, 2002). Therefore, this study examined the barriers negatively affecting teachers' positive psychological capital in educational organizations and the practices possible to be implemented to eliminate these barriers. It was found that the situations that prevented teachers' positive psychological capital were caused by the administrators, teaching profession, parents, colleagues, students, institutions, and themselves. It was identified that teachers' positive psychological capital was negatively affected mostly by the administrators' attitudes and behaviors.

The barriers caused by the school administrators were found to be as follows: not behaving fairly, not providing sufficient support to teachers, not appreciating teachers' achievements, not valuing teachers, and oppressing. The fact that the statement "school is as much a school as its principal" is quoted in every study reveals the school administrators' effect on the whole school. School administrators' ability to manage by taking into account not only the educational but also the emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects of teachers contributes to making teachers feel valuable, fulfill their responsibilities successfully, and be more willing for educational activities (Özdemir & Orhan, 2018). So, it was concluded that school administrators could contribute positively to teachers' positive psychological capital by providing academic and social support to them, acting fairly, adopting participatory management approach and, by doing so, making them have an optimistic perspective. In their studies on teachers' positive psychological capital, Çimen & Özgan (2018) and Tösten (2015) also emphasized that school administrators were an important factor. This result supports the result of the present study.

Another noteworthy result of the study is that the problems caused parents and colleagues constitute a barrier in front of the teachers' positive psychological capital. It was concluded that the parents' lack of interest and their negative attitudes towards the teachers, the communication problems teachers had with their colleagues, grouping among teachers, gossips, and being dragged into negative competition also negatively affected the teachers. Teacher is not the only person responsible for the education of children. Parents also have some important responsibilities in this regard. Contrary to teachers' interest and efforts, if parents are indifferent to their child's education, this result in closing the communication channels with teachers, constituting a barrier preventing teachers from being hopeful about students. It can be asserted that if the educational activities offered by teachers are supported and implemented by parents, students will be successful.

The problems among teachers are also considered as a barrier in front of positive psychological capital. Teachers' social roles are an important component in positive psychological capital. It is thought that the competitive environment, groupings, conflicts, and gossips among teachers cause damage to their extroversion characteristics. In addition, it can be concluded that receiving support of the people who practice the same profession in solving problems and ensuring professional development will contribute positively to the individuals' self-efficacy.

In the study, it was also found that the barriers caused by the teaching profession, such as the teaching profession is being discredited, low salary, and widespread unionization negatively affected the teachers' positive psychological capital. Recent studies emphasize that the prestige of the teaching profession has been gradually diminishing due to reasons such as negative news about the profession on social media, teachers' low salaries, graduation of teachers more than needed, and teachers' unemployment (Altun, 2014; Bozbayındır, 2019; Demir & Almalı, 2020; Kıran et al., 2019). It is thought that these situations will cause teachers to be less hopeful and less optimistic while performing their profession.

After identifying the barriers affecting teachers, this study examined what kind of practice could be implemented to increase the teachers' positive psychological capital. It was concluded that providing social, academic, and economic support to teachers would increase their positive psychological capital, and the following practices could ensure this support: improvement of working conditions, increasing the prestige of the profession, providing in-service training, ensuring the support of parents, implementing a system of mentorship, designing social activities, and exhibiting a participatory, optimistic, and solution-oriented management approach. These results are significant for teachers to feel more positive psychologically in education system, to focus more on their own and students' development, and to produce more qualified educational outcomes. So, it is essential for educational policy makers and administrators to plan practices by taking these suggestions into consideration.

Conclusion

Two important results were obtained in this study. First, it was concluded that teachers' positive psychological capital was at a high level. This result is considered important for teachers to work more effectively in the education system. Another important result is the determination of the obstacles that negatively affect teachers' positive psychological capital in the education organization. This study examined the barriers negatively affecting teachers' positive psychological capital in educational organizations and the practices possible to be implemented to eliminate these barriers. Identifying these barriers is expected to contribute to the development of positive psychological capital in educational organizations. It is necessary to eliminate the possible barriers in front of showing positive psychological capital, which contributes to developing many positive behaviors individually and institutionally, in educational organizations.

Limitations and Recommendations

Although this study provides valuable findings, there are some limitations. Firstly, in this study, the sample consisted of 257 teachers. The data were collected only from the teachers working in a province in southeastern Turkey (Kilis). The barriers to the positive psychological capital of teachers working in other regions of Turkey may differ. Therefore, more general results would have been obtained if this study had been designed with the participation of teachers working in different regions.

Based on the results of the study, the following suggestions can be made. It was found that the problems caused

by the school administration constituted a barrier to the teachers' positive psychological capital. Based on this result, it is recommended that school administrations exhibit a fair, collaborative, participatory, and solidarity-based management approach. Social activities that will ensure the fraternization of teachers in schools can be prioritized in order to solve the problems among teachers. Moreover, a mentorship system designed for teachers should be developed in order to increase teachers' competencies. Based on the conclusion, reached in national and international studies, that positive psychological capital is effective in creating a more qualified education, it is recommended that training programs that will make this effectiveness permanent be designed and implemented.

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