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AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF POSITIVE EMOTIONS AND HAPPINESS ON MENTAL HEALTH USING THE CONCEPT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

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ABSTRACT

The study aim to examine the correlation between positive emotions and happiness in the context of mental health, with psychological capital serving as a mediating factor. The subject of this study is a student enrolled at Universitas Bung Hatta Padang. Within the realm of student life, positive emotions and happiness are frequently recognized as significant elements that impact their psychological capital. Nevertheless, there is limited research that has investigated the mechanisms underlying this link, namely the mediating role of psychological capital. This study employs a quantitative research design utilizing a survey methodology, which includes a diverse group of students from different faculties at Universitas Bung Hatta Padang. Information is gathered by using a modified questionnaire based on previously approved tools. Research hypotheses are tested by employing multiple regression analysis techniques. The findings indicate that experiencing positive emotions and happiness has a beneficial impact on the mental health of students. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that psychological capital plays a crucial intermediary role in the connection between positive emotions, happiness, and mental health. The practical ramifications of this research indicate that colleges should establish a campus atmosphere that fosters positive emotions, and allocate resources towards initiatives that seek to enhance psychological capital.

Keywords : positive emotions; psychological capital; happiness; mental health

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education at the College is measured by the high and satisfactory learning achievement, which is the motto of every student, who is to be proud of his parents. This adult student is not only required to have a depth of knowledge (hard skills) but also the ability to communicate well, confidence, adaptability, and the skills to plan systematically (soft skills). Students need to increase their desire to learn, so they need to enhance their involvement in the learning process, which is called student engagement (Hazan Liran and Miller, 2019).

Research conducted by (John, 2009) found that the capital of hard skills in a person's success is only about 15%, and the remaining 85% are soft skills that they possess. Other research also found that 75% of the success of a long-term job depends on skills, while 25% is knowledge techniques that a person possesses. (Nafees and Jahan, 2017)(Robles, 2012)Note that there are ten soft skills that play an essential role in the workplace, namely integrity, communication, politeness, responsibility, social skills, positive attitudes, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethos.

The high roles and demands students face today are becoming extremely complex with increased competition and ultimately lead to higher levels of stress among students. Several studies related to stress and psychology among students in the university neighborhood have begun to be extensively researched and carried out. Many students face and experience stress related to academic course requirements, and they are also challenged to be able to have interpersonal contact with faculty, seniors, and fellow students (Nafees and Jahan, 2017).

To ensure that these roles are well-executed, students need to develop their inner psychological powers. Psychological powers are merged into one variable called psychological capital (Luthans, and Avey, 2013). Psychological capital studies and positive psychological approaches to the source of human strength and psychological capacity that can be measured, developed, and regulated effectively to improve individual performance. Psychological Capital (PsyCap) has begun to be extensively studied as one of the critical variables associated with interest in the context of improving student well-being and academic performance in the College. Psychological capital (PsyCap) includes several important things, such as self-efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism. These dimensions are critical factors in determining a student's success in organizing education and his time of study while in college (Luthans et al, 2013).

The issues to be investigated relate to how students develop their psychological powers by managing Psychological Capital (PsyCap) on themselves to reduce levels of stress, boredom, burnout in order to positive mental health, positive emotions and student success in conducting their education. So after leaving college students already have positive things that can be used when they enter a particular field of work and compete healthy when they are going to enter the world of work.

The urgency of research at this time is very interesting, especially in studying the concept of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) in students, because there is not much research related to this. Student success is an excellent subject to study among the many roles that they have to play. Moreover, in the end, it will help to increase the success of students in living their lives in the lecture environment. Through this literature a lot of research related Psychological Capital on employees in the context of the organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological capital

Psychological capital is a favorable condition in individuals that is far from a picture of despair and difficulties within the organization's scope. Psychological capital has an influence on self-perception, attitudes toward teamwork, ethical orientation, and a general view of life (Luthans et al, 2007). Psychological capital can be used to enhance competition and achieve organizational benefits by looking at the full potential of the human resources that they have. (Luthans et al, 2007).

(Luthans et al, 2007)note that psychological capital (PSY CAP) is the positive capacity possessed by every helpful individual to help the individual develop, characterized by first self-efficacy/confidence to complete the job. Second, having optimistic hope (optimism) of success now and in the current time. Three persistent in hope (hope) to succeed, and last firm in facing various problems (resiliency) until achieving success. A critical part of human resources is the concept of psychological capital, which can help address the issues faced by company employees. These four elements influence each other, so they have a purpose: to build psychological resources that allow a person to have a higher level of ability to perform consistently (Luthans et al, 2007). Based on the explanation above, it can be said that psychological wealth is a positive ability that every beneficial person possesses to help them develop. This psychological strength is demonstrated by independence, optimism, hope, and perseverance.

The psychological aspects of capital, according to (Luthans et al, 2007) psychological capital or psychological capitals have four main elements known as the acronym HORE. The explanation of each of these aspects is as follows:

a. Hope (Harapan)

Hope or hope is the ability to plan a way out of an attempt to reach a goal despite obstacles and make motivation a means of achieving a goal. Hope or hope is an active style that enables people, despite the many obstacles, to imagine a promising future and to set and pursue goals. Individuals with high expectations tend to be more motivated and confident in taking on tasks, have vital energy and desire, and have a high determination to meet their expectations. They also tend to have alternative ways when obstacles arise, producing higher performance.

b. Optimism (optimism)

Optimism is a tendency to expect a profitable outcome. Optimism is described as a positive prospect that is open to development. An optimistic individual hopes that good things will happen to him, does not give up easily, and usually has a plan of action under challenging circumstances. They strive to hope with positive thinking, work hard to cope with stress and daily challenges effectively, have dreams and goals, struggle as hard as they can, do not want to sit still waiting for success to be given by others, want to do everything on their own and don't want to think about failure before trying, and feel the best.

c. Resilience (Resilience)

Resilience is the ability or capacity of a person, group, or society to cope with, prevent, minimize, and even eliminate the adverse effects of an unpleasant condition or to transform an excessive life condition into something natural to overcome. Individuals with Resilience tend to make their lives stronger. Resilience will help a person successfully adapt to dealing with unpleasant conditions in severe stress conditions.

d. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in deploying the motivation, cognitive resources, and working methods required to perform a particular task in a given context successfully. An individual with high self-efficiency, confidence that he is capable of effectively managing events and situations faced, persistent in completing tasks, believing in the self-ability he possesses, sees difficulties as challenges rather than threats, likes to find new situations, sets himself challenging goals and enhances a solid commitment to himself.

Happiness

Student happiness is a crucial aspect of the educational experience, impacting various factors such as satisfaction, well-being, and academic success. The satisfaction model for executive education blended learning emphasizes how students' coping mechanisms, well-being, and stress levels influence their satisfaction with education (Negm, 2023). Happiness in an educational context often arises when students experience success or value the learning material, as per the Control-Value theory (Rosholm et al, 2017) . Workplace happiness is a term that describes the experience of employees who are energized by and enthusiastic about their work, find meaning and purpose in their work, have good relationships at their workplace, and feel committed to their work. Overall or global workplace happiness refers to how employees evaluate their work life in general and most studies rely on global reports of this kind (e.g. (Kahneman et al, 2004).

Most studies have examined objective variables that influence well-being and happiness, but happiness can also be interpreted through a subjectivist approach, which considers happiness from the individual's own perspective, and this notion has led to the self-report measurement of global happiness (Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 1999).

Positive Emotions

Positive emotions are essential for the overall well-being and adaptive strategies of individuals. The broaden-and-build theory of happy emotions, suggested by (Cappellen, et al, 2022), posits that pleasant emotions expand individuals' attention and cognitive abilities, resulting in a positive cycle towards emotional well-being. This theory suggests that positive emotions, such as awe, gratitude, love, and compassion, have a positive impact on both psychological and physical well-being. They do so by improving coping mechanisms and developing personal resources (Cappellen et al, 2022); (Tugade, et al, 2004); (Cohn et al, 2009; Grol and De Raedt, 2014). In addition, there is a connection between positive emotions and greater resilience. The cognitive expansion caused by pleasant emotions is a significant factor in promoting resilience (Grol and De Raedt 2014).

Mental Health

Improving mental health in the universities is a multifaceted endeavor that requires a comprehensive approach. Research indicates that promoting and preventing mental health problems are crucial strategies significantly enhancing overall well-being (Cho and Shin 2013). Workplace mental health interventions should aim to protect mental health by reducing work-related risk factors, promote mental health by emphasizing positive aspects of work and worker strengths, and address mental health problems among employees regardless of the cause (LaMontagne et al, 2014). An integrated approach that includes protecting, promoting, and addressing mental health problems is essential for effective workplace mental health programs (Smith, et al, 2019).

Hypothesis Development

Positive Emotions and Psychological Capital

Previous research has provided substantial evidence supporting a correlation between the well-being of individuals like emotions and their Psychological Capital. This suggests that improving psychological capital can potentially boost well-being and emotions. These findings have been supported by several studies conducted by (Avey et al, 2010), (Culbertson, et al., 2010), (Krasikova, Lester, and Harms 2015), and (Luthans et al. 2006) . Research has demonstrated that both efficacy and optimism play crucial roles in developing resilience in individuals. In turn, resilience enhances hope (Reivich and Shatté 2002). In addition, (Krasikova et al. 2015) discovered that psychological capital benefits psychological well being. They observed that a drop in psychological capital levels is associated with an increase in mental health issues such as PTSD, anxiety, sadness, and substance misuse (namely alcohol and drug abuse). These prior studies have demonstrated a growing association between psychological capital and negative aspects such as stress, anxiety, workplace deviance, and burnout (Avey et al. 2010); (Cheung, Tang, and Shuwen 2011).

In general, the connection between happy emotions and psychological capital is complex and mutually beneficial. Positive emotions play a role in the growth of psychological capital, which then affects how individuals think, act, and perform in different areas. This emphasizes the significance of nurturing positive emotions and psychological capital for overall happiness and achievement.

Hypothesis 1 : Positive Emotions has a Positive Effect on Psychological Capital

Happiness and Psychological Capital

The influence of happiness and psychological capital has been explored across different demographic groups, including university students, healthcare workers, and teachers. These studies consistently demonstrate that psychological capital positively impacts happiness levels among various populations, underscoring the significance of psychological well-being in fostering happiness

(Erkuş and Fındıklı, 2021); (Jo et al, 2015) ;(Garg et al, 2022) Additionally, research has delved into the interconnection between community-level social capital and individual happiness, emphasizing the role of social networks and support in promoting happiness (Cai and Ye, 2018); (Kun and Gadanecz, 2022a).

Hypothesis 2 : Happiness has a Positive Effect on Psychological Capital

Psychological Capital and Mental Health

In their study, (Yao, et al., 2022)discovered a notable association between psychological capital and levels of mental health. The researchers found psychological capital to be a reliable indicator of different aspects of mental health, such as emotional stability, self-regulation, and psychological distress—the study conducted by (Yao et al, 2022). The study conducted by (Asheghi, et al., 2020)has demonstrated a strong correlation between enhancing psychological capital elements, including hope, resilience, self-efficacy, and optimism, and improving mental well-being ((Asheghi et al, 2020)). According to (Finch, et al., 2020), there is a high correlation between Psychological capital (PsyCap), which encompasses hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (HERO), and improved well-being as well as decreased mental health symptoms in adults.

Hypothesis 3 : Psychological Capital has a Positive Effect on Mental Health

Psychological Capital Mediate The Relationship of Happiness and Mental Health

A study conducted by (Cai and Ye, 2018) could be a valuable reference for gaining insights into this link. This study examines how psychological capital affects mental health outcomes by influencing happiness and job burnout, with mental health acting as a mediator in this relationship. It provides insights into the function of psychological capital in developing job burnout and its subsequent impact on mental health. Gaining knowledge about this mediation pathway can provide a significant understanding of how psychological capital can indirectly influence mental health outcomes through other factors.

Furthermore, the research conducted by (Foroughinia et al., 2018) may be pertinent as it investigates the correlation between social capital and social happiness. This study aims to examine the impact of social capital on social happiness, which may offer valuable insights into the broader understanding of how dimensions connected to capital influence well-being outcomes. Exploring how social capital affects happiness might provide a significant sense of how psychological capital may mediate the connection between happiness and mental health.

Hypothesis 4 : Psychological Capital as a Mediators on Happiness to Mental Health

Positive Emotions Mediate The Relationship of Happiness and Mental Health

Study from (Tugade et al., 2004)examines the connections between positive emotions, coping mechanisms, resilience, happiness and mental health. It emphasizes how happy emotions can improve coping strategies and resilience, affecting mental health outcomes. Gaining an understanding of these relationships can offer valuable insights into how positive emotions may act as a mediator in the relationship between happiness and mental health.

Furthermore, the research conducted by (Zhai et al., 2021) may be pertinent as it examines the impact of emotional creativity on posttraumatic growth and mental well-being under challenging circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to investigate the relationship between emotional creativity and mental health outcomes, specifically by exploring the role of perceived social support as a mediator. By analyzing this mediating role, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into how positive emotional experiences might influence mental health through different routes. Gaining insight into these pathways can offer a subtle comprehension of how positive emotions impact mental health results.

Hypothesis 5 : Positive Emotions as a Mediators on Happiness to Mental Health

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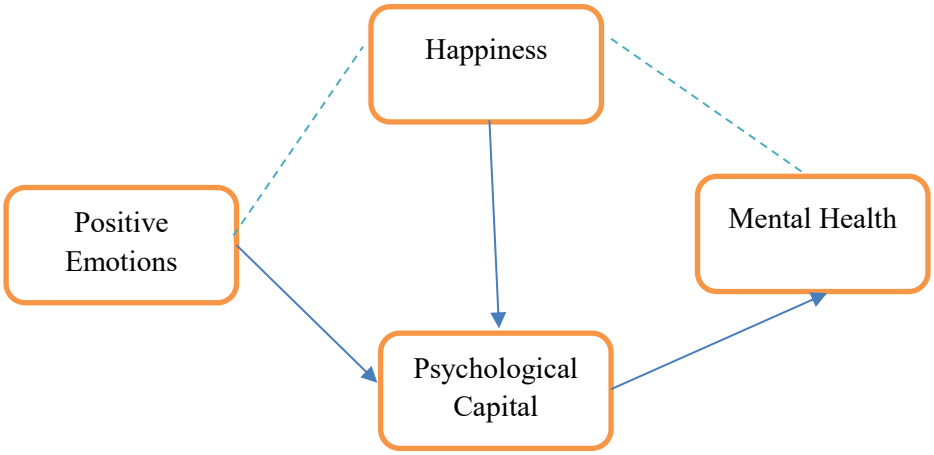

Figure 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHODS

The survey method is a meticulous, methodical, and structured approach for collecting primary data (Cooper and Schindler, 2011). The research population consists of all students enrolled in the Faculty of Bung Hatta University. The sample strategies employed in this study involve purposive sampling, which is a form of non-probability sampling. The selection of participants is based on specific criteria that align with the research objectives. (Cooper and Schindler, 2011). The criteria for this study include students who are in their fifth semester or above and have already completed their studies at Universitas Bung Hatta. The purpose is to examine the psychological consequences that these students experience after spending multiple semesters at the university. The sample in this study was 166 people and the questionnaire collection was carried out in May 2024.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a method used to assess the validity of a measurement instrument. The criteria for evaluating the loading factor, as stated by (Hair, 2015), are as follows: a loading of 0.30 is regarded to meet the minimum level, a loading of 0.40 is considered to be better, and a loading of 0.50 or more is considered to be practically significant. Based on(Hair, 2015), a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of ≤ 0.60 indicates poor reliability, however it can still be utilized for subsequent reasons. The data analysis method employed is Moderating Regression Analysis (MRA) with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Squares (PLS).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model for the validity and reliability tests includes the determination coefficient and the path coefficient, which are displayed in Figure 1 below

Figure 1

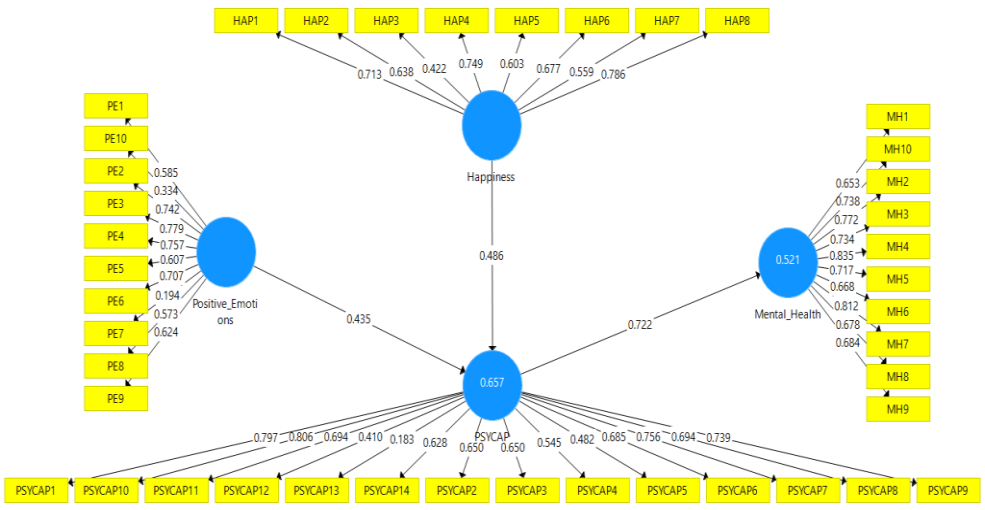

Figure 2 display of meant model output Source: SmartPLS Data Process Results (2024)

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is evaluated by examining the correlation (outer loading) between the score of the item or indication (component score) and the construction score. Convergence validity is considered high when the load value or correlation between the indicator and construction scores is more than 0.70. Indicators loading less than 0.70 are excluded from the study and then reestimated. Table 1 displays the external loading value of the indicator on the second reflective structure. This study conducted two re-estimation processes due to the identification of invalid indicators during the preceding stage's validity test. The researchers played a crucial role in this process, actively identifying and eliminating the faulty indicator and reanalyzing the data. The reliability test results are evaluated based on the internal consistency, which is determined by the composite reliability value of the indicator on the reflective construction. According to Bagozi and Yi, an excellent composite reliability value should be greater than 0.7, Cronbach's alpha should be greater than 0.6, and the average variance extracted (AVE) should be greater than 0.5.

Table 1
Result Analysis Convergent Validity Stage 1

Construct	ITEM	OUTER LOADING	CA	CR	AVE
Happiness	HAP 1	0.762	0,737	0.851	0.656
	HAP 4	0.846			
	HAP 8	0.819			
Positive Emotions	PE 2	0.804	0.797	0.868	0.622
	PE 3	0.816			
	PE 4	0.800			
	PE 6	0.734			
PSYCAP	Psycap 1	0.827	0.832	0.888	0.664
	Psycap 7	0.778			
	Psycap 9	0.804			
	Psycap 10	0.849			
Mental Health	MH 2	0.804	0.869	0.901	0.605
	MH 3	0.816			
	MH 4	0.800			
	MH 6	0.734			

Data Process Results *Smart PLS (2024)*

Table 1 indicates that all variables, including happiness, positive emotions, Psycap, and mental health, have been deemed valid and can be further analyzed. The reliability test findings, which assess the indicator's internal consistency on reflective constructs, indicate that good composite reliability values, as defined by Bagozi and Yi, are greater than 0.7. Similarly, Cronbach's alpha values should exceed 0.6, and AVE values should be higher than 0.5.

a. Discriminant Validity Discriminant validity is employed to ascertain the distinctiveness of

one structure (variable) from another. Discriminant validity is assessed by applying the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading procedures.

Table 2
Discriminant Validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion Method

	Happiness	Mental Health	PSYCAP	Positive Emotions
Happiness	0.810			
Mental Health	0.548	0.778		
PSYCAP	0.721	0.695	0.815	
Positive Emotions	0.565	0.721	0.661	0.789

Data Process Results *Smart PLS (2024)*

According to the data processing results, the correlations between latent variables are more significant than the correlations between variables and other latent variables. The variable "happiness" has a value of 0.810, a mental health score of 0.778, a Psycap value of 0.815, and pleasant feelings of 0.789. Among all the variables, they have already satisfied the Fornell Larcker Criteria (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

Structural Model Assessment

The Structural Model Assessment is required to see the relationship of the latent variable with other late variables, the results of the structural

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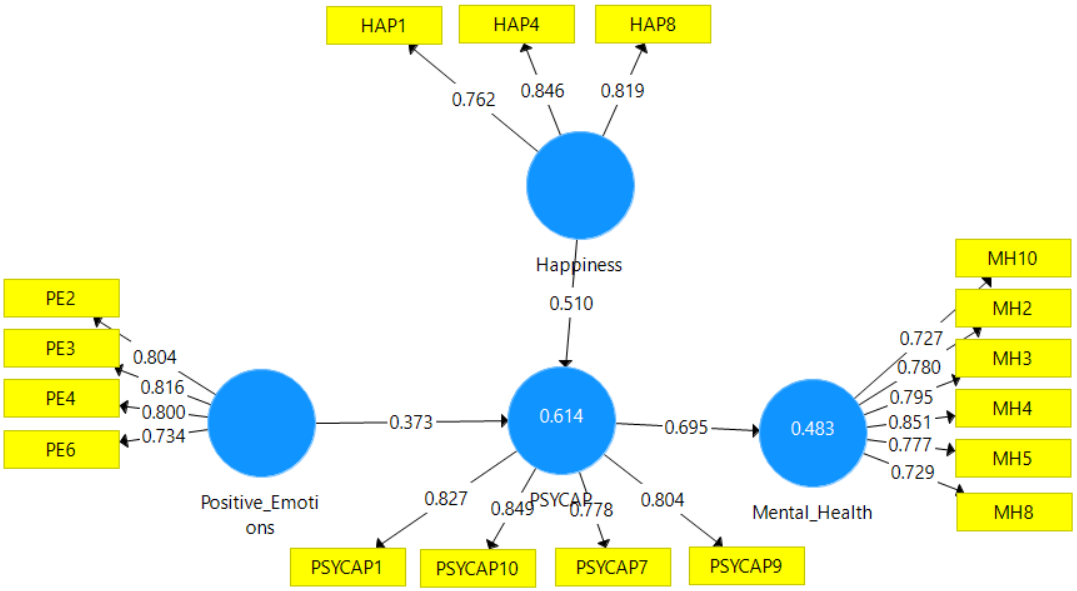
analysis of the model assessment can be seen in the following figure :



Hypothesis Test

The route coefficient or inner model value represents the significance level in hypothesis testing. To support two-tailed hypotheses with α= 0.05, the T-statistic value representing the path or internal model score must be greater than 1.96. Similarly, for two-tailed hypotheses with α = 0.10, the T-statistic value must be greater than 196 (Hair et al., 2014). The significant values of all the hypotheses evaluated in this study are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Hypothesis Testing Result

Hipotesis	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Value	Result
Positive Emotions -> PSYCAP	0.373	6.271	0.000	Accepted
Happiness -> PSYCAP	0.510	8.459	0.000	Accepted
PSYCAP -> Mental Health	0.695	15.126	0.000	Accepted
Happiness -> PSYCAP -> Mental Health	0.355	7.961	0.000	Accepted
Positive Emotions -> PSYCAP -> Mental Health	0.259	5.253	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Data Process Results (2024),) Significant at p<0.05 (two-tailed)*

The relevance of the inter-variable path in the structural model can be observed from the t statistics between variables, as depicted in Table 3. Every individual variable examined in this research structure model substantially impacts its corresponding dependent variable. This is evidenced by the T-statistics values, which are all over 1.96 (for two-tailed trials with a significance level of α=0.05). The inter-variable relations tests indicate a correlation between positive emotions and Psychological capital, with a coefficient of 0.373. This correlation is statistically significant at α=0.05, with a test statistic value of 6.271, more than the critical value of 1.96. However, the p-value of 0.000 is less than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, we may conclude that the first hypothesis is supported. It is aligned with previous research (Avey et al., 2010), (Culbertson et al., 2010), (Krasikova et al., 2015), and (Luthans et al. 2006). And also research conducted by (Reivich and Shatté, 2002), (Krasikova et al., 2015)discovered that psychological capital benefits psychological wellbeing. These findings are consistent with previous literature that stated that positive emotions can enhance the individual's PSYCAP, which includes self-confidence, resilience, optimism, and hope. High capital psychology in individuals can help them cope better with the challenges and stresses of everyday life.

The second hypothesis looked at the influence of the variable happiness to psychological capital, obtained a positive result (0.510) and significant at ∝=0.05 with a statistic value of 8.459 > 1.96 and p value of 0.000 < 0.05 so that it could be concluded that the second

hypothesis is supported. It is aligned with previous research (Erkuş and Fındıklı, 2021); (Jo et al., 2015); (Garg et al., 2022), (Cai and Ye, 2018); (Kun and Gadanecz, 2022). It suggests that individuals who feel happy tend to have higher levels of capital psychology. Happiness as a positive emotional factor plays an important role in increasing the psychological resources of individuals, which in turn can contribute to improving their psychological well-being. This indicates that high PSYCAP is associated with better mental health. These findings support the theory that PSYCAP may act as a buffer against stress and mental distress, helping individuals maintain good mental health.

On the third hypothesis psychological capital influence to mental health, obtained a positive result (0.695) and significant ∝=0.05 with a statistic value of 15.126 more than the critical value of 1.96. However, the p-value of 0.00 is less than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, we may conclude that the third hypothesis is supported. This is in line with previous research from (Yao et al., 2022) and (Asheghi et al., 2020). This indicates that happiness has both a direct influence on PSYCAP and an indirect effect on mental health by enhancing PSYCAP.

The fourth hypothesis, psychological capital is the mediation of happiness to mental health obtaining the positive outcome (0.355) and significant on ∝=0.05 with the statistical value of 7.961 > 1.96 and the value of 0.00 < 0.05, so it can be inferred that the fourth hypothesis are supported. This implies that happiness has both a direct influence on PSYCAP and an indirect effect on mental health by enhancing PSYCAP. The last hypothesis psychological capital is the mediation of positive emotions to mental health obtaining the positive outcome (0.259) and significant on ∝=0.05 with the statistical value of 5.253 > 1.96 and the value of 0.00 < 0.05, so it can be inferred that the fifth hypothesis are supported. This indicates that happiness has both a direct influence on PSYCAP and an indirect effect on mental health by enhancing PSYCAP.

DISCUSSION

These studies consistently demonstrate that happiness is not merely a subjective feeling but a robust predictor of positive psychological and physical health outcomes. The high correlation coefficient (r = 0.510) suggests that happiness may be a particularly potent factor in building PSYCAP, warranting further investigation into the mechanisms that underpin this strong association. Future research could explore whether specific types of happiness (e.g., hedonic vs. eudaimonic) are differentially associated with different components of PSYCAP. The direct impact of PSYCAP on mental health was also substantial (r = 0.695, p = 0.000), indicating that higher levels of PSYCAP are significantly associated with better mental health outcomes. Further research is needed to address the limitations of the current study and to explore the complex interplay of these variables in more detail. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs, incorporate objective measures, and examine these relationships across diverse populations. By addressing these limitations, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors influencing mental well-being and inform the development of effective interventions to promote mental health.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined the complex connections between positive emotions, happiness, and mental health among students at Universitas Bung Hatta Padang. It highlights the function of psychological capital as a mediator. The results suggest that positive emotions and happiness have a major impact on mental health, highlighting the necessity of creating a healthy emotional atmosphere in the academic environment. Additionally, the study demonstrates that psychological capital, which includes hope, resilience, self-efficacy, and optimism, plays a crucial role as a mediator in this connection. Students with elevated levels of psychological capital possess more abilities to utilize pleasant emotions and happiness to enhance their mental well-being.

These findings emphasize the need for educational institutions to allocate resources towards programs and initiatives that improve psychological capital. By implementing this approach, institutions can establish a conducive atmosphere that not only fosters favorable emotions and well-being but also enhances students' overall psychological well-being and academic achievements. Ultimately, this research adds to the expanding collection of literature that emphasizes the significance of psychological well-being in educational environments. This study offers useful insights to policymakers, educators, and mental health practitioners who seek to enhance student well-being through focused interventions that foster psychological capital. Subsequent investigations should persist in examining these dynamics in other settings and

demographics to further substantiate and broaden these discoveries.

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