An Investigation into the Psychological Capital of Second-Career Teachers and Factors Influencing Their Scores

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the Psychological Capital (PsyCap) of second-career teachers (SCTs) and their perceptions of what affects their PsyCap in the workplace by surveying and interviewing second-career teachers in public school districts in central eastern and northern Virginia. The research questions were: What is the PsyCap of a second-career teacher? What are the factors that second-career teachers perceive to contribute to their PsyCap? Participants were located in rural and suburban school districts in central eastern and northern Virginia. Data collection consisted of demographic surveys, the Psychological Capital Questionnaire survey (PCQ-24), and semi-structured interviews. Eighteen second-career teachers were purposefully selected from 34 who completed the demographic survey data and PsyCap-24 to participate in semi-structured interviews using the interview questions protocol.
Common themes from the interviews were determined using deductive and inductive coding.
Major findings were that second-career teachers exhibited a high average workplace positive PsyCapof 4.8; mentorship and strong peer support significantly influence second-career teachers' positive PsyCap; and a teacher's relationships with colleagues and their team's impact secondcareer teachers' positive PsyCap. Additional findings also showed that positive relationships with administration and prior-life experiences in other fields contributed to an increase in positive PsyCap. Whereas extra duties assigned to second-career teachers negatively impact their overall PsyCap. These results underscored the significance of nurturing positive PsyCap among second-career teachers, adding to the broader research on educators' PsyCap and its impact on teacher retention and job satisfaction in education.

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General Audience Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the psychological capital (PsyCap) of current teachers who held a career prior to teaching (second-career teachers) and what affects second-career teachers' PsyCap scores at the school level. The research questions were: What is the PsyCap of a second-career teacher? What are the factors that second-career teachers perceive to contribute to their PsyCap? SCTs who participated were located in rural and suburban school districts in central eastern and northern Virginia. Data collection methods involved demographic surveys, the Psychological Capital Questionnaire survey (PCQ-24), and semi-structured interviews. From a pool of 34 participants who completed the surveys, 18 second-career teachers were purposefully selected for one-on-one interviews. Analysis of the interviews highlighted several key themes, including the high average positive PsyCap score of 4.8 among secondcareer teachers, the significant influence of mentorship and peer support on their PsyCap, and the impact of relationships with colleagues and teams. Additionally, positive relationships with administration and prior experiences in other professional fields were found to add to positive PsyCap, while extra duties assigned to second-career teachers had a negative effect on their PsyCap. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering positive PsyCap among second career teachers and contribute to understanding its importance for teacher retention and job satisfaction in education.

DEDICATION

To my children, Cullen and Ian, I dedicate this work. I have spent almost half of your short lives working to achieve this goal. When you were babies and toddlers my earliest drafts were used to read you to sleep while I edited this work and cherished that time with you. This pursuit of knowledge, self-discovery and grit echoes what I tell you often, “You can do hard things”. My sincerest hope is that the memory of me in the early years of your life working towards this hard thing will be one of many examples of the spirit in never giving up and you too, will know the joy in accomplishing “hard things.”

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the Psychological Capital (PsyCap) of second-career teachers (SCTs) and their perceptions of what affects their PsyCap in the workplace by surveying and interviewing second-career teachers in public school districts in central eastern and northern Virginia. Researchers have been exploring organizational-level variables that contribute to employee attrition across many professions (Casely-Hayford et al., 2022; Göldag, 2020; Joo et al., 2015; Luthans, 2002; Moon, 2019; Raj et al., 2019). Teacher attrition is more prevalent in education today than over the last 20 years. Enrollment in teacher preparation programs declined by one-third between 2008 and 2019 (Fullan, 2014; Will, 2022b). According to data from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, enrollment in teacher preparation programs dropped 11% during the 2020 and 2021 school year (Will, 2022b). In a 2022 National Education Association (NEA) survey 55% of teachers surveyed planned to resign from teaching by spring 2023, compared with the average rate of 8% in the years before the COVID-19 pandemic (Göldağ, 2020; See & Gorard, 2020). Many U.S. states have issued emergency authorizations to allow the hiring of unlicensed teachers to meet the increasing teacher shortage (Casely-Hayford et al., 2022; See & Gorard, 2020). According to the National Science Teachers Association, 47% of teachers who left their teaching position reported that they were dissatisfied with their school culture or leadership (Wang et al., 2020; Will, 2022a).

District and building leaders now carry the burden of ensuring a physically and mentally healthy workplace. Teaching professionals stay in their careers longer if they have satisfaction at work (Casely-Hayford et al., 2022; Larkin et al., 2018; Sharma & Venkatesan, 2021; Wang et al.,

2020; Zee & Koomen, 2016). As building leaders, principals, assistant principals, and support administrators need to understand how to increase teacher PsyCap and how to maintain a positive and healthy workplace. Increasing teacher happiness also will increase students' positive perceptions of school and add to higher teacher job satisfaction (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Wollenschläger et al., 2016). When students have a positive relationship with their school, they tend to exhibit more adaptive behavioral patterns (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021). Students who report having a positive outlook on school as well as feelings of hope and feel community in their building have better outcomes in school and fewer truancy incidents (Aelterman et al., 2007; Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Teachers' job satisfaction affects the climate, culture, and overall success of students in their classrooms. When the teachers are content and students are happy, everyone can be successful. In short, fulfilled teachers stay in the classroom, and teachers who have high job satisfaction create happy, lifelong learners(Ansley et al., 2019; K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; De Stercke et al., 2015; Southern & East, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Many districts in the United States have issued emergency authorizations to allow the hiring of unlicensed teachers to meet the growing shortages sweeping the nation (National Education Association, 2022). In spring 2022, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers declaring resignation before they reached retirement increased by 47% since the most recent survey in the spring of 2019. This has led to a rise in second-career teachers (SCT) who left their current jobs to become educators (Baeten & Meeus, 2016; Paniagua & Sánchez-Martí, 2018). Research shows that teaching professionals will stay in their careers longer if they are satisfied at

work (Casely-Hayford et al., 2022; Larkin et al., 2018; Sharma & Venkatesan, 2021; Shields & Mullen, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Zee & Koomen, 2016), As building leaders, principals, assistant principals, and support administrators need to understand teacher positive PsyCap and how to maintain a positive and healthy workplace.

> Luthans et al. (2006*)* defined positive psychological capital as: an individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success. (p. 3)

Luthans' research on positive PsyCap and the workplace showed that employees who rated high on the PsyCap scale were higher performing and remained in their workplace longer than did their low PsyCap peers. Research shows that increasing teachers' positive PsyCap can increase students' positive perceptions of school, create higher job satisfaction, increase positive student relationships with the school, positive climate and culture of staff, and decrease truancy issues (Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016; Hughes, 2016; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Parker et al., 2012; Tosten & Toprak, 2017).

Recent research has explored connecting points for teacher happiness and influences on happiness in the school setting (Arens & Niepel, 2019; Dicke et al., 2020). Connections have been made in several studies in the areas of workload of tasks unrelated to teaching, campus appearance, classroom management, student negative behaviors, and feeling a loss of control.

Teacher positivity and life satisfaction are linked and found to be predictors of pupils' academic success (Al-Bataineh et al., 2021; Arens & Niepel, 2019), and Turner et al. (2002) showed that humor was more evident in a well-organized class with a high student participation. Teacher well-being can be improved with support from school principals, colleagues, and the community (Gustari & Widodo, 2022; Lavy & Bocker, 2018; Raj et al., 2019; Tadić et al., 2013). Factors that affect teacher happiness include workload, positive relationships, and positive attitudes towards building practices like duties assigned, behavior practices and other norms (Ansley et al., 2019; Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wang et al., 2020).

The findings from Hughes (2016) show that happiness for all at school is vital to learning. Future research should investigate SCTs and their PsyCap. Supporting staff and their needs is vital to teacher retention and the growth of learners. Although factors and correlations have been explored with first-career teachers there are few studies on teachers who have left other careers to become classroom teachers and how that is reflected in their PsyCap.

Significance of the Study

Studies have suggested that positive PsyCap is helpful to promote an individual's positive capacities and resources (Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). The positive relationship between PsyCap and employees' beneficial perspective toward job satisfaction, commitment to the organization and overall psychological well-being have been linked in previous studies (Avey et al., 2011). Research shows that people are successful when they are happy, and if a person is more hopeful, resilient, efficacious, and optimistic they have a higher probability to "weather the storm" in a challenging environment (Tosten & Toprak, 2017;

Troesch & Bauer, 2020).

Even though studies have explored leadership styles, emotional regulation, attrition, and happiness, it remains unknown the PsyCap of second-career teachers and their perceptions of work-based PsyCap at school. Few studies, if any, have been carried out to investigate the relationship between PsyCap and SCTs. The researcher, therefore, examined the PsyCap of SCTs and their perceptions by surveying and interviewing SCTs in public school districts in central eastern and northern Virginia. The research questions are: What is the psychological capital of a second-career teacher? What are the factors that second-career teachers perceive to contribute to their PsyCap?

Justification of the Study

The research focuses on the PsyCap of SCTs in their first 3 years and what contributes to the overall PsyCap score of these teachers. Unfortunately, teacher attrition rates are increasing over time. This turnover affects the school's climate, culture, and community. Staff changes impact relationships with students and learning communities and put a strain on veteran teachers to support more inexperienced staff members. Understanding why teachers leave schools can prevent these major changes in the school building. Teacher retention is under Virginia § 22.1295: Employment of teachers. This policy states that "local school boards shall develop employment policies and practices designed to promote the employment and retention of teachers" (Employment of Teachers, 2022). This stance requires examination by individual school boards to determine how this is implemented. Virginia's public school district's policy (54.7) states that there is a direct need for principals and evaluators to provide support for employee improvement and employee self-appraisal. This type of policy means that an employer must show documentation of efforts to support an employee before a contract can be terminated

or “nonrenewed.” Although there are guidelines for managing ineffective employees there is no mention of retaining highly qualified teachers.

Administrations’ support of teachers can vary across districts and even differ within schools. An administrator must evaluate the satisfaction of their employees and maintain a positive school climate and culture. There are many ways to measure job satisfaction, understand low satisfaction, and the reasons for attrition. Many policies enacted in the school can be controversial to the public; teachers often hold the blame for these district policies (Wang, et al. 2020). Administrators have the burden of ensuring that policies are followed while still maintaining and supporting an environment where PsyCap can obtain elevated levels (K.M. Brown & Wynn, 2009). This affects administrators’ evaluation of teachers. Evaluations need to be objective; however, teacher evaluations are often highly subjective (Joo et al., 2015). At a district or school level norming around expectations and best teaching practices requires district meetings of evaluators (Brandon et al., 2018). Using student data to evaluate teachers’ effectiveness is a controversial topic because students’ performance has many factors beyond the control of one teacher. When an administrator evaluates a teacher, they need to look at the whole teacher (Brandon et al., 2018; Joo et al., 2015). Leaders must consider how support looks to different staff members to help them have job satisfaction, embrace development and nurture positive PsyCap.

Conceptual Framework

Psychological capital is defined by Luthans et al. (2006) as a person’s positive psychological state of development, it is identified by elevated levels of Hope, (self-) Efficacy, Resilience and Optimism often referred to by the acronym “HERO.” These four traits comprise the complete PsyCap of an individual. With current findings in personal development and

malleability of the brain, an individual's PsyCap can be changed by assessing their PsyCap score, and then their PsyCap can be developed and managed. Furthermore, by examining the experiences of SCTs' patterns and commonalities can be discovered to better understand the overall PsyCap. The conceptual framework of this study is displayed in Figure 1. A *conceptual framework* is the evolving version of current research and a guide to the qualitative subject being researched (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Psychological Capital of an Educator (Flanagan, 2023)

This framework was developed using influences from the overall PsyCap framework developed by Luthans and Youssef-Morgan (2017). Factors that were found to affect teacher PsyCap in their workplace are themes that appeared in the findings from several other researchers (Bandura & Freeman, 1997; Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Reivich & Shatte, 2003; Snyder, 2002). These factors are the cross-sections shown in Figure 1. The interview questions developed for this research aim to understand how administration support and building level decisions shape HERO. as described in Luthans's research (how do

these sources come into play here? Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016; Luthans, 2002; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Parker et al., 2012; Tosten & Toprak, 2017).

Researcher's Professional Background and Assumptions

As an educator with more than 15 years of experience, I have witnessed many changes in public schools that have led to the rise in the need for "nontraditional" teachers. The decision to examine PsyCap in SCTs and how that relates to leadership is related to my work as a school leader in Virginia. Most of my work has been in hard-to-staff schools where the turnover is large, and the administration often must employ teachers who have not yet completed their degrees. In one middle school with approximately 130 staff members, only about 5 remained there over 5 years. Through my work as an administrator and other educational leadership roles, I have noticed that attrition rates have increased in schools. As a result, I have wondered what the factors are that teachers have in common when deciding to continue to teach.

As a researcher, I assume that leadership type, community in the building and teachers' education are factors in PsyCap. I assume that teachers who enter a preparation program are better equipped for the challenges in education than those who did not go through a university. Given that my assumptions are connected to my work I will continually monitor my biases by recruiting others to help check my data and will use validated and tested surveys and interview questions. My goal for this study is to analyze the PsyCap of SCTs in public schools in Virginia.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to provide better understanding of the content discussed.

Hope: "A positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (1) agency (goal-directed energy) and (2) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (Snyder, et al., 1991, p. 287).

Optimism: An explanation and attribution of positive events in terms of effort, sustainability, and organizational causes, while diverting negative events as the result of uncontrollable forces, circumstances, and momentary setbacks (Seligman, 1998). *Psychological capital*: As defined by Luthans et al. (2017), an individual's positive psychological state of development and is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success. (p. 3)

Resilience: The ability to recover from a setback or withstand a difficulty. It is a person's basic strength that underpins all the positive characteristics in their emotional psychological makeup (Wagnild & Young, 1993). The researchers Reivich and Shatte, (2003) stated that "without resilience there is no courage, no rationality, no insight. It is the bedrock on which all else is built. Some individuals need more resilience just to get them out of the negatives" (p. 59).

Second-career teacher: A person who had a career outside the field of education and left their profession to become a teacher (Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021; Troesch & Bauer, 2020).

(Self)-Efficacy: "People's beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects" (Bandura & Freeman, 1997, p.71). The degree to which an individual has the confidence to take on and put in

the required effort to succeed at a challenging task defines how they think, feel, and motivate themselves. The belief that an individual can produce the desired outcome is a considerable incentive to act in the first place. The higher a person's efficacy, the harder they will work to achieve goals, thus leading to a higher likelihood of success (Bandura & Freeman, 1997).

Summary

Chapter 1 was an overview of the study. Teachers are leaving education at an increasing rate. Preparation programs at the college level have declining enrollment for future educators. SCTs have become a source of new educators in the field. To support and grow this unique population of educators, leaders need to understand how to support and grow SCTs. Understanding the PsyCap of these teachers is foundational in understanding their success.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Happiness in Public Schools

The psychological well-being of students is a long-researched subject in education. For students to be effective learners, their basic needs must be met. As understood in Maslow's hierarchy of needs as per Sharma and Venkatesan (2021) when needs that are lower (i.e., more fundamental) in the hierarchy are met, individuals can attend to needs higher up on the scale, such as learning, discovery, and happiness (Sharma & Venkatesan, 2021). Happiness is a state that leaves an opening for discovery, growth, and learning (Sharma & Venkatesan, 2021). Although the nature of students' needs has been researched and explored, the needs of teachers and staff have not been researched in the same regard. Many professional development opportunities and trainings offered to teachers center around how to create a positive classroom

and contented students. These focus on staff members actions at the building level to help students feel supported and have positive relationships at school (Aelterman et al., 2007; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Zee & Koomen, 2016). There are fewer opportunities for administrators to have similar training on how to support satisfaction and positive outlook for their staff (Hanh & Weare, 2017).

Teachers who find fulfillment and joy in their job will create a rich learning environment where students feel safe to make mistakes (Bandura & Freeman, 1997; K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; Luthans, 2002; Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, teachers and employees who feel content in their workplace are more likely to take risks and try new things (Larkin et al., 2018; Lavy & Bocker, 2018). In the ever-evolving educational system, teachers are having to learn new strategies to reach the changing learner (Kamthan et al., 2019). When teachers feel safe and secure, they are more willing to engage with new district and school-wide initiatives and visions (Al-Bataineh et al., 2021; İhtiyaroğlu, 2018; Raj et al., 2019). Contentment, happiness, and fulfillment in a workplace are major factors in retention (Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016; Moon, 2019; Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019). Research has been conducted to find what impacts an educator's job satisfaction the most. Teacher positive psychological capital (PsyCap) is influenced by several factors: leadership style, teacher support, and self-efficacy are central themes in having a positive connection to the workplace (Lavy & Bocker, 2018; Luthans, 2002; Raj et al., 2019; Sharma & Venkatesan, 2021).

Search Process

The Virginia Tech (VT) online library was used in the search for scholarly literature.

Articles and books were found using the EBSCOhost, ERIC, and Google Scholar databases. Reference sections of articles and salient publications by peer-reviewed journals were used to discover additional sources. The parameters for searching articles in databases were those published from 2012 to 2022. Search terms used included *psychological capital, second-career teachers, teacher happiness, teacher retention, teacher attrition, management styles, administration support, student engagement, teacher autonomy,* and *teacher job satisfaction.* Table 1 provides the word counts of sources found for search terms.

Table 1

Search Terms and Results

Search Term	Number of Sources Found
psychological capital	5,051
teacher happiness	3,841
psychological capital and teachers	446
second-career teachers	293
teacher happiness and retention	251
teacher psychological capital and administration	28
teacher happiness and teacher job satisfaction	12

Sources consisting of 108 articles, 6 books, and 1 podcast were reviewed using these terms. The categories researched had three overall themes: leadership style, administration support, and self-efficacy. These were explored in the search process on how it affects teacher happiness and teacher job retention, an extensive overview of significant sources can be found in Appendix A.

Teacher Shortage

In a 2022 National Education Association (NEA) survey, 55% of educators in the United States reported that they were planning to leave the classroom sooner than their retirement. This is a vast increase compared with survey results from the previous summer in 2021 in which 37% of educators reported a plan to leave. The demographic survey shows this is true regardless of age or years of experience teaching (Goldhaber & Theobald, 2022). This trend is not new to educators. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor, in January 2020, there were approximately10.6 million educators working in public school; however, in 2022, only 10 million educators were employed in public schools nationally (Goldhaber & Theobald, 2022).

Since 2020, over 500,000 educators in the United States have resigned, contributing to a 9.1% increase in the dropout rate among educators in 2021 (Delarosa, 2022). This trend of early departures from the teaching profession is expected to persist, leading to approximately 44% of public schools reporting unfilled teaching positions for the 2023-2024 academic year, as per data from the National Center for Education Statistics released in 2022 (DeLaRosa, 2022).

Between 2008 and 2019, enrollment in teacher preparation programs declined by onethird (Fullan, 2014; Will, 2022b). Recent data from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education shows an 11% drop in enrollment in such programs between 2020 and the 2021 school

year (Will, 2022a). Consequently, numerous states in the United States have resorted to issuing emergency authorizations to hire unlicensed teachers to address the growing shortage in educators (Casely-Hayford et al., 2022; See & Gorard, 2020).

Psychological Capital

Martin Seligman pioneered the field of psychology research in 1989, noted by his landmark speech where he called for a shift of research to understand not only mental illness but also personal happiness or positive psychology (Reivich & Shatte, 2003). Psychological capital is defined in Luthans et al.'s (2006) work as applying positive resources, strengths, and capacities that can be developed, measured, and managed to improve an individual's performance. To separate PsyCap as a concept from human capital and social capital, Luthans made a distinction that it is directly concerned with "who you are" and "who you are becoming" (Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

Emerging evidence in neuroscience found that positivity and negativity are linked to the brain's prefrontal cortex. Rather than controlling emotional reactions, this is the part of the brain that processes higher-order rational and thought, meaning that positivity levels are not a fixed characteristic but change over time. Research has shown that this area of the brain exhibits more plasticity toward greater positivity levels (Davidson & Begley, 2012). Over time an individual can sustain higher positivity and become more positive, which is consistent with the concept of PsyCap. Evidence also supports the concept that people vary in plasticity, with some presenting more sensitivity than others (Pluess, 2015), this further implying that PsyCap varies across individuals.

As introduced above, a distinguishing characteristic of PsyCap is its malleability and opportunity for change and development. Longitudinal studies support the concept that PsyCap

changes over time (Avey et al., 2011; Joo et al., 2015). Additional research supports the development of an individual's positive PsyCap, which can be effective in raising positivity levels, alleviating negativity, and increasing overall well-being (Avey et al., 2011; Davidson & Begley, 2012; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Reivich & Shatte, 2003). Negative PsyCap is related to multiple undesirable results in the workplace: higher absenteeism and higher employee intentions to quit and have cynicism, and lower job satisfaction (Jensen, 2020; Joo et al., 2015; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Moon, 2019) PsyCap can be developed and enhanced within a supportive school climate.

Leadership Decisions

Although it is pertinent to all occupations, an understanding of attrition is particularly vital in the high-stress, high-turnover career of educators. Professions with lower turnover rates have leaders who provide support, resources, and leadership opportunities and encourage autonomy (Balcerzyk, 2021). Satisfaction at work cannot be viewed in isolation; the working environment of the principal and teacher directly influences employee happiness (Dicke et al., 2020; Huang & Wang, 2021; Larkin et al., 2018). Educators value a principal who provides clear direction but does not micromanage them (K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; Dicke et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). A study by Dicke et al. (2020) of educators who were surveyed across 32 countries found that the positive relationship with job satisfaction can be explained by the effects of principals' transformational leadership styles. This leadership style is positively related to higher principal job satisfaction as reported in several other studies (Baig et al., 2021; Semedo et al., 2017). Traits of leadership identified to increase workplace happiness included consistency, the ability to prioritize, the ability to take risks, and make difficult decisions passion;

commitment; and being transparent and concrete (Balcerzyk, 2021; K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019; Dicke et al., 2020).

Beginning Teachers' PsyCap

Beginning teachers, educators who are in the first 3 years of the profession, are more likely to value a building leader who provides guidance but does not suppress their ideas (K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009). Whether in attitude or actions, the ability of a principal to offer support to a beginning teacher when needed is seen as essential (K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; Wang et al., 2020). Leaders who provide structure with flexibility and who treat beginning teachers as skilled professionals are what those teachers need to be successful. Principals who provide the environments and resources needed to support new teachers in continued learning, professional development, and growth, will retrain teachers in the profession; using these abilities to identify and provide several types of support and leadership styles results in increased happiness for beginning teachers (Balcerzyk, 2021; Brown & Wynn, 2009). Including beginning teachers in decision-making on essential issues, working collaboratively with other staff on shared outcomes, and broadening their teacher leadership ability increases their positive PsyCap at work (K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009). The findings of many studies have shown that teacher perceptions and administration style are more important than student characteristics in predicting teacher happiness at work (Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019; Dicke et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020).

Trust and belief in a leader greatly affect job satisfaction. In any occupation, employees will try to be more useful to the organization when given leadership roles. These teacher-leaders feel fulfilled and that their opinions are valued (Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019). When

employees are included in decision-making for the development of their organization, they have more success and greater satisfaction than when they are not included (Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019; Dicke et al., 2020; Larkin et al., 2018). Teachers are less likely to consider leaving their jobs when they feel satisfied with their work, have a culture of support from leadership, and have self-efficacy (Balcerzyk, 2021; Dicke et al., 2020). Furthermore, job satisfaction has a significant predictive effect on turnover intention (Larkin et al., 2018). Teachers who reported having high levels of job stress or who had a history of changing jobs were more likely to report an intention to leave their job (Joo et al., 2015; Larkin et al., 2018). In their 2018 study, Larkin et al. found that teachers having a high level of satisfaction and a high feeling of equity (concerning duties and decision-making) within the organization correlated with lower turnover intentions.

Leadership Styles and PsyCap

Leadership styles that are shared, transformational and authentic tend to lead to positive PsyCap for educators. (Balcerzyk, 2021; K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016). Administrators who have developed a culture of shared responsibilities for school operations have teachers who report a high level of positive PsyCap for teachers in those schools (Büyükşahin Çevik, 2017; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Cooperating with other educators in developing programs and initiatives for the school, giving responsibility to staff, and fairly distributing the opportunities for leadership at their school create the positive PsyCap of teachers in a manner due to the nature of shared leadership (Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019).

Having a shared leadership model in the workplace fosters a feeling of control and job satisfaction in employees. In a 2019 study by Çobanoğlu and Bozbayindir, it was suggested that

to create a positive work environment, a course on shared leadership should be mandatory for teacher preparation programs and in-service training for current teachers. To ensure that the fidelity of shared leadership is executed effectively instead of traditional leadership approaches that model a leadership type dominated by school administrators, training for all staff is needed. This type of environment can only be developed by teachers together from planning to application (Al-Dhuwaihi & Almohaisin, 2021; Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019; Huang & Wang, 2021) Some of the resources at schools are not distributed fairly (Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019). Knowing that shared organizational resources predict the positive psychology of teachers, school leaders need to be transparent and fair when distributing these resources. Practicing this transparency will increase positive perceptions of the staff (Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019; Wang et al., 2020). By having a shared, authentic leadership culture in school, teachers have a higher work engagement, whereas low work engagement leads to more negative emotions at work (Burić & Macuka, 2018; Semedo et al., 2017).

Leaders can support staff involvement by providing opportunities for teachers to participate in decision-making about school policies and build their school awareness to allow all teachers to feel like members of the school family (Burić & Macuka, 2018). Effective school leaders cultivate supporting school environments in which skillful teaching can thrive and grow. North Carolina's State Board of Education recognized the importance of principals' role in teacher positive PsyCap and required administrators to earn license renewal credits in the areas of "teacher effectiveness, teacher evaluation, teacher support programs, teacher leadership, teacher empowerment, and teacher retention" (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2005, p. 6)

Perceived Support and PsyCap

The administrative structure is an important part of school culture and contributes to the well-being of all staff in the building. Support from an administration team is a contributing factor to the happiness of the staff. When teachers feel supported, they report higher happiness scores (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Support by the principal and encouragement for professional development are matters of local school management that play a significant role in teacher happiness at the secondary level (Aelterman et al., 2007). The administrative style, beliefs in management, and genuineness of employee relationships are factors that contribute to the overall climate and culture in a school building.

Teachers often have little belief that they will obtain help and support from their principals when they encounter a problem (K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; Wang et al., 2020). To increase the positive PsyCap of teachers, the principal needs to ensure that teachers trust they will be supported regardless of the circumstances they face (Raj et al., 2019). Principals need to ensure that teachers feel support when faced with a real problem. Teachers' frustration and anger are most often related to students' misbehavior, lack of discipline in the classroom, or lack of perceived administrative support (K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; Wang et al., 2020).

Administrators also have control over many aspects of building operations. Choosing to support a teacher, help with requests, and encouragement are some matters within an administrative team's realm of control in a school building. Another facet within an administrator's control is consistency in behavior expectations of students and staff. Enforcement of student behaviors and faculty expectations set a precedence for what is acceptable within the building (Dicke et al., 2020). Faculty norms and expectations need to be written out in detail and

used as a reference when expectations are not met. Unwanted or wanted behavior is influenced by the norms, boundaries, and expectations set by the reactions of administrators. When staff members are given clear expectations and an understanding of duties and their contribution to the running of the building, they have greater buy-in and job satisfaction. Consistency in consequences, rewards, recognition, and behavior outcomes sets the standard. For teaching staff to provide effective instruction, exhibit professionalism, and manage student conduct, they must receive support from their leaders (Ansley et al., 2019). Administrators have control over many aspects of building operations. Choosing to support a teacher, help with requests, and encouragement are some matters within an administrative team's realm of control in a school building.

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Facilities and PsyCap

A person's surroundings and overall environment substantially contribute to their wellbeing. Green spaces, practicing mindfulness, and the presence of staff facilities are examples of factors that have been shown to increase happiness in teachers (Mertoğlu, 2018). Many schools have neglected to have spaces for teachers, such as faculty areas or green space. Building repairs, upkeep, and even paint color affect the culture and climate of the building space. Good parentteacher relationships, cooperation, and administration support also increase teachers' happiness (Al-Bataineh et al., 2021). During break time teachers need a space that is comfortable and refreshing. Providing this space leads to enjoyment in the workplace and increased job satisfaction (Harris, 2018).

The front office of the school as a welcoming place sets a tone for the building. A police presence, searches, metal detectors, and other security measures decrease happiness and comfort level in the building (Peguero & Bracy, 2015). In contrast, beginning the day with a welcome sign or staff greeters sets a positive tone for the building (Earthman, 2019). Plants and outdoor spaces also promote positive feelings at school (van den Bogerd et al., 2020), having school gardens or courtyards that are accessible to staff during breaks or for outdoor lessons increases happiness scores in the PsyCap scale (Al-Bataineh et al., 2021).

Workload and Extra Duties

It is a frequent practice for teachers in the United States to take on extra duties in the school building without compensation for such. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers reported higher workloads and feeling like their time was spent on duties that did not relate directly to instruction (Zee & Koomen, 2016). In European schools, extracurricular activities are not in the

building but are a community event (Harris & Mixon, 2014); this takes a great deal of weight off teachers and allows instruction to be their primary focus. In the United States, responsibilities associated with extracurricular activities can be a huge burden for teachers. Some teachers find enjoyment in roles like club sponsors or team coaches; other assigned duties are not as well received. Teachers have reported that extra responsibilities and completing reports increased their workload (De Stercke et al., 2015). Teacher preparation programs focus mainly on instructional practices and classroom management. As a result, many beginning teachers (those teaching up to 3 years) are unprepared to balance the committees, clubs, sports, duties, and other activities that rely on teachers to support the daily running of the building (HelmsLorenz & Maulana, 2016). Workload or extra duties have a major influence on workplace happiness scores (De Stercke et al., 2015). Teachers who feel overloaded in work have excessive preps or extra duties and tend to report lower job satisfaction (Ansley et al., 2019). Secondary teachers may have multiple preps and extra duties to support students' extracurricular activities. When a teacher feels overloaded with these duties, enjoyment leaves, and it is replaced by burden and obligation.

Having the right motivation for work has a significant role in reducing the negative effects of high demands during extra activities and making secondary educators happy in their everyday work life (Tadić et al., 2013). One strategy used to increase happiness is to have educators frequently think about the meaning their work may have (Lavy & Bocker, 2018).

In a study conducted in England, educational leaders reported working an average of 52.4 hours in a *"*typical week*"* in the winter of 2020, compared with 47.8 hours in the last full week that they worked since the COVID-19 lockdown in spring 2020 (Walker et al., 2020), for an average decrease of 4.6 hours per working week. Although this study draws from several

counties in England, one can assume that educators worldwide experienced similar drops in workload when moving to online learning. There is a significant correlation between job satisfaction and feelings of being in control of several facets of teaching and learning practice (Walker et al., 2020). When surveyed in 2021, educators reported that online teaching was the most enjoyable part of their job. In a greater survey on teacher satisfaction, findings suggested a direct link between online teachers' fulfillment with the flexibility their job affords them and their desire to continue teaching at their online school (Larkin et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2020).

Learning Communities and PsyCap

Teachers' buy-in and input in decision-making in schools increase their empowerment in their environment. Low happiness scores are reported when teachers are "feeling they cannot control their life" (Mertoğlu, 2018, p. 401). This includes extra duties, students' social stress and emotional needs, and families experiencing hardship. Teachers having control over their duties, extracurricular activities, and building level decisions will increase the level of happiness score, as measured by the Oxford Happiness Scale (De Stercke et al., 2015; Mertoğlu, 2018; Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021; Sharma & Venkatesan, 2021). When decisions about curriculum and program adaptation are made at a district level, it takes away teacher autonomy. Program adaptations also detract from teachers' self-efficacy in making learning decisions. When selfefficacy scores are higher teachers feel in control of events and when they are given reasoning for decisions made at the building level their job satisfaction also increases (Aelterman et al., 2007; Burić & Macuka, 2018; Mertoğlu, 2018). Job satisfaction also increases when teachers have autonomy over the pace of instruction and curriculum decisions (Battersby & Verdi, 2015).

Studies have shown that putting learning communities into place leads to efficacy in the teaching community (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). Teachers need to collaborate across schools to improve and learn from each other. These learning communities support each other and increase teachers' efficacy (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Muñoz & Branham, 2016). Self-esteem and confidence in the content taught are other factors of happiness in teachers (Moore & CarterHicks, 2014). Fostering positive work situations such as professional learning communities and team-building activities are ways administrators can support teachers in building their selfefficacy (Ansley et al., 2019).

Building a culture of collaboration can help productivity and increase morale while decreasing burnout and conflict among staff (B. Brown et al., 2018; Daniel et al., 2019; Moore & Carter-Hicks, 2014). Collaborative work provides opportunities for teachers to share resources, plan activities together, and share expertise, and it helps engender a cooperative, selfmotivated staff body rather than a competitive one (Ansley et al., 2019; Daniel et al., 2019). When teachers are in learning communities, they can share ideas and collaborate in decisionmaking about curriculum and learning in the classrooms (Moore & Carter-Hicks, 2014; Muñoz & Branham, 2016).

School administrators can provide opportunities for teachers' professional development by encouraging this in-school teacher cooperation and communication, and by supporting teachers' further learning (K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019). School leaders should support and encourage teamwork among teachers and provide attention, guidance, and leadership as needed (Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019; Moore & Carter-Hicks, 2014). These practices nurture unofficial professional learning communities that decrease teacher

isolation, increase teacher responsibility and understanding, and improve job satisfaction, commitment, and PsyCap (Çobanoğlu & Bozbayindir, 2019; Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016).

Satisfaction in Personal Life and Job Satisfaction

Personal lives also play a part in job satisfaction. Multiple studies have shown that people who are content in their jobs report higher PsyCap scores in life overall (Büyükşahin Çevik, 2017; Tadić et al., 2013). Although one study showed that teachers who are married to nonteachers are happier at their work, (İhtiyaroğlu, 2018), other studies have been inconclusive on outside factors and conclude that personal life and work life can exist in two different states of happiness or PsyCap (Cetinkaya, 2020). Subjects such as gender, income, age, marital status, number of children, and tenure have been explored and found to be without significance to workplace PsyCap (İhtiyaroğlu, 2018; Lavy & Bocker, 2018; Mertoğlu, 2018; Sharma & Venkatesan, 2021). In similar studies, connections were found between job satisfaction and personality characteristics (Büyükşahin Çevik, 2017; Dogan et al., 2013; Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Personal tendencies, close relationships, and cultural experiences were reported to be factors explaining the satisfaction with life score (Büyükşahin Çevik, 2017). Having emotional support, interpersonal and affective classroom relationships, increase administrative awareness to teachers' sensitivity to social and emotional needs, and regard for student perspectives (Hamre & Pianta, 2010) are all factors that led to a happier teacher.

Mindfulness and PsyCap

Mindfulness and gratefulness are practices that are known to improve happiness levels and decrease unwanted feelings (Hanh & Weare, 2017; Mazer et al., 2014; Tadić et al., 2013). Several studies suggest practicing mindfulness in a school-wide setting to encourage teacher and

staff's gratitude practices and increase their happiness scores (Al-Bataineh et al., 2021; Hanh & Weare, 2017; Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021). In one of those studies, staff members who regularly practiced mindfulness and gratitude reported low stress at work (Hanh & Weare, 2017). Teachers with high self-esteem have increased happiness scores (Büyükşahin Çevik, 2017). Selfefficacy and stress causes are important predictors of teacher stress responses. Therefore, school (psychologists) and educational (psychology) researchers are needed to help staff improve their self-efficacy level and reduce causes of stress to minimize undesired outcomes. Interventions, restorative practices, training, and staff support are promising approaches to increasing mindfulness in schools (Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016).

Although some studies have been conducted to elucidate factors associated with teachers' happiness at school and in their personal lives, further investigation is needed on effective measures to improve happiness. Teachers who describe themselves as happy, conscientious, and emotionally healthy are optimistic toward their students, peers, and principals. Optimistic teachers instill hope for success in a failing or unsuccessful student. They may motivate students to persevere in their struggles even after a failure and can motivate them to improve classroom behavior (İhtiyaroğlu, 2018). Happy teachers cultivate happy students. These dispositions improve the learning and working environment of the school overall.

Self-Efficacy

Higher levels of self-efficacy are related to greater positive emotions and work engagement, as well as lower reports of negative emotions (Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016). Studies by Büyükşahin Çevik (2017), Helms-Lorenz and Maulana (2016), and Polatcan and Cansoy (2019) have shown that the main factors in teacher efficacy are personal characteristics, academic competency, professional attitudes, and professional competence (Büyükşahin Çevik,

2017; Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016; Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019). Teachers who reported higher self-efficacy also have more positive behavior management systems than those of teachers who report low self-efficacy (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Self-efficacious teachers report feeling less stress and, low emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and overall burnout; they also experience higher feelings of personal accomplishment, PsyCap, commitment, and job satisfaction (Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Research shows that employee self-assessment, transparency, and trust are key to employee improvement and job satisfaction (Moon, 2019; Range et al., 2013). Administrators are stretched thin with many duties, and their needs are widely outnumbered in school when it comes to the needs of parents, students, and staff. Having staff input and self-evaluations or reflections will incentivize staff members to buy-in on growing together (Brandon et al., 2018; Moon, 2019; Wollenschläger et al., 2016). Authentic and transformative leadership styles are a good practice in this initiative; both styles implement a shared vision and transparency, they and employ methods to build trust with their staff (Baig et al., 2021; Balcerzyk, 2021; Semedo et al., 2017). Any growth, vision, or goal in a school should be present in every aspect of a building and in school-wide, committee, and individual goals (Baig et al., 2021; Semedo et al., 2017).

Second-Career Teachers

Second-career teachers (SCTs) are those who have pursued (an)other career(s) before becoming a teacher (Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021). They are often seen as a solution to the problems of global teacher shortage (Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021) and declining education employment and enrollment in teacher preparation programs (Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021). The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) showed that 24 out of 34 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries have teachers with 2 to 10 years

of experience outside the teaching field (Goldhaber & Theobald, 2022; Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021). Literature has shown that the SCT has five aspects that differ from first-career teachers: expertise, motivation, level of self-direction, beliefs, and skills (Baeten & Meeus, 2016; Paniagua & Sánchez-Martí, 2018; Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021).

The need for SCTs becomes evident when examining educator program enrollments, as mentioned above. Even though SCTs can follow a regular certification program, they are commonly trained in nontraditional certification programs that provide fast-track routes into the classroom. These programs were developed specifically to attract SCTs into teaching. Educating and employing SCTs is a widely implemented solution for teacher shortages nationwide (Baeten & Meeus, 2016; Goldhaber & Theobald, 2022; Paniagua & Sánchez-Martí, 2018). SCTs bring transferable skills from their previous careers that are different from those of a first-career teacher who is still developing skills (Baeten & Meeus, 2016; Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021). SCTs also bring practical skills and real-world expertise to their subject matter in the classrooms.

Although research into beginning teachers' attrition is vast; SCTs are not set apart from other beginning educators, even though the support needed to succeed as an educator of these two groups are vastly different (Baeten & Meeus, 2016; Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021). Similarly, there is ongoing research regarding PsyCap and educators; however, a lack of research was found that focused on SCTs and their PsyCap scores.

Summary

This literature review summary of teacher PsyCap, leadership style, and administrative support and SCTs suggest a strong connection between attrition in public schools and these factors. It is undeniable that "happiness and education are, properly, intimately connected:

Happiness should be an aim of education, and a good education should contribute significantly to personal and collective happiness" (Hughes, 2016, p. 2). Researchers have explored connecting points for teacher happiness and influences on happiness in the school (Arens & Niepel, 2019; Dicke et al., 2020). Connections have been made in several studies with regard to workload, campus appearance, classroom management, student negative behaviors, and loss of control (Büyükşahin Çevik, 2017; Dicke et al., 2020; Helms-Lorenz & Maulana, 2016; İhtiyaroğlu, 2018; Lavy & Bocker, 2018; Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019; Sharma & Venkatesan, 2021). Teacher positivity and life satisfaction are linked and found to be predictors of pupils' academic success (Al-Bataineh et al., 2021; Arens & Niepel, 2019; Turner, 2022). Factors that affect teacher happiness include workload, self-efficacy, positive relationships, and positive attitudes toward building practices (Al-Bataineh et al., 2021). Additional research is needed to understand the PsyCap of SCTs in Virginia.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose of the Study

This research focuses on examining the psychological capital (PsyCap) of second-career teachers (SCTs) in public schools in Virginia. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the PsyCap of SCTs and their perceptions of what affects their PsyCap in the workplace by surveying and interviewing second-career teachers in public school districts in central eastern and northern Virginia.

Research Questions

The research questions are: What is the psychological capital of a second-career teacher?

What are the factors that second-career teachers perceive to contribute to their PsyCap?

Research Design

The research design for this study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research design is used when studying the shared experience of a lived phenomenon such as the ones shared by SCTs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design was selected for this study to examine and understand common experiences that affect the PsyCap of SCTs. There is limited research available on PsyCap and teachers, and even less information on SCTs and what affects their PsyCap. Qualitative researchers study personal experiences that are shared and find commonalities among respondents. The responses can be used to influence policy and practices with this group (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants

The schools selected were public-school districts in Central Eastern Virginia located in suburban or rural areas. The participants were selected using purposeful sampling; this can help ensure that diverse demographic views are considered in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Permission was granted by three school divisions for the recruitment of participants. Other participants were recruited with permission from the EducateVA program. The study was conducted from Aug-Oct 2023. Table 2 below lists the inclusion criteria for the participants in the survey and interview.

Table 2.

Inclusion Criteria for the Teacher Survey Participation

Second-career teacher participant	Inclusion Criteria
	• Presently teaching • Second-career teacher

	• Teaches in a public-school setting. • Teachers in Virginia • Held a career that was not teaching. • Original degree was not intended for teaching.

An electronic letter (Appendix C) with a short study description, greeting, and purpose of the study was sent to selected teachers with a link to opt into the study, approval of the Virginia Tech institutional review board (IRB), and the approval of the district's superintendent or the director of human resources.

After obtaining consent from the survey participants, emails were sent to them that contained information on informed consent (Appendix D), a link to the demographic survey (Appendix E), and the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24). Permission to use the PCQ-24 can be found in Appendix F. The survey collected data to determine each participant's PsyCap score and demographic data. The survey was reviewed and used to summarize the demographic data from the participants. These data were used to purposefully select participants to invite to take the PCQ-24. Data were also used to ensure that the participants were from a variety of backgrounds, grade levels, and-or subjects taught. The participants for the interviews were sent an electronic letter (Appendix G) with a greeting, a brief description of PsyCap and the topic of study, the purpose of the study, a request to participate, and consent was obtained in the survey. Upon consent, 30- to 45-minute interviews were scheduled. Prior to the interviews, each participant was sent their PCQ-24 scores with an explanation of PsyCap and the meaning of each component of HERO (Appendix H). The online interviews were conducted, recorded, and

transcribed through Zoom. In person interviews were recorded on a voice recording app and transcribed through parrot.ai. In person or online were dependent on the participants' preference, using the interview protocol (Appendix I). The transcripts were reviewed using voice recording to ensure accuracy. Five participants chose in person and 13 Zoom. Member checking occurred, by two emergent qualitative experts, after the interviews to ensure accuracy of the transcribed interview. Handwritten notes were also used in addition to recordings and transcriptions in data analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Limitations/Delimitations

This study was limited to SCTs in suburban or rural Central Eastern Virginia, excluding urban populations. This study did not include other areas of Virginia, so the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other parts of the state. The study includes only SCTs. First-career teachers did not share their PsyCap score or perspectives. Teachers who were firstcareer teachers were not invited to participate. SCTs who teach in states other than Virginia were also not included.

Data Collection

Before collecting data, approval was obtained from the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) through the VT IRB. The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative training on Social Behavioral Research was completed (Appendix J).

After obtaining approval from the superintendent or director of human resources, an email was sent with an introduction, information on the purpose of the study, a request to have district approval for employees to participate in the study, and a request to send emails to participants who fit the criteria. Teachers who volunteered to take the PsyCap-24 indicated in

their survey consent to be interviewed. Then, an email was sent to the teachers who fit the criteria for the PCQ-24 and indicated consent to interview. The teachers who agreed to participate received an email with an introduction, an explanation of the purpose of the study, a request to participate in the demographic survey, and a link to the QuestionPro survey.

Online surveys through QuestionPro were used to collect demographic data from the participants. Demographic questions on the survey included questions on current grade level and subjects taught, level of education, age, gender, race or ethnicity, number of years teaching, and grade levels and/or subjects taught. QuestionPro was also used to collect answers from the PCQ for each participant. Data from the PCQ were input into Google sheets, and each respondent received a numeric identification code.

Interview response data were collected through scheduled 30-to-45-minute semistructured interviews. Audio and video were recorded using Zoom for online interviews or a voice recording device if in person, and protocol questions were used to collect data from the participants. Interview protocols can be found in Appendix I; the data collected in the interviews were analyzed by identifying themes, repeated keywords, and significant statements. as described in Creswell and Poth (2018). This information was used to draw conclusions from these data.

Measurement of PsyCap

With the movement of research into positive aspects of psychology, the PCQ-24 was developed by Luthans et al. (2006) to measure and study ways to develop PsyCap. Since its publication, the PCQ-24 has undergone extensive analyses and trials from populations representing careers in service, manufacturing, tech, education, military, and cross-cultural components (Luthans et al., 2006).

The PCQ-24 has six items to measure each of the four components of PsyCap. The combined score of these features gives an individual's level of positive PsyCap. The four components are hope, (self)efficacy, resiliency, and optimism, often referred to as HERO, and have been designed researched and validated (Davidson & Begley, 2012; Jensen, 2020; Luthans, 2002; Pluess, 2015; Reivich & Shatte, 2003; Snyder, 2002). Characteristics of other widely recognized measures were used in development of the PCQ-24 (Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Unlike other measures of psychology, this Likert scale was developed specifically for use in the workplace. Using foundational measures in the four components of PsyCap (HERO), the PCQ-24 was developed as a tool for leaders to better understand how to develop their staff (Avey et al., 2011; Da et al., 2021; Davidson & Begley, 2012; Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Pluess, 2015; Reivich & Shatte, 2003; Snyder, 2002).

Instrument Design and Validity

To measure the PsyCap of a select group and for the PsyCap to be measured and upheld to rigorous scientific study standards and evidence-based applications, valid and reliable measures are necessary. Figure 2 shows a sample of the validated self-report PsyCap. Although there is an implicit, projective measure for PsyCap the PCQ-24 is widely recognized and is used in almost all PsyCap research across fields (Casad, 2015; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Tosten & Toprak, 2017; Zhou & Zheng, 2022).

Figure 2. *A Sampling of Items From the PCQ-24*

Instructions: These statements describe how you may think about yourself right now. Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Agree 5	Strongly Agree 6

4. I feel confident helping to set targets/goals in my work area	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it and moving on. (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best.	1	2	3	4	5	6

The PCQ-24 includes six items measuring each of the four traits (HERO), with sample questions shown in Figure 2 (see also Luthans et al. [2006 for the validity of this scale or Mind Garden [http://www.mindgarden.com] for more information, resources, and the permission process). The items used in the PCQ-24 were adapted from previously established measures on hope (Snyder et al., 1996), efficacy (Bandura et al., 1999), resilience (Wagnild & Young, 1993), and optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985). There is evidence-based support for the selection of items included in the survey. To measure the specific domain of work and not to measure the individual's PsyCap as a whole, the adaptation was selected to include the terms "at work" or "at school" in these items.

The second phase of the study was interviews with the participants. After the participants completed the PCQ survey, they were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews with the researcher.

Table 3.

Interview Procedures Aligned with Creswell and Poth (2018)

Interview Procedure	Clarify Study

Determine the research questions.	The questions for the interview protocol were developed from the findings in relevant scholarly research articles (see Appendix A). All the questions were reviewed and reworded with the guidance of Dr. Carol Mullen, advisor and expert researcher.
Determine interview participants.	Interview participants included purposefully selected SCTs based on working as an SCT, located in a school district within rural or suburban central eastern Virginia.
Define the type of interview.	Semi-structured, 30-to-45-minute interviews were scheduled to enable a clear understanding of the questions and responses.
Collect data using sufficient recording procedures when conducting focus group interviews.	The interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed through the online platform Zoom, when requested, or face-to-face using audio recorders. In addition to recordings and transcriptions, handwritten notes were taken and used in data analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
Design and use interview protocol or interview guide.	The interview protocol can be found in Appendix I.
Refine the interview questions and the questioning method through pilot testing.	The protocol was validated through pilot testing the interview questions with a teacher not included in the research; pilot testing is a suggested way to improve interview questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
Find a distraction-free place for conducting the interview.	The interviews were conducted, according to the participants' preference, either recorded and transcribed through the online platform Zoom or face-to-face. The researcher used Zoom from a home office with no distractions. The face-to face interviews took place in the researcher's office with no distractions. The interviewee selected a distraction-free location for them to use Zoom.
Obtain consent from participants by receiving a completed consent form that was approved by the human relations review board.	The consent form for the interview can be found in Appendix D and was approved by the HRPP through the VT IRB.
Follow good interview procedures.	The interview procedures were followed. The researcher remained within the study limits reviewed, used the protocol to guide questions, concluded the interview within the time indicated, and was considerate and respectful of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Decide transcription logistics ahead of time (p. 165).	The interviews were conducted, according to the participants' preference, either recorded and transcribed through the online platform Zoom or face-to-face. Handwritten notes were taken along with recordings and transcriptions to be used in data analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A Google sheet was stored on the VT Google drive with each participant's name and assigned numeric code. The recordings and transcripts were verified by member checking with the interview participants before data analysis.

Interview Protocol and Alignment

All participants in this study had the same interview protocol (Appendix I). Before the interview, participants were given their score with an explanation of PsyCap and the HERO components (Appendix H). The protocol was formatted according to the method recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018). Prior to and during the interviews, participants received concise definitions and explanations of the HERO and PsyCap terminology. The alignment to the interview questions and the research questions are in Table 4. The sources used to develop the interview questions can also be found in it.

Table 4.

Focus Group Questions Alignment

Research question	Focus group questions	Sources
What is the psychological capital profile of a secondcareer teacher?	1. What are your thoughts of your psychological capital survey results? In 2. your experience, as a beginning teacher, what has most affected your psychological capital result? Align margins of 1, 2, 3 Of 3. the four states of psychological capital, self-efficacy, hope, optimism, or resilience,	(Avey et al., 2011; Luthans et al., 2006; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017)

	which one do you think has had the most impact and how?	
What are the factors that second-career teachers perceive to contribute to their PsyCap?	1. In your understanding, what experiences (personal or professional) have led to your development of psychological capital? If 2. you were to take the psychological capital survey when you first started your role, do you think your score would have been the same? Why or why not? 3. Do you believe a teacher's psychological capital can positively influence a teacher? A student? Why or why not? 4. What resources were made available to you that supported your PsyCap? What did you need that was not offered? 5. Are there any situations in the school environment that negatively affect your psychological capital? Could you give an example? 6. What resources were made available to you that supported your PsyCap? What did you need that was not offered? What 7. would need to be done to increase your positive psychological capital?	(Al-Dhuwaihi & Almohaisin, 2021; Burić & Macuka, 2018; Külekçi Akyavuz, 2021; Larkin et al., 2018) (Johnson et al., 2012; Külekçi Akyavuz, 2021; Raj et al., 2019) (Da et al., 2021; Külekçi Akyavuz, 2021)

Confidential and Ethical Treatment of the Data

All data gathered during the research process were documented and safeguarded with password protection on Google sheets. These datasets are securely stored on the researcher's VT Google drive and backed up on an external drive. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was assigned a random numeric code. The researcher-maintained Google sheets on their VT Google drive containing the survey and the corresponding numeric codes and participant names, all of

which were password protected and accessible solely by the researcher. Focus groups were conducted either in the researcher's office or via the online video platform, Zoom, in a secure, distraction-free environment, utilizing a Zoom room where only the host had permission to admit participants into the meeting.

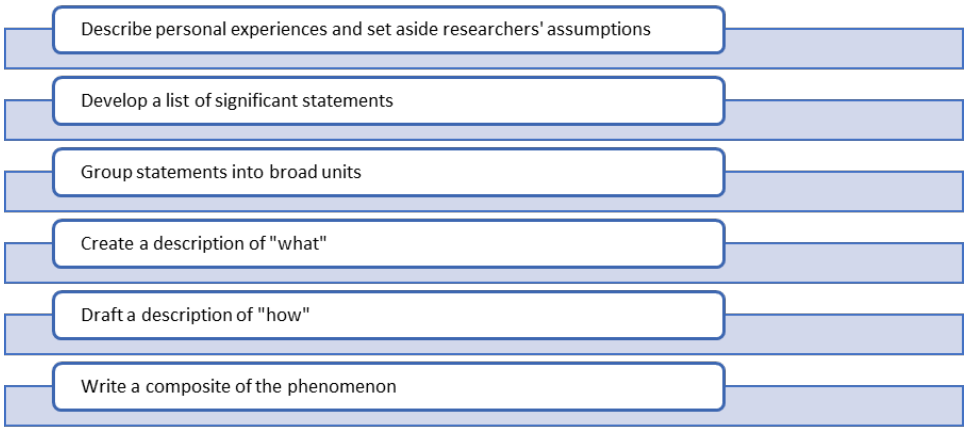
Data Analysis

For this study, the modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen analysis approach, as described by Creswell and Poth (2018), was used. The screener was examined to pull out the participants who were career switchers. Then, the PCQ-24 was scored and the participants' level of PsyCap determined (high, medium, or low). Participants were asked to participate in interviews to reflect on their scores. Interviews were conducted in a secure location or on Zoom. Interview discussions were recorded and then transcribed. The answers were recorded in a Google sheet. The participant numbers are listed down the left side and the questions across the top. Answers were recorded in cross-section between the lines of the Google sheet. By using grouping, keywords, and significant statements, per Creswell and Poth (2018), conclusions were drawn from these data.

Before determining a method of qualitative data analysis, a variety of methods were explored. The qualitative data analysis process includes collecting, managing, and organizing data; memoing ideas; describing and determining codes for themes; developing an interpretation of the data; making a visual representation of the data; and reporting findings (Creswell & Poth 2018). Data from the demographic surveys were entered into Google sheets, with each respondent receiving a numeric identification code. The demographic data from the survey provided an objective method to purposefully select the teacher participants and provide demographic data for all participants.

The data collected from the PCQ-24 survey were entered with the corresponding numeric code of the participant. The scores were coded in each of the four areas according to HERO. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using the online platform Zoom or in person using an audio recording device, according to the participants' preferences. Deductive coding was used to determine common themes emerging from the interview data, which consists of terms from the literature review and research questions. The data were compiled into Google Sheets; this allowed for analysis of text, to gain a clear understanding of the participants' views, and, through color-coding responses, to locate themes that emerged in the research. Two independent readers reviewed the data set after it was analyzed as outlined in Figure 3 below. Interview data analysis followed Creswell and Poth's (2018) processes:

Figure 3. *Qualitative Analysis Process* (Flanagan, 2023)



Summary

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis. Surveys and interviews were sources of data collected. The surveys provided PsyCap and demographic data for the participants and allowed the researcher to purposefully select SCTs for interviews. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to share their expressions on perceived administrative support, mentorship, life experiences, and student misbehavior in their school building and the effects these factors have on their overall PsyCap score. Participant interviews were recorded and transcribed either through an online platform, Zoom, or using an audio recording device in person, according to the participants' preference. Deductive coding was used in the data analysis from the interviews to determine themes, consisting of terms from the literature review and research questions. Conclusions were drawn from the findings, leading to suggestions for improvement, support of SCTs, and best practices for scholars and practitioners.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the Psychological Capital (PsyCap) of second-career teachers (SCTs) and their perceptions of what affects their PsyCap in the workplace by surveying and interviewing second-career teachers in public school districts in central eastern and northern Virginia. The research questions were

1. What is the psychological capital of a second-career teacher?
2. What are the factors that second-career teachers perceive to contribute to their PsyCap?

A demographic survey was used to collect data on participants and to purposefully select

SCTs for further interviews. The results from the demographic survey displayed in Table 5 show 2 elementary teachers, 16 middle school teachers, and 5 high school teachers completed the PsyCap survey.

Baseline participant characteristics were as follows: there were 15 male and 20 female teachers. The age range of the teachers was 20–69 years old; there were 5 SCTs who were 20-29 years old, 12 teachers who were 30-39 years old, 8 teachers were 40–49 years old, 7 teachers were 50–59 years old, and three teachers were 60–69 years old. Fifteen teachers held a master's degree, 19 a bachelor's degree, and 2 did not identify their highest level of education. Although most teachers were White (78%), there was noteworthy representation from other racial backgrounds, with Hispanic (6%), Black (6%), Asian (3%), and multiracial (3%) second-career educators contributing their perspective to the survey. The curriculum taught by SCT participants was diverse, with English (31%), math (26%), science (17%), and history (14%) noted as subjects that were currently taught.

The SCTs' prior careers varied. These included mortgage banker, LPN (licensed practical nurse), operations and planning analyst, fitness instructor, mental health therapist, and substance abuse counselor. Respondents who elected to participate in the interviews are denoted on Table 5 with an asterisk.

Table 5**.**

Demographic Survey of SCT Participants Who Took the PsyCap-24

Teacher	Grade(s) teaching	Degree	Age	Gender	Race	Years taught	Subject(s)	Prior Career
*T1	8	Master's	40-49	M	White	3+	English, Math, Other	Mortgage banker, insurance sales rep
T2	4	Master's	40-49	F	White	3	Elementary	LPN
*T3	6,7,8	Master's	50-59	F	White	3+	History, French	Human resources, nonprofit administration

*T4	6-8	Master's	40-49	F	Hispanic	3+	CTE	interior design intern; assistant director for a childcare center.
T5	K-5	Master's	40-49	F	White	3+	Elementary	Retail
T6	10,11,12	Bachelors	20-29	F	Hispanic	1	Math	Operations and planning analyst
T7	10	Master's	20-29	F	Black	1	English	Substitute
*T8	7	Bachelors	50-59	M	White	1	Science	Database administration
*T9	8	Bachelors	30-39	M	Multiracial	3+	Math	Daycare worker, professional mover
*T10	8	Master's	50-59	F	White	3+	English	Youth minister
*T11	8	Master's	20-29	M	White	3+	Math, Social Studies	Substitute
*T12	6,7,8	Bachelors	30-39	F	White	3	PE	Fitness instructor
*T13	6,7,8	Bachelors	20-29	M	White	2	PE	Substitute
T14	8	Bachelors	30-39	F	White	3+	English	Journalist
T15	6,7,8	Bachelors	30-39	M	Black	3+	Math, Science and Other	Mental health therapist
*T16	7,8	Bachelors	40-49	F	White	3+	math	Juvenile court recorder
*T17	7	Bachelors	60-69	M	White	3+	Social Studies	Non-profit
*T18	7	Bachelors	30-39	M	Black	3+	Math	IA and behavior support
T19	7	Bachelors	30-39	F	White	3	Math	
T20	6	Bachelors	20-29	F	White	1	Science	Agriculture
*T21	6-11	Bachelors	40-49	F	White	3	English, Foreign Language	Videographer, bookkeeper, missionary
T22	9-12	Master's	30-39	M	White	2	English	Journalism
*T23	6	Master's	60-69	F	White	2	History	Substance abuse counselor
T24	9	Bachelors	40-49	F	White	2	Science, History	Forensic Scientist
T25	7	Bachelors	30-39	M	White	3	English, History	Intelligence analyst in the US Air Force
T26	8	Bachelors	30-39	M	Black	1	English	Personal banker
*T27	10-12	Master's	50-59	M	White	3	History, CTE	Law enforcement
*T28	11	Master's	50-59	M	White	3+	Science, History, Other	U.S. Coast Guard Officer
*T29	9-12	Master's	50-59	F	White	2	CTE	Pharmacist
T30	8	Master's	50-59	F	White	3	History	Journalist and communications director
T31	9-12	Bachelors	30-39	F	White	3+	Math	Mechanical Engineer
T32	9-12	Bachelors	30-39	M	White	2	Science, CTE	Sports field manager, Landscape supervisor
T33	12	Other	60-69	M	White	3	English	Attorney
*T34	7	Other	40-49	F	Asian	3	Math	Medical interpreter, corporate banking
T35	6, 7	Master’s	30-39	F	White	3	English	Office manager

Note. Asterisks (*) denote participants who chose to participate in the interviews. CTE = career and technical education; F = female; IA = instructional aide; M = male; PE = physical education; rep = representative.

A survey was used to collect data on the PsyCap of SCTs and select participants for interviews. Table 6 shows the results from the PCQ-24; 35 SCT participants completed the Psychological Capital survey. Two elementary teachers, 21 middle school teachers, and 11 high school teachers completed the survey. The PCQ-24 is a Likert-scaled assessment that uses selfrating in various statements. Teachers were asked to score themselves on a scale of 1–6 in relation to the statements in the PCQ-24. The PCQ-24 includes six items measuring each of the four traits (HERO). The items used in the PCQ-24 were adapted from the established measures on hope (Snyder et al., 1996), self-efficacy (Bandura et al., 1999), resilience (Wagnild & Young, 1993), and optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985). To measure the specific domain of work (and not the individual's PsyCap as a whole), the adaptation was selected to include the terms "at work" or "at school" in these items. SCTs' hope scores ranged from a low of 2.3 (T8) to a high of 6 (T5, T14, T15, T23, T28), for an average score of 4.83 in the domain of hope. Efficacy scores ranged from 3.1 (T30) to a score of 6 (multiple respondents); the participants had an average efficacy score of 4.87. Resilience scores of SCT participants ranged from 3.8 (T6, T13, T20) to 5.8 (T3, T19, T28), for an average score of 5.02 in resilience. Optimism scores varied from 3.1 (T25) to 6 (T3, T14, T15). The average optimism score from respondents is 4.54. The overall Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PsyCap-24) scores ranged from 3.30 (T8) to 5.9 (T3); the average PsyCap score for all participating SCTs was 4.91. Teachers T3, T14, T15, and T28 consistently scored high across all dimensions, indicating a strong PsyCap. SCTs T8, T11, T12, T13, T20, and T25 scored lower in some domains, particularly in optimism, contributing to

slightly lower overall PsyCap scores. The SCTs studied indicated an overall positive PsyCap, with efficacy being the highest-rated dimension. Responses among teachers varied in the remaining domains, showing differences in their levels of hope, resilience, and optimism. The scores of the domains are averaged together to give the participant a total PsyCap score. Table 6 shows the scores of each SCT and the average of the group in each domain of HERO.

Table 6.

PCQ-24 Second –Career Teacher Scores

	Score (range				
Teacher	**Hope**	**Efficacy**	**Resilience**	**Optimism**	**Overall PsyCap Score**
*T1	5.7	6	5.7	5.5	5.7
T2	5	5	4.3	3.5	4.4
*T3	5.8	6	5.8	6	5.9
*T4	5.1	6	5.8	6	5.7
T5	6	5.3	5.7	5.5	5.6
T6	3.1	3.8	4.5	4.5	3.9
T7	5.5	5	5	5.3	5.2
*T8	2.3	3.5	4.1	3.3	3.3
*T9	4.8	4.8	5	3.6	4.5
*T10	4	4.6	5.3	3.6	4.3
*T11	5.5	4.6	4.5	3.3	4.4
*T12	3.8	5	5.3	3.3	4.3
*T13	3.6	4	3.8	3.3	3.6
T14	6	6	5.3	4.3	5.4
T15	6	5.5	5.5	5.8	5.7
*T16	5.5	4.6	5	4.8	4.9
*T17	5.6	6	5.3	5.5	5.6
*T18	4.8	5	5	4.2	4.7
T19	5.8	5.3	5.8	5	5.4
T20	3.3	4	3.8	4.3	3.8
*T21	4.5	4.3	4.8	4	4.4
T22	4.5	5.3	5.6	5.3	5.1
*T23	6	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.6

T24	4.3	4.6	5	4	4.4
T25	4	3.3	5.6	3.1	4
T26	5.5	5.1	5.1	4.8	5.1
*T27	5	4.3	5.1	4.3	4.6
*T28	6	6	5.8	5.6	5.8
*T29	5	4.6	5	5	4.9
T30	3.5	3.1	4.3	4.2	3.7
T31	5.3	6	5.1	5.3	5.4
T32	4.1	4.8	4.5	5	4.6
T33	5	4.6	5.2	4.1	4.7
*T34	4.3	4.1	3.8	3.8	4
T35	4.6	5	5.6	4.3	4.8
Average	4.82	4.87	5.04	4.54	4.821

Note. Asterisks (*) denote participants who chose to participate in the interviews.

Table 7 displays the demographic information for the teachers who participated in the interviews. There were 18 teachers who participated in the interviews. Thirteen public schools and 6 districts were represented in this study, four suburban districts and two rural districts. The participants consisted of 14 middle school teachers, three high school teachers and one who teaches middle and high school. The racial demographic was 14 white teachers, one African American, one Hispanic, one multiracial and one Asian. The participants were composed of nine males and nine females.

Table 7

Interview participant demographic information

Teacher	Grade(s) teaching	Degree	Age	Gender	Race	Years taught	Subject(s)	Prior Career
*T1	8	Master's	40-49	M	White	3+	English, Math, Other	Mortgage banker, insurance sales rep
*T3	6,7,8	Master's	50-59	F	White	3+	History, French	Human resources, nonprofit administration
*T4	6-8	Master's	40-49	F	Hispanic	3+	CTE	interior design intern; assistant director for a childcare center.
*T8	7	Bachelors	50-59	M	White	1	Science	Database administration

*T9	8	Bachelors	30-39	M	Multiracial	3+	Math	Daycare worker, professional mover
*T10	8	Master's	50-59	F	White	3+	English	Youth minister
*T11	8	Master's	20-29	M	White	3+	Math, Social Studies	Substitute
*T12	6,7,8	Bachelors	30-39	F	White	3	PE	Fitness instructor
*T13	6,7,8	Bachelors	20-29	M	White	2	PE	Substitute
*T16	7,8	Bachelors	40-49	F	White	3+	math	Juvenile court recorder
*T17	7	Bachelors	60-69	M	White	3+	Social Studies	Non-profit
*T18	7	Bachelors	30-39	M	Black	3+	Math	IA and behavior support
*T21	6-11	Bachelors	40-49	F	White	3	English, Foreign Language	Videographer, bookkeeper, missionary
*T23	6	Master's	60-69	F	White	2	History	Substance abuse counselor
*T27	10-12	Master's	50-59	M	White	3	History, CTE	Law enforcement
*T28	11	Master's	50-59	M	White	3+	Science, History, Other	U.S. Coast Guard Officer
*T29	9-12	Master's	50-59	F	White	2	CTE	Pharmacist
*T34	7	Other	40-49	F	Asian	3	Math	Medical interpreter, corporate banking

Table 8 displays the components shared by participants during the interviews that most affected their PsyCap at work. There were 18 second-career teachers who responded to interview requests. The table lists the factors in a school building that participant reported impacted their PsyCap scores. One factor was noted by 16 participants, and another was mentioned by 15. Common themes from the interviews of 18 SCTs were mentorship/peer support (16); school climate (15); administration (13); prior life experiences (13); and extra duties required (12). Additional factors affecting SCTs' PsyCap scores were evidenced by 18 respondents' comments: handling student misbehavior (8); choosing to be a teacher (8) student-teacher relationships (7); SCT preparation programs (5); professional development (4); and compensation (4).

Table 8.

Participants Perceptions of Influences on Their PsyCap Scores

Factor	T1	T3	T4	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13	T16	T17	T18	T21	T23	T27	T28	T29	T34
Mentor/peer	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X

Climate	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Administration	X		X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Prior experience		X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Extra duties	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Student misbehavior				X		X		X	X		X		X	X	X			X
Choice	X	X	X		X									X	X	X	X	
Student-teacher relationship	X	X				X						X	X			X		X
Prep program		X						X		X	X					X	X	
Professional development	X												X		X	X		
Compensation				X	X		X								X			

In this chapter, the outcomes of individual interview questions are displayed, along with findings, accompanied by corresponding responses from interviewees. Quotations from participants have undergone editing to eliminate redundant words and conversational fillers, such as "you know," to enhance the overall readability. Eighteen SCTs shared their viewpoints through interviews (5 face-to-face and 13 over Zoom) on what career components at their school building have affected their PsyCap at work.

Findings

All SCT participants were asked the same questions (Table 8). Prior to responding, they took the PsyCap survey (PsyCap-24). The PsyCap scores of HREO and an overall score were provided to teachers before their interview and referred to when they reflected on the following questions in Table 9. Along with the PCQ-24 results, the responses to the interview questions were used to develop findings focused on the research questions.

Table 9.

Interview Questions for Second-Career Teachers

1. What are your thoughts of your psychological capital survey results?

2. In your experience, as a beginning teacher, what has most affected your psychological capital result?
3. In your understanding, what experiences (personal or professional) have led to your development of psychological capital?
4. If you were to take the psychological capital survey when you first started your role, do you think your score would have been the same? Why or why not?
5. Do you believe a teacher's psychological capital can positively influence a teacher? A student? Why or why not?
6. Of the four states of psychological capital, self-efficacy, hope, optimism, or resilience, which one do you think has had the most impact and how?
7. What resources were made available to you that supported your PsyCap? What did you need that was not offered?
8. Are there any situations in the school environment that negatively affect your psychological capital? Could you give an example?
9. What resources were made available to you that supported your PsyCap? What did you need that was not offered?
10. What would need to be done to increase your positive psychological capital?

Finding 1

Second-career teachers have an average workplace positive PsyCap of 4.8 and the psychological capital results are an accurate reflection of each participant's individual hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism.

Analysis to Support Finding 1. SCTs were surveyed and completed the PCQ-24. This survey measured the teacher's responses to the four components of positive PsyCap: hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism often referred to collectively as "HERO" (Luthans et al., 2006). The survey is comprised of 24 statements with the four components of HERO (six items each). A 6-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6) was used to rate the components of HERO. The PCQ-24 was adapted for use in the context of working in a school setting. With permission, the statements were reworded based on the teachers' perspectives.

Prior research showed that the internal reliability scores for the subscales are as follows: 0.86 for self-efficacy, 0.85 for hope, 0.72 for resilience, and 0.73 for optimism (Akhtar et al., 2019; Külekçi Akyavuz, 2021; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Sood & Puri, 2023). The overall reliability of the PCQ-24 is 0.91. A higher score on these components indicates a greater level of the respective constructs of HERO. Thirty-four SCTs completed the survey. The total scores, representing the cumulative PsyCap, ranged from 3.68 to 5.85; the average total score was 4.82, indicating a relatively high overall PsyCap among the SCTs surveyed.

Eighteen teachers were interviewed, and all generally agreed with the overall PCQ-24 results. These results are in alignment with the research done by Luthans (2002) on the validity of the PCQ-24 and confirmed in further studies (Casad, 2015; Külekçi Akyavuz, 2021; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Sood & Puri, 2023) Table 10 displays the SCTs' responses when asked their initial thoughts about their survey results. They stated that they were not surprised at their scores, as they felt that the assessments aligned with their self-perception. One teacher said, "I would say those are all pretty accurate. … I would say, I have a lot of psychological capital … and all those things sound like me" (T1). Five SCTs (T1, T13, T16, T17, T28) attributed their higher positive PsyCap to their personal resilience and life experiences. One SCT expressed having a natural disposition to the factors of HERO, stating, "I definitely feel as though I am on the higher end when it comes to self-efficacy and optimism. I feel like there are a lot of people who are not very optimistic in education right now. But I tend to feel like I am on the upper side of optimistic" (T16). Nine SCTs indicated that scores were lower due to their classroom behaviors or because they worked at hard-to-staff schools. T10 stated, "I knew my scores would be lower [due to] the dynamic of my classroom." Another teacher who reflected on their score discussed classroom behaviors then stated, "the thing that strikes me now is I'm getting my joy

and benefit from teaching from about a third of the students…There's always a significant percentage of the class that if I don't lock them down, I can't teach. And that's where most of my effort goes" (T8). Three teachers indicated that the results were slightly different than they thought, such as T23, who said, "I think my score is off. It's a little bit higher scoring than what I think. But overall, it sounds about right."

Table 10.

SCTs' Perception of PsyCap-24 Results

Response	T1	T3	T4	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13	T16	T17	T18	T21	T23	T28	T29	T34
Agree	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Partially agree			X						X					X			
Disagree																	

Finding 2

Mentorship, peer support, and having strong peer support from colleagues' are perceived to be an influence SCTs' positive PsyCap at work.

Analysis to Support Finding 2. The SCTs expressed a strong sense of camaraderie and support within their school environments. Several teachers emphasize the positive impact of having a mentor (17 out of 18), especially during the first few years of teaching. Table 11 shows reoccurring themes among mentorship and colleague relationships with SCTs. Themes that emerged with in mentorship are having a supportive staff, having a positive mentor, having a positive relationship with the school team, collaborating with colleagues, having support from coaches, and the impact of the lack of an effective or present mentor.

Having a positive mentor was reported as a crucial influence for second-career teachers not only for professional development but also for navigating the administrative aspects of teaching, such as the individualized education programs (IEPs) or specific school-related business. There is evidence for the effectiveness of formal mentoring programs in developing PsyCap and enhancing performance for beginning teachers. Studies in mentorship have shown similar results (Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019; Tang, 2020). Effective mentoring builds a new teacher's PsyCap, which is similar to the findings for SCTs. Engaging in meaningful mentoring offers opportunities for the mentee to encounter mastery, observe modeling, and experience high levels of efficacy, all of which have been demonstrated to enhance positive PsyCap (Bandura & Freeman, 1997; Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019). Interactions with an effective mentor leads to high-quality mentoring relationships, and as a result, their PsyCap grows (Carter & YoussefMorgan, 2019).

SCTs also discuss the importance of mentorship in their professional development and growth as an educator. One participant reflected on the impact of their mentor when they first began teaching and expressed, "Having a mentor here at that time was good and... knowing I could ask them anything to and get help if I needed it" (T2). Teachers expressed the value of collaborating with a colleague to develop their own teaching skills. They conveyed the importance of learning from experienced educators and gaining practical insights to improve their own teaching methods. Reflecting on their own experience, T13 stated about their mentor, "She was fantastic. I went to her class every day. It's like, even though I'm teaching it, I want to understand the [process]. I wanted to see a professional, who knew it and knew it well." Having a positive relationship with the school team is noted as a significant factor contributing to a positive second-career teaching experience (7 out of 18). The SCTs credit their high PsyCap

score to the people and staff in the school buildings, emphasizing the accessibility of colleagues for guidance and assistance. They feel confident in approaching peers with questions and value the overall support from veteran teachers. “I wouldn't have such a high score if it weren't for [my mentor and] what I'm surrounded by. I really think that I can go to people and ask questions about ... anything. [T]he school building I work in, the people, [and] the staff are extremely supportive” (T23). One SCT also commented on the benefits of accessing the knowledge and effectiveness of experienced teachers when they mentored new second-career teachers: “[J]ust think of all that knowledge and efficacy that is, that could be used to mentor new teachers and maybe if you made new teachers lives a little bit easier and it gave them more support with mentors, you'd have less absences.” (T3). Providing additional support and mentorship to new SCTs leads to a more supportive and collaborative teaching environment (Külekçi Akyavuz, 2021; Mullen & Flanagan, 2023).

Collaboration with colleagues develops a positive atmosphere that creates a closeness among teachers (Polatcan & Cansoy, 2019; Raj et al., 2019). SCTs feel comfortable discussing personal matters and appreciate the unwavering assistance from their close-knit group. “I think the team that I work with really brings me up, even when I'm having a bad day. I know I can talk to them about anything … and they're there to help no matter what” (T13). They stressed the significance of building trust and friendships with colleagues who understand the demands of their job. Teachers often reported that their department or team of teachers lifted them up when having a bad day or cited colleagues’ support as a reason for their positive PsyCap scores.

Two SCTs (T8, T9) discussed having a coach as an effective mentor figure for them in the first year. The coaches who had the most effect were experienced teachers who were viewed as having supported the SCTs directly in the classroom. The SCTs also relayed that watching

coaches teach and maintain classroom control (when it was difficult) improved their own effectiveness despite the challenges in their classroom.

Second-career teachers also reflected on the impact of the lack of an effective or present mentor (T8, T9 and T10). Three educators faced challenges with an unhelpful mentor. One teacher reflected that when they changed schools in their second year, they lacked the same level of support. This lack of guidance made their next few years in the school building challenging. The mentors for the three teachers were reported to be either out of the building (on sick leave or not located in their building) and dealing with personal and/or school-related issues or a negative influence on their mentee. The teachers faced numerous difficulties in their early years, and two SCTs reported having considered leaving the teaching profession during those years.

Overall, when discussing mentor support in the building, participants highlighted in their responses the significance of a supportive and collaborative peer, the role of mentors in professional growth and efficacy in teaching, and the positive impact of experienced teachers mentoring SCTs in the education field. The responses of the teachers reflected the need for a supportive network and trustworthy individuals in navigating the complexities of teaching.

Table 11.

SCTs' Perception of the Impact of Peer Support on PsyCap

Themes	T1	T3	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13	T16	T17	T18	T21	T23	T27	T28	T29	T34
Supportive staff	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X				X
Positive mentor		X		X						X		X	X		X	X	X
Relationships with team	X				X	X	X		X		X						X
Collaboration with colleagues	X					X				X							X
Coaches support			X	X						X							

Lack of a mentor	X	X	X

Finding 3

The school's climate among the staff members and their work relationships was reported to affect second-career teachers' positive psychological capital at work.

Analysis to Support Finding 3. Respondents reported that the school building's climate and culture greatly impact their personal PsyCap at work (15 out of 18). Common themes in culture are school community, teacher attitudes, collaboration, negative climates, and relationships with colleagues as portrayed in Table 12.

Eight participants stated that school communities among staff was an influence on their PsyCap. Positive relationships and a sense of community among staff members are noted as crucial for maintaining a cohesive and supportive work environment (Ansley et al., 2019; Daniel et al., 2019; Mullen & Flanagan, 2023). T10 noted that a key reason teachers continue working at their school is the community of the teachers they work with daily. Participants noted the importance of teachers forming a positive, supportive, and united community. A strong sense of unity, even in the face of challenges, is essential for a healthy working environment, as similar research indicates, and contributes to enhanced efficacy within the teaching community (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). The SCTs stated that the positive community was a driving force in their feelings of hope and optimism at school (Moore & Carter-Hicks, 2014). Even though a positive and supportive community can lift SCTs' PsyCap, seven of the participants also noted that negative attitudes of peers influenced their PsyCap negativity.

Many respondents noted that teachers' attitudes significantly influence the overall atmosphere in the school either negatively or positively among teachers and can affect both

colleagues and students. One teacher, T28, stated a negative staff can influence the entire building. Several teachers reflected that other staff members negatively influence the building when negative feelings and attitudes are shared repeatedly without any positive results in a conversation. Participants also stated that teachers' negative attitudes also affect the students and the climate of the building. Six out of 15 teachers stated that this can lead to feelings of hopelessness and general apathy.

Collaboration among peers is also emphasized by the participants. The SCTs note the need for the knowledge and wisdom of seasoned educators that are trusted and willing to share. T12 also states that the collaboration provided by their team allows them to feel supported in facing day-to-day challenges. One participant reflected on this stating: "The team environment has been really useful. [They] are really supportive... I may be exhausted [but] I want to be with those people so I can go in and do what I need to do" (T18). Participants also noted that effective communication and the ability to share experiences and concerns with colleagues are important for a healthy work environment and building positive PsyCap.

Negative climate in a school building has a deep and lasting impact on its culture. Participants; T4, T16, T18, T29, T27 and T34, relayed the impact of a negative climate in the school building on their personal PsyCap at work. T4 and T18 shared that a negative climate can affect an entire school. T4 stated that the negativity "just snowballs and you end up in a toxic environment." T18 and T29 also stated that students are affected by the negative climate of the staff "they can tell if you aren't enjoying your job and if you have no hope for, you know, optimism, they definitely can tell and then affects the same way. Why would they feel positive and optimistic if the teacher in the front of the classroom doesn't?" (T29). Fostering a collaborative culture is essential in enhancing productivity, boosting morale, and mitigating

burnout and conflicts among teaching staff (B. Brown et al., 2018; Daniel et al., 2019; Moore & Carter-Hicks, 2014). This encourages teachers to pool resources, plan activities collectively, share expertise, and promotes a cooperative, self-motivated staff ethos rather than a competitive one (Ansley et al., 2019; Daniel et al., 2019; Mullen & Flanagan, 2023).

Respondents also noted the importance of relationships with colleagues in their overall PsyCap in the school building. T17 stated, “I'm so thrilled with the staff... that we get together. We're so cohesive together.... everyone seems to genuinely like each other and that's important for us to have to like each other.” T1 and T10 also expressed the importance of having a group of colleagues to vent their frustrations to, who can also help in a positive way. All three teachers shared the value of having a group of colleagues to share their success with and to problem solve at work. These relationships raise the PsyCap of SCTs.

Table 12.

SCTs’ Perception of the Impact of School Climate on PsyCap

Theme	T1	T3	T4	T10	T11	T12	T13	T16	T17	T18	T21	T23	T27	T29	T34
School community	X			X	X	X			X		X	X		X	
Teacher attitudes	X	X	X				X	X		X				X	
Collaboration		X		X		X			X		X	X			
Negative climates			X					X		X			X	X	X
Relationship with colleagues	X				X	X			X						

Finding 4

A second-career teacher’s relationship with their administration was perceived to affect their positive psychological capital at work.

Analysis to Support Finding 4. Positive support from an administrator was reported to be a factor in a teacher's psychological capital (8 out of 13). Participants expressed appreciation for administrators who provided support, encouragement, and positive feedback to them during the school year (Balcerzyk, 2021). Teachers also reported that administrators who contributed to a positive work environment were influential in making teachers feel valued and motivated (Balcerzyk, 2021; Mullen & Flanagan, 2023). Several teachers noted the impact of encouragement to be creative in teaching on their self-efficacy. "I think part of that might be because I did have such a good, leadership team. I mean…our, principal…was just magnificent. And the other administrators were great too. I always felt supported" (T28). Supportive administrators contribute to a positive work environment, and like first-career teachers, secondcareer teachers also report that they feel valued and motivated at work (K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009; Dicke et al., 2020; Mullen & Flanagan, 2023; Parker et al., 2012). Flexibility and encouragement (T17, T21 and T24) to be creative are also highlighted as positive aspects of administration.

Lack of support (7 out of 13) was stated as a negative impact for SCTs. Some respondents felt that there was a lack of understanding from their building-level administrators about their unique challenges. T1 and T10 discussed the challenge of feeling supported with integrated services or exceptional education roles. Other SCTs cited instances of feeling unsupported, especially during challenging situations that negatively affected their resilience and overall job satisfaction.

Communication from an administrator or building level leader was also noted as a factor for responders' PsyCap. The teachers relayed that they appreciate constructive feedback when it

is provided in a supportive manner and its positivity contributed to their professional growth. The importance of administrators creating an environment where teachers feel comfortable asking for feedback is also highlighted by some participants as also mentioned by their firstcareer teacher counterparts in other studies (Casely-Hayford et al., 2022; Külekçi Akyavuz,

2021; Larkin et al., 2018; Lavy & Bocker, 2018; Mullen & Flanagan, 2023; Raj et al., 2019).

However, negative experiences, like those with micromanaging administrators lead to feelings of frustration and a sense of being undermined.

> I worked for an administrator who was... manipulative and micromanaged things in a way that really kind of chipped away at people feeling like they were good at anything. And I think that you can take that you can deal with it so much, but up to a certain point then it just starts kind of beat you down. (T16)

The need for clear communication from administrators is mentioned by participants, especially regarding expectations, evaluations, and the purpose of observations (Range et al., 2013). Miscommunication and lack of transparency were cited as factors that negatively impacted the overall teacher-administrator relationship and a teacher's positive PsyCap. Positive impacts were noted when administrators fostered a collaborative and non-judgmental atmosphere in the school building.

Respondents emphasized the significant role that administrators play in shaping the school environment, teacher morale, and overall job satisfaction. Positive support, effective communication, and a collaborative approach are seen as crucial elements for a healthy teacheradministrator relationship. Conversely, negative experiences, such as micromanagement or lack of support, can have detrimental effects on teachers' well-being and professional

engagement. The role of administration in influencing teachers' PsyCap is emphasized, with positive administration contributing to increased PsyCap and job satisfaction. Negative experiences with administration, such as feeling undervalued or unsupported, can lead to a decline in PsyCap.

Table 13

SCTs' Perception of the Impact of Administration on PsyCap

Themes	T1	T4	T8	T10	T16	T17	T18	T21	T23	T27	T28	T29	T34
Positive support	X		X			X	X	X			X	X	X
Lack of support		X		X	X				X	X		X	X
Communication	X			X		X	X						
Micromanagement					X	X							
Constructive feedback						X							X

Finding 5

Second-career teachers perceive that their prior-life experiences in other fields of work to build or influence the psychological capital of themselves in the workplace.

Analysis to Support Finding 5. Respondents discussed several areas prior to becoming a teacher that influenced the positive psychological capital that they experienced at work. Twelve participants reflected on aspects of their prior careers, parenting, and adaptability that increased their psychological capital in the school. Prior research on SCTs has shown that they have the qualities of expertise, motivation, level of self-direction, beliefs, and skills that differ from those of first-career teachers (Baeten & Meeus, 2016; Paniagua & Sánchez-Martí, 2018; Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021). T3 stated, "I mean, because of the experience I had, I was fine. I think if I had

been less resilient from experiences that I've had in my life that I might have just given up after the first, I don't know, three months even." Ten of 12 participants discussed the impact of their previous career(s) on their ability to maintain hope and resiliency as a teacher. Several teachers cited working in daycares or being substitutes as a precursor to teaching. T21 echoed the thinking of other participants who discussed their backgrounds in the human resource department, nonprofits, and corporate work which helped them understand a directive from a leader in a corporate structure to become adaptable at work:

I think working some in the traditional workplace right out of college was a good experience to understand what it means to have an employer. I think a lot of times people go into teaching, and you're the teacher, you're the leader. It's hard to envision yourself as an employee as well. Another participant mentioned that having a prior career as a military officer prepared them to navigate stressful situations, fostering confidence, resilience, and hope. These varied prior-career experiences boost the resiliency and efficacy of the respondents as they navigate the teaching profession (Baeten & Meeus, 2016; Ruitenburg & Tigchelaar, 2021).

The ability to adapt to different situations and the belief that they can be successful was noted by six of the participants who discussed prior life experiences that led to their current PsyCap. One teacher reflected on significant life transitions, some which involved moving from a career in human resources in Europe to becoming a teacher. Many SCTs made the decision to pursue a new degree to start teaching and this empowered them to be successful. Several participants discussed personal challenges especially in their school-aged years, such as having a speech impediment, learning disabilities, a general dislike for school, and overcoming selfadvocacy issues. The participants who discussed their adaptability and resiliency cited

previous stressful jobs and life experiences that have prepared them for the challenges of teaching.

> I was very nervous about it at the time because I thought I'm going to be competing for a job with people (who) do this for a living. Here I am a 40-year-old brand new teacher who's going to hire me? I was adamant that I was going to be successful at it just because...I work harder than other teachers. Because I don't have all the background, they're going see me as a 40-year-old that should be their 19th year of teaching. Here I am. I'm brand new at it. (T17)

SCTs also noted that their children influenced their desire to succeed and boosted their resiliency in teaching. “The benefit that I had was I am a parent, I had two daughters that were in public schools. I saw things from their perspective, from a kid's perspective and as a parent's perspective” (T17). Several participants discussed their less-than-positive experience in public school and how this encourages them to connect and support students who may feel awkward or struggle and create a positive learning environment.

Table 14

SCTs’ Perception of the Impact of Prior Life Experience on PsyCap

Themes	T3	T4	T8	T9	T13	T16	T17	T18	T21	T27	T28	T34
Prior work	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Adaptability	X		X	X				X		X		X
Parenting	X	X	X	X	X		X					

Finding 6

Extra-duties assigned to second-career teachers such as bus duty, after school meetings and documentation (classroom data, IEPs, behavior plans) were perceived to impact their overall psychological capital.

Analysis to Support Finding 6. Respondents cited that the extra duties required of teachers have negatively impacted their PsyCap. Additional studies have also noted that with first-career teachers, the level of workload or additional responsibilities significantly affects workplace PsyCap (De Stercke et al., 2015). Teachers experiencing an overwhelming workload, characterized by numerous preparations or additional duties, often express lower levels of job satisfaction (Ansley et al., 2019). SCTs cited instances that took away from their planning such as coverage and extensive meetings; T8 stated, "[I] usually [only] have two or three planning periods a week because I have to cover for teachers that aren't there." When discussing the number of meetings being held after school and during planning, T4 stated that "respecting teachers' time would definitely increase a lot of positive capital. Twelve-hour days pretty much kill morale and everyone around you." In their new school, T11 reflected, "I feel like I have a much better work-life balance now that I'm a few years into teaching at this point." In the case of secondary teachers, who may have many course preparations and additional responsibilities like students' extracurricular activities the excessive workload can decrease enjoyment in work (De Stercke et al., 2015; Mullen & Flanagan, 2023).

Some of the participants noted the impact of the additional duties, such as data collection tools and Individualized Education Programs. Most participants discussed the difficulty of having unincumbered planning time. Overall, SCTs expressed a need for a more balanced

workload, recognition and respect of their time, and ongoing consideration for teachers' extraduties, all of which negatively impacted their PsyCap.

Data Points

Additional factors related to SCTs' PsyCap were shared throughout the interviews. Fewer than 50% of participants reported these as factors that impact their PsyCap at work. Therefore, these are datapoints (not findings).

Data Point 1

The approach to handling student misbehavior and the ability to have support for misbehavior occurring in the classroom and around the school is a reoccurring theme in the responses from SCTs affecting their psychological capital scores.

Eight of the 18 participants conveyed concerns and reflected on student misbehavior in several responses. T8 articulated frustration with misbehavior and academic performance, stating that, "seeing the very, very low-test scores, especially when my eight-year-old can sometimes pass these tests" affects their PsyCap. Managing diverse student behaviors emerged as a topic with several participants as well. T8 also discussed the presence of engaged students, noting, "there's always those kids that... have their hands in the air... and there's always those kids that you got to split them away from anyone that wants to talk to them." The challenge of class size also was discussed with management; T12 remarked, "I teach six classes and they're way bigger than I think... the average class size was 25, and now it's 32 in the non-collaborative settings."

Disciplinary challenges included in the discussion encompassed disruptive students and a perceived lack of consequences. Support systems and protocols were discussed as crucial for teachers' success and level of PsyCap in the school building. One teacher (T27) stressed the importance of having detention as a tool for maintaining discipline. Another highlighted the

significance of supportive colleagues and administrators, stating, "I'm not an island working at a middle school. I can't do it all on my own. I need the support" (T23).

Overall, student misbehavior is often cited as a barrier to teacher's positive PsyCap (Carter & Youssef-Morgan, 2019; Mullen & Flanagan, 2023; Singh, 2018), with many teachers also citing the perception of administration and "lack of consequences" as a reason for decline in their PsyCap (Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Data Point 2

Second-career teachers noted that they had higher efficacy scores due to choosing the profession of teaching after having another career. When answering questions about factors that lead to their overall PsyCap score, eight out of 18 respondents (SCTs) expressed feeling empowered by the decision to pursue teaching: "I came into the profession, and then I [made] the deliberate choice to come and become a teacher" (T28). Participant T29 emphasized the positive impact of choice on their PsyCap scores, saying, "I'm not surprised that I have a positive attitude with a new career. I mean, it's something I wanted to do. I wouldn't have switched careers if I weren't wanting to do this."

Participant T23 articulated their confidence in teaching because of the choice they made to switch careers: "I feel confident, I don't feel like I'm lacking anything. I feel prepared." Additionally, SCT T4 explained the reasoning behind switching careers as "you're tired of just being in the mainstream of not doing anything."

Also, T9 shared insights into the nature of teaching, expressing love for the constantly changing field of mathematics and that they chose to teach to share their love of the subject with students. This teacher also acknowledged the absence of perfection in teaching, stating, "I truly

believe that there is no perfect teacher. There is no perfect way to instruct something." This truth gives them hope to continually improve in their craft.

In conclusion, these SCTs highlighted the impact of choice on their PsyCap scores. They cited the deliberate decisions to enter the teaching profession, the positive attitudes resulting from aligned career choices, and the confidence derived from the ability to make decisions in their teaching roles. It's "the best choice I ever made. I love it," said T3.

Data Point 3

Positive student-teacher relationships is another recurring theme among respondents as being a positive influence in their PsyCap scores. SCTs often spoke of the importance of relationships with students in their building. Seven out of 18 participants discussed relationships with students that gave them hope and optimism in the classroom. T34 noted the importance of connections with students: " As long as my students like me, I think the school year usually goes well." Additionally, T28 emphasized the significance of positive feedback from students: "I'm always talking about how important it is to have a positive mindset and to feel empowered and efficacy and all that sort of stuff." T18 shared a personal experience of students seeking emotional support: "I had one kid a few years ago whose mom literally asked if [her daughter] could have counseling sessions with just me...[because] I'm the only one she will talk to," noting how important it was to have connections with students that make them feel safe.

The "times where I've had students just come to me and be like, hey, can I talk to you and realizing that, you are that person for some kids" (T18) gives them hope in their impact on the lives of students. T28 acknowledged the impact of teacher expectations on student performance:

"When teachers have high expectations of students, they perform well. Optimism is contagious." T34 stated, "If I have a better relationship with my students and if they are doing well, then my efficacy will grow... and my psychological capital will be better" a statement highlighting the importance of well-being for positive relationships for both teachers and students. T18 stated, "It's easier to be hopeful when you know that there are some kids who probably only come to school because they know you or someone like you is at the building." Overall, the SCTs emphasized the positive influence of student-teacher relationships on creating conducive learning environments, impacting student success, and fostering their own professional efficacy and growth.

Data Point 4

Second-career teachers noted the importance of a supportive preparation program for career switchers. Six of the 18 respondents cited that their teacher preparation program supported their confidence and overall positive PsyCap. Several respondents expressed the impact of participating in a career switcher program, highlighting its transparency about the challenges of transitioning into teaching. "I also think that one of the things that helped me was being a part of a career switcher program that made it very clear, it's going to be very difficult and…that's normal because I need to at least feel like it's not just me" (T16). The acknowledgment that the initial experience might be difficult helped T16 manage expectations and understand that challenges were normal for beginners in the teaching profession.

T29 also discussed that the career switcher program they participated in provided a solid foundation in teaching, especially valuable for individuals like them who did not major in education. The program's structure, which included shadowing and mentorship, contributed to feeling better prepared for the teaching role, "also, the peers that I had in the program when we had to evaluate each other or when we had meetings and you got to know people in the same

situation. If you kept up with them and got their email addresses, it was easy to ask questions" (T29). These statements also highlighted the importance of having mentors and peers as resources, creating a supportive network for asking questions and seeking guidance in a career switcher program.

Similarly, T28, who had previous teaching experience, particularly at the college level, expressed success with the career switcher program. "I loved [the] career switchers [program]. I felt, you know, really nurtured and well prepared coming out of that." They also reflected on the nurturing and preparation received, emphasizing the comprehensive onboarding program offered in their district. Despite finding it almost excessive, T28 acknowledged its value, especially for teachers who might require additional assistance.

In summary, these responses echo the positive impact of career switcher programs, providing transparency about the challenges, offering foundational teaching knowledge, and creating a supportive network for new teachers, ultimately contributing to a sense of efficacy and well-being in their teaching roles leading to higher PsyCap scores for SCTs.

Data Point 5

Second-career teacher respondents feel that professional development can impact their PsyCap in both negative and positive ways. Several teachers noted that mandatory professional development could be a hindrance or could bolster their PsyCap at work. Four out of the 18 respondents discussed the need for meaningful professional development. When asked what other tools would be needed to increase PsyCap T29 responded, "I think one thing that would really help me is… technology tools and teaching strategies. I'm not just a one trick pony though.

I need to grow." This is also in line with feedback about growing as a professional. T29 expressed the desire to have constructive conversations so they could focus on meaningful growth in their teaching profession. Another participant (T28) expressed that participating in professional development assisted in their ability to get support, "If I was a teacher who would have needed more assistance, I would have felt like I knew who to call to get that" because of the connections they made at professional development.

Respondent T1 also reflected on the difficulty of professional development that does not have meaning: "I might not always agree with the type of professional development or some of the things that they have in place." They also reflected finding more value in learning from peers than from a presenter, indicating that efficacy is increased when learning from colleagues that are trusted, respected, and work with a similar population. T27 also reflected that started to teach during the COVID-19 pandemic, made the previous year's training obsolete, "I started [teaching] during COVID and things were different after COVID than they were before. So even my classes and stuff, I took, the people who taught them all taught before COVID So they didn't know how it would be different. So, I kind of felt like I was wasting my time."

Overall, the responses from the participants on professional development emphasized the need for meaningful content, technology tools, and ongoing growth. The impact of the COVID19 pandemic on training experiences is also recognized as a factor influencing the relevance of professional development. Underscoring the importance of meaningful professional development to build the PsyCap of SCTs.

Data Point 6

Second-career teachers noted the importance of being compensated for their time and degree in many responses. While the aim of this study was to discover what building level

decisions affect SCT's PsyCap it is important to note that four out of 18 teachers mentioned the lack of compensation for their time and limited pay that made them question their profession. One teacher noted feeling "I, why am I even here? What am I doing? I just felt like I was a babysitter. I wouldn't even say a highly paid babysitter cause babysitters get like $15 an hour per kid" (T27). Another noted that a certain mindset must be developed to when thinking about their time and compensation stating, "…my job is here to pay my bills and to give me hopefully some sense of validation, but it's a job at the end of the day" (T11). When asked what needs to be done to increase your PsyCap at work, T4, T9 and T11 all cited increase pay would add to their positive PsyCap, as it would, "[help] show people that they are valued … [by] pay(ing) us the living wage, pay us what we deserve to get paid for. Being working professionals with multiple degrees would be the number one way …you increase people's resilience and hope because they don't do it for the money" (T11).

These SCTs consistently emphasized the significance of being compensated adequately for their time and educational qualifications. Several stressed that paying a living wage and acknowledging the value of their professional qualifications would significantly contribute to increasing resilience and hope among SCTs, while continuing to acknowledge that their motivation for becoming a teacher extends beyond financial incentives.

Summary

The responses from the participants demonstrated that there are similar perspectives on which factors impact SCT's PsyCap overall. Respondents who were surveyed using the PCQ-24 tool exhibited a high average workplace positive PsyCap of 4.8. The majority reported mentorship/peer support and school climate to be the most impactful on their PsyCap at work.

Most participants also attributed their PsyCap to school level administration, prior life experiences, and extra duties required.

Additional data points found in the research impacting SCTs' PsyCap scores were evidenced by respondents' comments: choosing to be a teacher; student teacher relationships; second-career teacher preparation programs; professional development; and compensation were mentioned by multiple participants. Responses also revealed that SCTs often face challenges related to student misbehavior, class size, and disciplinary issues, which negatively impact their PsyCap.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Major Findings and Implications

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the psychological capital (PsyCap) of second-career teachers (SCTs) and their perceptions of what affects their PsyCap in the workplace by surveying and interviewing SCTs in public school districts in central eastern Virginia. The research questions were:

1. What is the psychological capital of a second-career teacher?
2. What are the factors that second-career teachers perceive to contribute to their PsyCap?

The research addresses a gap in the literature as it pertains to SCTs' PsyCap and what influences their PsyCap scores in the public-school setting. Chapter 5 includes review and discussion of the major findings, practitioner and policy implications, and recommendations for future research.

Review of Major Findings

A major finding in this study was deemed significant if more than 50% of participants provided similar responses. Findings 1 through 6 qualify as major discoveries, as over half of the participants acknowledged the impact of each factor on their PsyCap at work as being impactful. All six major findings align with specific research found in the literature review and analysis.

1. Second-career teachers, surveyed using the PCQ-24 tool, exhibited a high average workplace positive psychological capital (PsyCap) of 4.8, reflecting individual hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism. The survey, which was adapted for school settings, indicates strong reliability scores for its subscales.

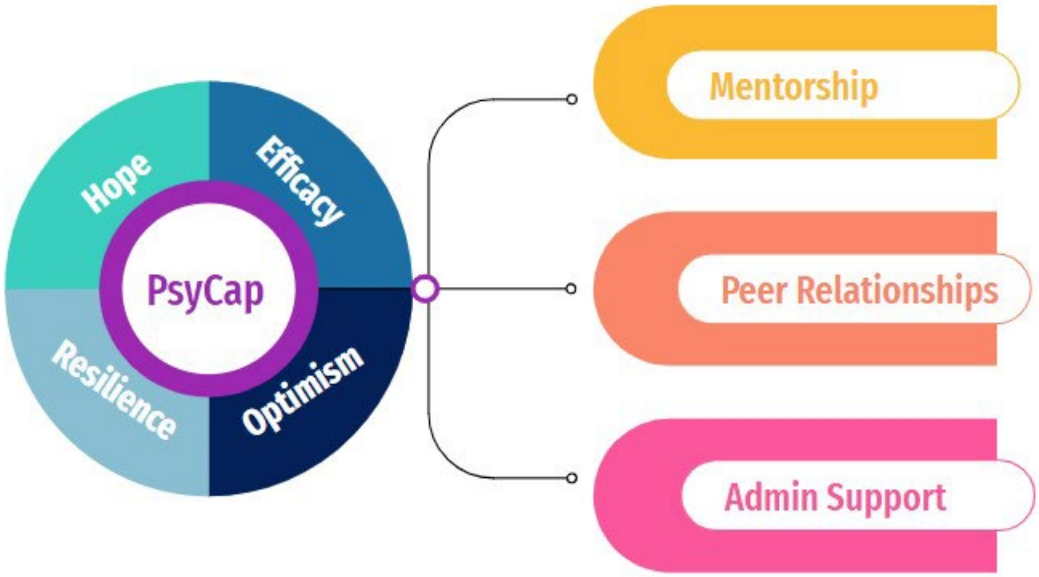
2. Mentorship and strong peer support were perceived to significantly influence secondcareer teachers' positive PsyCap.
3. A teacher's relationships with colleagues and their teams were reported to impact second-career teachers' positive psychological capital.
4. The relationship with administration was perceived to affect second-career teachers' positive psychological capital. Positive support and effective communication from administrators contribute to a positive work environment, whereas lack of support and micromanagement have detrimental effects.
5. Prior-life experiences in other fields was reported to significantly influence SCT's psychological capital. Having previous careers, parenting experience, and being adaptable contribute to increased PsyCap.
6. Extra duties assigned to STCs, such as bus duty and after-school meetings was perceived to negatively impact their overall psychological capital. An overwhelming workload and lack of planning time correlated to lower PsyCap scores.

Discussion of Major Findings

The SCTs who participated in this study all work at public schools in the central and northern regions of Virginia. The findings were shaped by the results of the PCQ-24 survey and the responses of the participants in one-on-one interviews with open-ended questions. The findings can provide school building and district leaders with practices that improve retention and support the PsyCap of SCTs. This researcher found that with SCTs, mentorship, a positive relationship with peers and trust in their administration had the most impact on influencing the positive PsyCap of educators at work. These factors were repeated themes of responses that

directed affected PsyCap with either negative or positive outcomes. Figure 4 highlights the three building-level components that teachers shared impacted their PsyCap scores.

Figure 4. *Major Factors impacting PsyCap* (Flanagan, 2024)



Findings show that second-career teachers need productive and active mentors, strong communities with peers in their workplace and to feel supported from their administration to have a high level of positive PsyCap. The teachers' responses continually spoke of connections with mentors, peers and/or administration that were attributed to their success and overall PsyCap at work. Respondent T10 underlined the impact of these relationships.

> You've got to have that support system or somebody that you trust that you can just sit down [with], especially on the hard days, and debrief. Having those people who bridge and support. and the ones who have been around for a while... really comes in handy. So, you've just got to find those people, who really have the same mindset that you do and

finding them and having that support is key to having people stay because a lot of the teachers I know that have stayed at our school has been because of the community.

Recent research found that teacher retention and job satisfaction are linked to teachers' positive PsyCap. The PsyCap of teachers is built and maintained through positive working relationships with their administration, peers and mentors such as the findings of Ansley et.al (2019). The current findings look at SCTs as a whole and they indicate that the practice of being paired with an active mentor was invaluable to the development of their PsyCap at work. An effective mentor was identified by the participants as any teacher who works in the building with them, helps them grow, engages in conversations without judgment and has a genuine connection with the mentee. This study included assigned and unassigned mentors in consideration of the impact of having an experienced and invested person to aid the growth and development of SCTs.

Peer relationships as a working team are also a factor that greatly impacts SCTs' PsyCap as evident in data obtained through the participant interviews. Different from a mentorship relationship, teachers reflected on the importance of the collective climate and team cohesiveness in their responses. Current research also found that teacher's positive PsyCap was tied to positive school climates and relationships with peers (Ansley et al., 2019; K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2009). Teachers value a strong school climate among staff that fosters support and collaboration among peers.

Participant responses from the current research supported the notion that administration building relationships with staff is crucial to the foundation of PsyCap. Teachers who voiced that they trusted their administration and felt they in turn were trusted improved their efficacy in

teaching. As T19 stated, “Administration plays a huge role in the psychological capital [of teachers] and I think it's more than people realize.” Respondents discussed the importance of having administrators who are engaged, personable, encouraging and present. Teachers desire a genuine relationship with their administration that fosters trust and aids in the growth of their teaching.

Results for the PCQ-24 also showed that second-career teachers have high levels of resiliency. Participants shared that this was affected by their prior life experiences and choosing to be a teacher which is different than first-career teachers’ reflections. Positive student-teacher relationships were also related to the teachers' overall hope. Responses also revealed that secondcareer teachers often face challenges related to student misbehavior, class size, and disciplinary issues, which negatively impact their PsyCap.

The current study confirmed that second-career teachers require support systems and positive relationships to enhance their PsyCap at work. Second-career teachers highlighted the importance of connections with mentors, peers, and administration in their success and overall PsyCap. They stressed the need for a support system and the value of finding like-minded individuals within their school community. Research has shown that teacher retention and job satisfaction are linked to positive PsyCap, which is built and maintained through positive working relationships. The participants emphasized the importance of administrators building relationships with staff, as teachers who felt trusted by their administration showed improved efficacy in teaching. Resiliency was found to be high among SCTs, influenced by their prior life experiences and deliberate choice to become teachers.

Practitioner Implications

School building leaders must consider the findings of this study when working with SCTs and building PsyCap for their staff. District leaders are recommended to implement practices that lead to the growth and understanding of SCTs' PsyCap that deepen support. Further development in career switcher programs offered at the district level will deepen the PsyCap of emerging SCTs. Colleges and universities are advised to consider the findings to impact principal preparation programs and educational leadership programs. Principals are encouraged to:

1. Invest in finding the PsyCap of school building second-career teachers in order to understand the need of support for the teachers (finding 1).
2. Foster strong mentor teachers for incoming second-career teachers, use team building, and provide multiple opportunities for mentors to connect with mentees regularly (finding 2,3).
3. Provide opportunities for team collaboration by building into the school daytime for teachers to common plan, have lunch together and time to build cohesive teams. Pair second-career teachers in teachers that are close in proximity (next door or across the hall) (finding 2 and 3).
4. As an administrator, engage in meaningful conversations with second-career teachers and develop relationships that foster trust, growth and encouragement (finding 4).
5. Value SCT's prior life experiences by discussing how they use these experiences in the classroom and in their career (finding 5).
6. Limit extra duties assigned to teachers. When they are assigned provide the reasoning behind the duty and invite SCTs to join in problem-solving conversations (finding 5 and 6).

Policy Implications

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and local school boards should ensure that administrators are aware of the effects of mentorship, school climate and administrative relationships on PsyCap of educators when they formulate school policies and programs. Understanding the PsyCap of SCT programs participants within districts or state programs will help ensure the growth of STCs and increase their retention within the school setting. SCTs are a growing population among educators and fine tuning their programs to understand PsyCap and increase hope, resiliency, optimism, and efficacy will ensure a higher success rate for SCTs in public schools.

Suggestions for Future Research

Although this study provides valuable findings, there is room for further research. The sample size of 34 teachers working in central and northern Virginia was modest. The study could be expanded to include SCTs in other areas of Virginia and the nation. The influence of PsyCap of SCTs may differ in other states or other areas; therefore, more general results would be obtained with larger samples.

The SCTs sampled in this study held varied backgrounds in prior careers. Further investigation should be conducted into STCs' prior careers and their PsyCap as teachers to look for any correlation. Additionally, teachers who were surveyed were primarily in the field of secondary education, further information is needed to understand the experiences of SCTs who teach at the elementary or pre-K level. Although preparatory programs and career-switcher programs were mentioned by several participants, there were no data collected intentionally to examine the influence of specific career switcher programs and the PsyCap of educators once they obtained a teaching post. When emulating this study researchers should consider asking

interview questions that are specific to the components of HERO for more in-depth insight to perceived connections. Further data should be collected to investigate the significance of teacher preparation programs for career switchers and their validity and PsyCap of SCTs.

Conclusions

SCTs are growing in number in public schools and are a valuable resource for public education. Leaders who want to increase retention, school buy-in, and job satisfaction need to understand the PsyCap of SCTs and the factors that influence PsyCap. Authentic connections with mentors, peers, and administration were the most important factors in retaining SCTs and building their PsyCap at work. SCTs emphasized that their choice in career, attending a teacher prep program for SCTs, and their prior work experience accounted for their positive PsyCap at work. While student misbehavior, extra duties required, negative relationships with peers, administration and mentors led to negative impacts on a teacher PsyCap. Other factors that impacted PsyCap mentioned included compensation, meaningful professional development, and student teacher relationships. The importance of maintaining and growing positive PsyCap of SCTs is further proven by the findings, add to the growing research on the PsyCap of educators and the impacts of PsyCap in education. One of the most important things a leader can do for their school building is to take the steps needed towards positive PsyCap for teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Salient Sources Reviewed

This table contains the salient academic sources used in the literature search and review process to determine relationships among teacher psychological capital, administrative style, support from leadership and self-efficacy. The color-coded based on three themes and numbered based on sections. Background and historical information are labeled 0 and color-coded green, leadership styles are labeled 1 and colored blue, support of staff is labeled 2 and colored red, self-efficacy sources are labeled 3 and colored yellow. Some sources have multiple labels and colors.

Theme	Author(s) and Title	Methods/ Themes/Findings (s)	Year Data Collection	
0	Luthans et al. (2017)	Psychological capital: An evidence-based positive approach	PsyCap Likert-Scale, 24- and 12-point scale	PsyCap draws from positive psychology in general and positive organizational behavior. The first-order positive psychological resources that make up PsyCap include hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism, or the HERO within. These four best meet the inclusion criteria of being theory- and research-based, positive, validly measurable, state-like, and having impact on attitudes, behaviors, performance and well-being. PsyCap development, positive leadership, and novel applications such as the use of video games and gamification techniques. The overriding theme throughout is that PsyCap has both scientific, evidence-based rigor and practical relevance.
0	Sharma & Venkatesan (2021)	A study of personality, self-esteem and happiness Among Graduates	Subjective Happiness Scale NEO-Five Factor Inventory Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	There was a positive correlation of self-esteem, conscientiousness, and extroversion with happiness. Individuals who tend to feel good about themselves are seen happier in their everyday experience, whereas those who lack self-worth or self-respect are usually unhappy. No differences were shown for gender.
1	Dicke, (2020)	Job satisfaction of teachers and their principals in relation to climate and student achievement	Likert scale	Principals' transformational leadership styles are positively related to higher job satisfaction and teacher well-being.
1	Balcerzyk, (2021)	The Role of a Leader in Contemporary Organizations	Survey	Key behaviors and traits: consistency in action, the ability to set priorities, courage in taking risks and taking difficult decisions, passion and commitment, as well as being matter of fact and concrete showed a positive relationship between job satisfaction and their leadership.
0, 1	Larkin et al. (2018)	Retaining K-12 online teachers: A predictive	11 K-12 online schools in a single	Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are less likely to consider leaving their jobs.

		model for K-12 online teacher turnover	southeastern state of the United States, of which six schools agreed to participate in a 5-point Likert scale	Work environments that provide support, resources, and opportunities to learn and grow, and that encourage autonomy are associated with job satisfaction, leading to low turnover intentions
2	İhtiyaroğlu (2018)	Analyzing the Relationship between Happiness, Teachers' Level of Satisfaction with Life and Classroom Management Profiles	Oxford Happiness Questionnaire	Adopting an Appreciative Classroom Management profile reveals that teachers enjoy higher levels of happiness and satisfaction with life, while adopting the Indifferent Classroom Management profiles may be attributed to the low Happiness and Satisfaction with life level of the said teachers.
2	Al-Bataineh et al. (2021)	The correlation between level of school happiness and teacher autonomy in Jordan	The School Happiness Scale and Teacher Autonomy Scale were used	Happy teachers nurture happy students who achieve scholastically. Teacher's happiness increases with green spaces, good parent-teacher relationships, cooperation, and administrative support. Teachers with less than 5 years tend t to be happier
2	Aelterman, et al. (2007)	The well-being of teachers in Flanders: the importance of a supportive school culture	Likert-type items (7point scale)	Teachers had the impression that they managed control of the class, that children listened to what they said, that they had a good relationship with students, and they were successful.
3	Navaneethakrishnan (2020)	The effects of teacher autonomy, student behavior and student engagement on teacher job satisfaction.	Measured using a 4item scale adapted from Caprara A Likert scale from the teacher's perspective	Teacher job satisfaction increases with student positive behavior. To control student misbehavior, there is a need for teachers to strictly impose corrective measures in and out of the classroom. A greater level of teacher autonomy empowers teachers by giving freedom and discretion over the school environment in the everyday life of the school
3	Helms-Lorenz & Maulana (2015)	Influencing the psychological wellbeing of beginning teachers across three years of teaching: Selfefficacy, stress causes, job tension and job discontent	Likert-scale	Self-efficacy and stress causes are important predictors of responses. Therefore, school (psychologists) and educational (psychology) researchers are encouraged to help teachers boost their self-efficacy level and reduce stress causes to mitigate negative outcomes.

1, 2, 3	Brown & Wynn (2009)	Finding, supporting, and keeping: The Role of the Principal in Teacher Retention Issues	Semi-structured interviews with 12 principals. Conducted in a small urban school district in a southeastern state. The school district serves 32,000 students in 445 diverse schools	Recognizing the importance of principal leadership, one State Board of Education task force recommended that school administrators, to renew their administrative certification, and earn license renewal credits in the areas of "teacher effectiveness, teacher evaluation, teacher support programs, teacher leadership, teacher empowerment, and teacher retention From a policy perspective, principal support is essential, whether it be in attitude or actions. Beginning teachers seem to value a principal who provides direction but at the same time does not stifle them.
				Principals share decision-making with new teachers on substantive issues, work collaboratively with others to reach shared goals, and expand teacher leadership capacity. They model elevated expectations for all and keep the vision of student learning alive and at the forefront of all decisions. They encourage and support collegiality among all teachers and provide guidance, and leadership when needed. They foster unofficial professional learning communities that reduce teacher isolation, increase teacher responsibility and understanding, and improve teacher satisfaction, morale, and commitment.
1,2,3	Çobanoğlu, & Bozbayindir (2019)	A study on shared leadership and positive psychological capitals of teachers at primary and secondary schools	The descriptive survey model was used for examining the levels of leadership at school and the positive PsyCap levels of the teachers; whereas the relational model was used to examine the relationship between the levels of leadership at school and the positive PsyCap of the teachers.	It can be put forth that the administrators have a culture of sharing their leadership in primary and secondary schools and that the general positive psychological capitals of teachers are quite high Shared leadership courses should be obligatory for teacher candidates at universities as well as in-service training for working teachers. School principals should be transparent and fair when sharing these facilities, which in turn will increase positive perceptions. Teachers have a weak belief that they will receive help and support from their principals when they encounter a problem. To increase the positive psychological capital of the teachers, the principals should ensure that teachers believe they will always be supporting them regardless of the conditions they face. They should make the teachers feel their support when faced with a real problem.

0, 2	CaselyHayford, (2022)	What makes teachers stay? A cross-sectional exploration of the individual and contextual factors associated with teacher retention in Sweden	A sample of 5903 elementary-year teachers completed a questionnaire between 2004 and 2011 The QPS-Nordic (Dallner et al., 2000) was used to assess organizational commitment using three items on a 5point scale	The findings showed that teachers' intention to remain in the profession is mainly explained by individual factors, predominantly by teachers' perceived health state, work motivation, and collegial support. The main implication is the importance of teachers' perceived health state for their intention to remain, underscoring the importance of a health-promoting work environment in schools.
0,1,2,3	Wang et al. (2020)	Selected Factors Contributing to Teacher Job Satisfaction: A Quantitative Investigation Using 2013 TALIS data	Through multilevel regression and commonality analysis of U.S. data from the Teaching and Learning	According to the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA,2014), 47% of the teachers who left the position voiced that their reason for leaving was mainly their dissatisfaction with school culture or administration. This suggests that the degree of teachers' job satisfaction is mainly dependent on school factors and teacher factors,
			International Survey (TALIS) 2013.	such as participation among stakeholders, autonomy for instructional policies, teacher self-efficacy, and teacherstudent relationships, rather than their students' 'characteristics. Opportunities for teachers, parents, and students to participate in decision-making about school policies will help build their school-owner awareness and allow all involved to feel like members of the big school family. School leaders can provide more opportunities for teachers' professional development by encouraging inschool teachers' communication and cooperation or supporting teachers' further learning.
1,3	Zee & Koomen (2016)	Teacher self-efficacy and its effects on classroom processes, student academic adjustment, and teacher well-being: A synthesis of 40 years of research	Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale	Self-efficacy affects not only behaviors and actions but also thoughts and feelings. Teachers with higher self-efficacy have more positive behavior management systems than others. Emotional and organizational processes in class, such as student misbehavior and motivation, positive affect, and instructional management, are likely to function as catalysts in the relationship between teachers' burnout and job satisfaction.
2,3	Walker et al. (2020)	Job satisfaction and workload of teachers and senior leaders	Based on the findings of a national survey of 1senior leaders and teachers in publicly funded, primary and secondary schools in England	There is a significant association between job satisfaction and feelings of being in control of distinct aspects of teaching and learning practice Teachers' experiences of receiving support and providing remote learning for pupils while working from home are most strongly related to their levels of job satisfaction.

Legend

0: Background and historical information are colored green
1: Leadership styles are colored blue
2: Support of staff is colored red 3: Self-efficacy sources are colored yellow ** Some sources have multiple labels and colors.

Appendix B: VT-IRB Letter

Division of Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120 (MC 0497)
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-3732
irb@vt.edu
http://www.research.vt.edu/sirc/hrpp

VIRGINIA TECH

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 15, 2023

TO: Carol Ann Mullen, Amanda Grace Flanagan

FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572)

PROTOCOL TITLE: An Investigation into the Psychological Capital of Second-Career Teachers and the Factors that Influence Their Scores

IRB NUMBER: **23-524**

Effective May 15, 2023, the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category (ies) 2(ii).

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit an amendment to the HRPP for a determination.

This exempt determination does not apply to any collaborating institution(s). The Virginia Tech HRPP and IRB cannot provide an exemption that overrides the jurisdiction of a local IRB or other institutional mechanism for determining exemptions.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

https://secure.research.vt.edu/external/irb/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before beginning your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Determined As:	**Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category(ies) 2(ii)**
Protocol Determination Date:	**May 15, 2023**

ASSOCIATED FUNDING:

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this protocol, if required.

Appendix C: Request for Superintendent Permission Letter

Subject Line: Request to Conduct Study

Dear Superintendent or Director of Human Resources:

My name is Amanda Flanagan, and I am a fellow educator in the Hanover County Public Schools District. I am a doctoral candidate in the Virginia Tech Educational Leadership program under the supervision of Dr. Carol Mullen, my advisor and committee chair.

I am sending this email to ask for permission to approve my current research on beginning teacher psychological capital as it relates to second-career teachers. I am requesting the "careerswitcher" teachers in your district to participate in a survey and possibly a follow-up focus on "Second-Career Teacher Psychological Capital." The positive psychological capital will be measured using a 24-question Likert-scale questionnaire (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007), measuring the positive states of hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience. I am using a qualitative research design to provide a deep understanding of the psychological capital of second-career teachers in districts in Virginia.

Positive psychological capital, or PsyCap, is defined by Fred Luthans as "the positive developmental state of an individual as characterized by high self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency" (2004). Luthans' research in positive PsyCap and the workplace showed that employees who rated high on the PsyCap were not only higher performing but also remain in their workplace for a longer period than did low PsyCap peers. Research also shows that these positive capacities are associated with higher performance of not only the teacher, but also the students.

May I ask your permission for the following: to administer a screener to teachers to determine which will be purposefully selected to participate in a survey conducted of second-career teachers and conduct focus groups with second-career teachers with in their first three years? The data collected from the participants will be confidential and the school names and divisions will not be identified. I have developed an interview protocol to use when collecting data and selecting focus group participants for this study. The interview questions were guided by research conducted of the literature on the topic of PsyCap.

My practical goal for this research is to improve understanding of the PsyCap of second-career teachers. I thank you in advance for reading this message and considering being a part of my research. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Amanda G. Flanagan, terminal degree
Doctoral candidate
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Appendix D: Email to Teachers to Participate in the Surveys

Subject Line: Request to Participate in the Surveys

Dear Educator:

Greetings! My name is Amanda Flanagan, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Virginia Tech Educational Leadership program under the supervision of Dr. Carol Mullen, my advisor and committee chair.

I am sending this email to ask if you would participate in my current research on beginning teachers' psychological capital as it relates to second-career teachers (IRB #----). Positive psychological capital or PsyCap is defined by Fred Luthans as "the positive developmental state of an individual as characterized by high self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resiliency" (2004). The purpose of this study is to identify trends in the PsyCap of second-career teachers. I have been given permission by the district to conduct this research.

The goal of this research is to improve understanding of the PsyCap of beginning second career teachers in education. This knowledge can be used by scholars to improve PsyCap in schools and understand what affects the PsyCap of beginning educators. If you are 18 years or older and willing to participate, please click on the demographic survey link and complete, and submit the survey.

The results of the study will be analyzed and shared with the participants if requested. Participation is voluntary, but greatly appreciated. You may be asked to expand on your viewpoint in a focus group lasting no longer than 45 minutes. If you are selected an additional email will be sent with details. Thank you in advance for your consideration of and participation in this research.

Sincerely,

Amanda G. Flanagan, terminal degree
Doctoral candidate
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Appendix E: Informed Consent for the Demographic Survey and Interview

Title of research study: An Inquiry into the Psychological Capital of Second-Career Teachers in Public Schools: A Qualitative Study

Principal Investigator: Dr. Carol A. Mullen, PhD; College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences, School of Education, Educational Leadership Program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Key Information: The purpose of this study is to examine the PsyCap of beginning second career teachers in education. This knowledge can be used by scholars to improve PsyCap in schools and understand what affects the PsyCap of beginning educators. The second purpose is to understand the relationship between the psychological capital of educators and leadership style, administrative support, and self-efficacy in suburban and rural public schools in Richmond, VA.

Who can I talk to?
If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to Dr. Carol A. Mullen.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may communicate with them at 540-231-3732 or irb@vt.edu if:

- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team to provide feedback about this research.

How many people will be studied?
We plan to include 10 to 50 people in this research study.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?
- Upon consent, a survey link will be sent. The survey will collect demographic data and psychological capital data on second-career teachers.
- Surveys will be reviewed to collect demographic data from the participants and to purposefully select the teacher participants to interview from a variety of backgrounds, grade levels, psychological capital levels and or subjects.
- The participants for the one-on-one interviews will be sent an email with a description of the purpose of the study, a request to participate, and a consent form.
- Data will be collected through scheduled one-on-one 30-45-minute interviews with each interviewee and the researcher through the online platform, Zoom or in person based on preference. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed using Zoom (online) or dual recording devices (in person).

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?
You can leave the research at any time, for any reason, and it will not be held against you. If you decide to leave the research, any data collected prior to the withdrawal will be destroyed by the

researcher. If you decide to leave the research, contact the investigator, Dr. Carol A. Mullen so that the investigator can notify the researcher and the researcher can destroy any data collected prior to the withdrawal.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me? There are no known risks to participating in this study.

What happens to the information collected for the research?
We will make every effort to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study and medical records, only to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete confidentiality. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB, Human Research Protection Program, and other authorized representatives of Virginia Tech.

If identifiers are removed from your private information or samples that are collected during this research, that information or those samples could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without your additional informed consent.

The results of this research study may be presented in summary form at conferences, in presentations, reports to the sponsor, academic papers, and as part of a thesis/dissertation. Federal law provides additional protections of your medical records and related health information. These are described in an attached document.

Can I be removed from the research without my, OK?
The person in charge of the research study or the sponsor can remove you from the research study without your approval.

What else do I need to know?
We will offer to share your individual results with you. You may accept or decline these results.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have all my questions answered.
By completing the online survey of this study, I signify my consent.
Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Appendix F: Demographic Survey

The purpose of this study is to examine the PsyCap of beginning second career teachers in education. This knowledge can be used by scholars to improve PsyCap in schools and

understand what affects the PsyCap of beginning educators. If you are 18 or older and willing to participate, please click on the demographic survey link, complete, and submit. Please answer the following demographic survey questions.

1. Current Grade Level:

_____

3. Level of Education:

A. Bachelor
B. Master
D. Doctorate
E. Other

4. Age range:

A. 20-29 B. 30-39 C. 40-49 D. 50-59
E. 60-69
F. 70 or greater

5. Gender:

A. Male
B. Female
C. Non-binary
D. Chose not to disclose.fix alignments in this file

6. Race and or Ethnicity (Select all that apply):

A. Black or African American
B. Asian or Asian American
C. White or Caucasian
D. Hispanic or Latino
E. American Indian
F. Alaska Native
G. Other

7. Number of years teaching in all:

A. 1
B. 2
C. 3

8. Grade levels taught:

A. K-2
B. 3-5
C. 6-8
D. 10-12
E. Other

9. Subjects taught:

A. English
B. Math
C. Science
D. History
E. Foreign Language
F. CTE
G. Art
H. Other

10. Previous Career

_____

Please provide your name and email if you would consider participating in a 30–45-minute interview for this study. Each interview will be conducted, transcribed, and recorded through the online platform, Zoom, or will be held in person. When selected you will be emailed additional information regarding the study and a consent form for your review.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Appendix G: Permission to Use PCQ-24

For Publications:
We understand situations exist where you may want sample test questions for various fair use situations such as academic, scientific or commentary purposes. No items from this instrument may be included in any publication without the prior express written permission from Mind Garden, Inc. Please understand that disclosing more than we have authorized will compromise the integrity and value of the test.

For Dissertation and Thesis Appendices:
You may not include an entire instrument in your thesis or dissertation, however you may use the three sample items specified by Mind Garden. Academic committees understand the requirements of copyright and are satisfied with sample items for appendices and tables. For customers needing permission to reproduce the three sample items in a thesis or dissertation, the following page includes the permission letter and reference information needed to satisfy the requirements of an academic committee.

Online Use of Mind Garden Instruments:
Online administration and scoring of the Psychological Capital Questionnaire is available from Mind Garden, (https://www.mindgarden.com/136-psychological-capital-questionnaire). Mind Garden provides services to add items and demographics to the Psychological Capital Questionnaire. Reports are available for the Psychological Capital Questionnaire.

If your research uses an online survey platform other than the Mind Garden Transform survey system, you will need to meet Mind Garden's requirements by following the procedure described at mindgarden.com/mind-garden-forms/58-remote-online-use-application.html.

All Other Special Reproductions:
For any other special purposes requiring permissions for reproduction of this instrument, please contact info@mindgarden.com.

Appendix H: Interview Participation Email

Subject Line: Interview Confirmation for PsyCap Study

Dear Educator:

Greetings! Thank you for participating in the first portion of the research study, Psychological Capital of Second-Career Teachers. You have been selected to participate in an interview to gain perspective on your results. Please take some time to complete this Doodle Poll to confirm your availability.

Within a few days, you will receive a calendar invitation that will include a Zoom link, or a meeting time and place based on the preference you indicate in the poll. As noted in the Information Sheet for Participation in a Research Study document shared in my initial communication, the interview will be audio recorded and all identifiable information will be extracted prior to analysis and there are no known risks to participate in the study. A transcript of your responses will be sent to you to check over. If there are any concerns, please reply.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Respectfully,

Amanda G. Flanagan, terminal degree
Doctoral candidate
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Appendix I: PsyCap Results Handout and Explanation

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL RESULTS

<<FirstName>><<LastName>> **Created:**
<<Date>>

Thank you for taking the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24).

What is Psychological Capital? Psychological capital (PsyCap) is defined as a person's positive state of development of resources they can use to improve their success and job performance. Traditional human resource strengths, including human capital (what you know) and social capital (who you know), are recognized as giving people an advantage in the workplace. However, PsyCap consists of four components: hope, optimism, resilience, and (self) efficacy giving it the acronym, HERO.

Fred Luthans has researched PsyCap in the workplace since its conception in 2007. People with high PsyCap scores have shown positive relationships with job satisfaction,

organizational commitment, psychological well-being, and desirable employee behaviors. PsyCap is a measurement by the combined score of the four components of HERO.

Hope	Efficacy	Resilience	Optimism
•A positive motivational state where (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals) successfully interact.	•An individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. Selfefficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment	•A person's ability to recover from a setback or withstand a difficulty. Without resilience there is no courage, no rationality, no insight. It is the bedrock on which all else is built	•Having confidence and positive feelings about the outcome of the future, while diverting negative events as the result of uncontrollable forces, circumstances, and momentary setbacks

Your PsyCap Score *(all scores are on a scale of 1-6 points)*

Hope	Efficacy	Resilience	Optimism	Total PsyCap

Like human and social capital, PsyCap can be developed, unlike more fixed personality traits, such as extraversion or conscientiousness. I hope you enjoyed learning more about Psychological Capital. For more information on PsyCap or its four constructs of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, please see the resources below. If you have questions about the survey or my research, please feel free to contact me.

Appendix J: Interview Protocol

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview to help me collect information on the psychological capital of second career teachers. The purpose of this study is to examine the trends related to the psychological capital of second-career teachers in the first three years of teacher in public school divisions. The four constructs of psychological capital are self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. I want to just ask a few questions from each of those constructs to try to better understand how you have personally developed PsyCap as an educator.

Interview Questions:

1. What are your thoughts of your psychological capital survey results?

2. In your experience, as a beginning teacher, what has most affected your psychological capital result?
3. In your understanding, what experiences (personal or professional) have led to your development of psychological capital?
4. If you were to take the psychological capital survey when you first started your role, do you think your score would have been the same? Why or why not?
5. Do you think psychological capital is important for teachers? Why or why not?
6. Of the four states of psychological capital, self-efficacy, hope, optimism, or resilience, which one do you think has had the most impact and how?
7. Do you believe a teacher's psychological capital can positively influence a teacher? A student? Why or why not?
8. What resources were made available to you that supported your PsyCap? What did you need that was not offered?
9. Are there any situations in the school environment that negatively affect your psychological capital? Could you give an example?
10. What would need to be done to increase your positive psychological capital?

Appendix K: CITI Certification

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 24-Mar-2023
Expiration Date 24-Mar-2026
Record ID 44986331

This is to certify that:

Amanda Flanagan

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Social & Behavioral Research
(Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech)

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w6a6faa00-abd9-4cfa-930c-54ea5ca85a82-44986331