

The mediating role of EFL/ESL teachers' academic optimism and positive psychological capital in their pedagogical effectiveness

JIACHEN ZHANG

Henan Institute of Science and Technology, Xinxiang, Henan, China

VINCENT GREENIER (Corresponding author)

University of Aberdeen, The United Kingdom

Received: 25/3/2023 / Accepted: 12/11/2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.vi2023c.29632>

ISSN paper edition: 1697-7467, ISSN digital edition: 2695-8244

ABSTRACT: A growing scholarly attention has been paid to the psycho-emotional side of second/foreign language (L2) education in the past decade. Optimal teaching and student achievement are no longer solely governed by teachers' pedagogical skills and practices. Instead, various psycho-affective variables mediate the process of teaching English and its effectiveness. However, the way EFL/ESL teachers' academic optimism and positive psychological capital influence their pedagogical effectiveness in light of demographic factors is neglected. To fill this gap, this study used three online questionnaires to examine the predictive role of 338 Chinese EFL/ESL teachers' academic optimism and positive psychological capital in their pedagogical effectiveness. The results of structural equation modeling (SEM) and the standardized regression weights demonstrated a strong correlation between demographic factors and teacher's academic optimism and teacher's positive psychological capital. Moreover, a strong association was observed between teacher's positive psychological capital and teacher effectiveness, while academic optimism did not correlate with teacher effectiveness. Furthermore, positive psychological capital could predict about 67% of changes in Chinese EFL/ESL teachers' pedagogical effectiveness. The study also discusses the implications and suggestions for further research to deepen L2 educators' knowledge of teacher-psychology.

Keywords: EFL/ESL teacher, positive psychology, academic optimism, positive psychological capital, pedagogical effectiveness

El papel mediador del optimismo académico y el capital psicológico positivo de los profesores de EFL/ESL en la efectividad docente

RESUMEN: En la última década, los aspectos psicoemocionales de la educación en segunda lengua extranjera (L2) han atraído cada vez más la atención de los círculos académicos. La mejor enseñanza y el rendimiento de los estudiantes ya no dependen únicamente de las habilidades y prácticas docentes de los profesores. Por el contrario, diversas variables psicoemocionales juegan un papel mediador en el proceso de enseñanza del inglés y sus efectos. Sin embargo, bajo la influencia de factores demográficos, se ha ignorado el impacto del optimismo académico y el capital psicológico positivo de los profesores de EFL / ESL en su efectividad docente. Para llenar este vacío, el estudio utilizó tres cuestionarios en línea para investigar el efecto predictivo del optimismo académico y el capital psicológico positivo de

338 profesores chinos de EFL / ESL en su efectividad docente. Los resultados del modelado de ecuaciones estructurales (sem) y los pesos de regresión estandarizados muestran una fuerte correlación entre los factores demográficos y el optimismo académico de los docentes y el capital psicológico positivo de los docentes. Además, hay una fuerte correlación entre el capital psicológico positivo de los docentes y la eficacia de los docentes, mientras que no hay correlación entre el optimismo académico y la eficacia de los docentes. Además, el capital psicológico positivo puede predecir un cambio del 67% en la efectividad docente de los profesores chinos EFL / esl. El estudio también discutió la iluminación y sugerencias de nuevos estudios para profundizar los conocimientos psicológicos de los educadores de segunda lengua.

Palabras claves: profesores de EFL/ESL, psicología positiva, optimismo académico, capital psicológico positivo, efecto docente

1. INTRODUCTION

A wave of research in the past decade has revealed that teaching, learning, and assessing English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) is a challenging task (Derakhshan, 2022a, b; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014; Mercer, 2020; Shakki, 2023; Solhi *et al.*, 2023). The progressing complications in this field are due to the presence of interplays among psychological, emotional, individual, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-cultural factors/variables (Derakhshan, 2022b; Delos Reyes & Torio, 2020; Xie & Derakhshan, 2021; Wang *et al.*, 2021; Wang, 2023). This multi-layered nature of second language (L2) education has ascribed a prime significance to teachers' psycho-emotional health and capacities (Strachan, 2020). Teaching is no longer a simple transfer of what one knows, instead, it is an occupation full of emotions and psychological factors (Derakhshan & Zare, 2023; Ghiasvand & Banitalebi, 2023; McIntyre *et al.*, 2019). One such factor, which is essential in the face of challenges and difficulties in the field, is teachers' academic optimism. It refers to a teacher's inclination to maneuver over the strengths and positive aspects of teaching and teaching contexts (Safari & Soleimani, 2019). Instead of losing motivation and getting burned out, optimistic teachers stay firm, look on the bright side, and seek solutions (Pathak & Lata, 2018; Seligman, 2006). Research in L2 contexts reveals that optimistic EFL teachers enjoy higher levels of self-efficacy, resilience, job commitment, well-being, and confidence (Hoy & Tarter, 2011; Lu, 2021; Sezgin & Erdogan, 2015).

Moreover, EFL teachers' academic optimism may positively correlate with their psychological capital in case they are livid and fully involved in their profession (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Xu & Zhu, 2022). This positive feeling in relation to one's work is known as positive psychological capital, which is a personality trait that brings about productivity (Gohel, 2012). It is a psychological resource by which a teacher foregrounds positive aspects of teaching rather than negativities and difficulties (Luthans *et al.*, 2005). Positive psychological capital is a multidimensional construct, which has been found positively associated with different teacher-related variables such as work engagement (Xu, 2023), teacher motivation (Viseu *et al.*, 2016), job satisfaction (Yong *et al.*, 2019), and well-being (Wu *et al.*, 2022). However, its interaction with academic optimism to predict EFL/ESL teachers' pedagogy-related constructs has been left unnoticed. A critical construct as such is teachers' pedagogical effectiveness, which can be described as a broad feature in teachers involving numerous positive traits and competencies that improve teachers' instruction as well as

students' academic achievement (Kwangsawad, 2017; Stronge, 2018). It is noteworthy that pedagogical effectiveness steps beyond teachers' pedagogical knowledge and comprises several characteristics including their skills to involve students in the class, establish classroom rapport/immediacy, present contents professionally, use various teaching techniques/strategies based on students' contexts and needs, manage classes, provide timely feedback, having emotional literacy, and being pedagogically clear to all students when teaching (Borg, 2006; Giovannelli, 2003; Ko, 2014).

To date, researching teachers' pedagogical effectiveness has mostly focused on its conceptualizations and features, yet its impact on teacher-psychology constructs has captured little empirical attention. In a theoretical study, Liu (2022) tried to argue for the positive influence of EFL teachers' connectedness and psychological hardiness on their pedagogical effectiveness. Nevertheless, empirical evidence in this domain is still dearth. Additionally, the mediating role of demographic factors in the interplay of teacher optimism, positive psychological capital, and pedagogical effectiveness has been overlooked. To fill this gap in knowledge, this empirical study was an effort to disclose the interaction among these three constructs in light of demographics and determine whether academic optimism and positive psychological capital could predict Chinese EFL teachers' pedagogical effectiveness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Academic optimism

The first theoretical foundations of academic optimism were put down by different scholars including Bandura, Coleman, and Seligman (Dong & Xu (2022)). Their hypotheses were fortified and represented in the positive psychology trend, which draws on human strengths and positivity instead of overstating negativities and negative emotions (Derakhshan, 2022b; Wang *et al.*, 2021). According to Carver and Scheier (2002), optimism is an intrinsic trait in people, which forms positive expectations of their future regardless of difficulties and problems. In academia, teacher optimism refers to teachers' optimistic view of their ability to cause learning in students and make a change in their academic achievement despite challenges and failures (Xu & Zhu, 2022). To put it differently, optimistic teachers usually expect positive events to take place in the class and believe in the future and goal accomplishments (Carver & Scheier, 2002; Peterson & Park, 2004). The construct of academic optimism was first invented by Hoy *et al.* (2006) to refer to educators' constant tendencies to be hopeful and see the glass as half full irrespective of complications (Schueller & Seligman, 2008).

It has been found that academic optimism is a multidimensional construct including three facets of *academic emphasis*, *collective efficacy*, and *faculty trust* as shown in Figure 1. The first facet pertains to teachers' enacted behaviors stirred by their faith in producing learning in students through a positive and hopeful instructional philosophy. As the second dimension, collective efficacy concerns teachers' faith in their capacity to implement instruction competently and generate academic achievement (Hoy *et al.*, 2006; Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Finally, faculty trust is related to teachers' assurance and trust in pupils and their parents to play a significant role in learning and school efficiency. This sort of collaboration improves learning standards as favored by different stakeholders (Dong & Xu (2022)). An important note

is that these three dimensions are by no means disjunctive but in a reciprocal relationship.

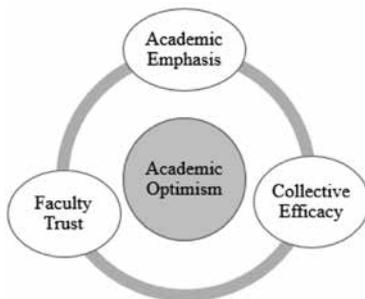


Figure 1. *The Dimensions of Academic Optimism (Hoy et al., 2006)*

2.2. EFL teachers’ positive psychological capital

The concept of positive psychological capital was inspired by the positive psychology paradigm that highlights the harmony and strengths of positive emotions and variables (Derakhshan, 2022b; Luthans *et al.*, 2007). As put by Zewude and Hercz (2022), positive psychological capital underscores human being’s positively-oriented psychological capabilities and resources, which are dynamic, measureable, and manageable for improving one’s performance. The term differs from social capital (i.e., relationships, networks) and human capital (i.e., one’s obtained knowledge, experiences, expertise) (Adler & Kwon 2002; Van Marrewijk & Timmers 2002). It pertains to who the person is at the moment and who he/she can become via positive growth (Ganotice *et al.*, 2016; Youssef-Morgan & Luthans 2015). This psychological resource is the core of one’s professional success and well-being (Uusiautti & Hyvärinen, 2020). The construct has different, latent dimensions (Figure 2) including *hope*, *efficacy*, *resilience*, and *optimism* (also known as HERO). As explained by Luthans *et al.* (2007), hope is a positive feeling, which represents as determination and capacity to identify possible paths of attaining one’s goals. Efficacy refers to one belief in his/her capabilities to perform a task and obtain specific objectives (Tschannen-Moran *et al.*, 1998). As the third element, resilience is the capacity to modify challenging situations and bounce back (Youssef & Luthans, 2013). Finally, optimism refers to one’s realistic belief in succeeding in the future despite problems (Manka *et al.*, 2014).

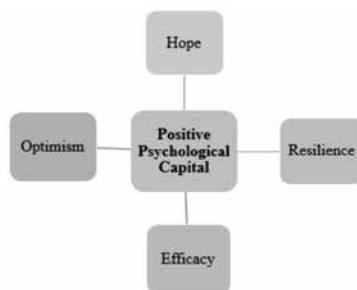


Figure 2. *The Components of Positive Psychological Capital (Luthans et al., 2007)*

In addition to the HERO model, in the literature, other subfactors have been proposed for the construct of positive psychological capital including adequacy (i.e., teachers' determination and energy to teach for a lifetime), positive thinking (i.e., a positive approach toward life and addressing challenges), confidence (i.e., making the required energy to succeed), extroversion (i.e., sociability) (Seligman, 2002; Tösten, 2015). With this multi-layered nature, positive psychological capital can influence different aspects of EFL teachers' performance and practices. One such significant aspect can be their pedagogical effectiveness or efficacy as explained below.

2.3. Teacher pedagogical effectiveness

The concept of teacher effectiveness has been given different definitions in the literature. However, it is still an elusive concept given its multiple understanding by different people (Job, 2017; Norman, 2010). Moreover, abstract terms such as effective, excellent, qualified, good, and highly efficient made the definition of teacher effectiveness more complicated (Watkins & Zhang, 2006). The existing definitions of teacher effectiveness have focused on its impact on students' achievement, effective teachers' actions and skills, and the mindsets required to encourage teacher effectiveness (Carrero, 2016; Job, 2017). For Stronge *et al.* (2011), an effective teacher is one, who helps students to gain learning in the top quartile. They also argued that pedagogically effective teachers have positive academic attitudes, use different instructional approaches and strategies, and connect with their students in the class. As put by Routman (2012), effective teachers take advantage of every moment of instructional time and feel committed to teaching.

In the context of L2 education, the concept expanded to address the principles of "specificity" and "particularity" highlighted in *post-method pedagogy* and *communicative language teaching (CLT)*, *constructivist approaches* (Liu, 2022). Based on this modern conceptualization of teacher effectiveness, each EFL teacher has particular pedagogical beliefs, values, attitudes, and styles. These peculiarities called for teacher reflection as a critical feature of effective teachers (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Other studies contended that teacher effectiveness is highly dynamic and affected by teachers' personality traits, pedagogical content knowledge, and several socio-cultural factors (Job, 2017; Soodmand Afshar & Doosti, 2014). Thanks to the complicated nature of L2 teaching, a wave of efforts has been made to disclose the features of effective teaching/teachers across the globe (Borg, 2006). Consequently, increasing lists of characteristics have been proposed in the literature. Based on such lists, effective teachers are proficient in English, communicate effectively by using interpersonal skills, teach meaningfully, encourage classroom collaboration to involve learners, form a relaxing learning environment, tolerate errors, respect and count on students' emotions, etc. (Borg, 2006; Ko, 2014; Kourieos & Evripidou, 2013; Stronge, 2018). Two other features of effective teachers could be optimism and positive psychological capital, which are studied in the present research.

2.4. Related studies

With the increasing attention paid to positive psychology over the past decades, different

teacher-related constructs and emotions have been studied in EFL contexts (Al-Obaydi *et al.*, 2023; Derakhshan, 2021; Derakhshan, 2022a, b; Derakhshan, Karimpour *et al.*, 2023 a, b; Derakhshan, Wang, *et al.*, 2023; Fu & Wang, 2022; Greenier *et al.*, 2021; Mercer, 2020; Shakki, 2022, 2023; Solhi *et al.*, 2023; Wang *et al.*, 2021; Yüce *et al.*, 2023). EFL teachers' optimism is one of the emerging constructs in L2 research, which has been found influential in promoting teachers' perceived self-efficacy, resilience, job commitment, well-being, and confidence (Hoy & Tarter, 2011; Lu, 2021; Sezgin & Erdogan, 2015). Furthermore, as pinpointed by Xu and Zhu (2022), L2 teachers' optimism can predict their psychological capital and perceived job commitment, as well. Teachers' academic optimism has also been found as one of the core components of positive psychological capital in validation and factor analysis studies (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). However, the way these two variables can empirically correlate is unclear. Research shows that the interaction of optimism and positive psychological capital strongly affects teachers' performance and practices in academia (Khajavy *et al.*, 2018; Luthans *et al.*, 2015). In a survey study on 425 teachers in Portugal, Rodrigues *et al.* (2017) found that high positive psychological capital reduced their psychological distress, perceived anxiety, depression, and stress. In a systematic review study, Zewude and Hercz (2022) argued that positive psychological capital has the potential to positively predict teachers' well-being and motivation.

Additionally, in a correlational study on 412 Chinese EFL teachers, Xu (2023) indicated that teachers' positive psychological capital had a positive and significant correlation with work engagement. Another teacher-related construct, that has recently witnessed a prime interest among scholars, is pedagogical effectiveness (Job, 2017; Ko, 2014; Storage, 2018). The surprising point, however, is that researching this concept has been confined to the features and indicators of teacher effectiveness. Yet, the way it correlates with positive psychological factors and emotions remains intact. In one of the first attempts, Liu (2022) theoretically justified the facilitating role of teacher-student connectedness and psychological hardiness in English teachers' perceived pedagogical effectiveness. Nevertheless, the way EFL/ESL teachers' academic optimism and positive psychological capital can predict their pedagogical effectiveness has been neglected by educational researchers. Additionally, a wealth of research approves that these three constructs are separately affected by several factors. However, the way demographic factors (gender, academic degree, and teaching experience level) mediate their interplay and predictive power is fresh line of thinking. Motivated by this lack, this quantitative study examined the mediating role of EFL/ESL teachers' academic optimism and positive psychological capital in their pedagogical effectiveness considering demographic factors. The guiding research question of the study was:

- How much variance in the EFL teachers' effectiveness can be predicted by EFL teachers' demographic factors, academic optimism, and positive psychological capital?

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

A total of 338 questionnaires were received from a sample of Chinese EFL teachers.

There were 102 males and 232 females. The proportion of males was 30.37% and that of females was 69.63%. The participants majored in English education, translation, and linguistics, among which English education took the largest proportion, accounting for 81.15%. The age range of participants spanned from 26 to 60 years old. Regarding the educational qualification of the teachers, who participated in the questionnaire survey, 1.57% were high school students, 34.55% were bachelor's degree holders, 47.12% were master's degree holders, 12.57% were doctor's degree holders, and 4.19% had other degrees. The participants had different teaching experience levels from 0-3 years (36.13%), to more than 24 years of teaching which accounted for 5.24%. They belonged to different provinces in China including Henan, Gansu, Sichuan, Heilongjiang, Guangxi, Guangdong, Hainan, Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Shandong, Hebei, Shaanxi, Inner Mongolia, Chongqing, among which Henan accounted for 43.19%. The participants were aware of their rights to participate in the study and voluntarily completed the scales.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. *Teacher optimism questionnaire*

In this study, teacher's academic optimism was measured via Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's (2001) scale comprising 42 items that were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The participants were required to choose an option from (1) "strongly agree" to (5) "strongly disagree". The researcher ran a reliability analysis through Cronbach's α the results of which showed that the questionnaire had a reliability index of 0.76, which was satisfactory.

3.2.2. *Positive psychological capital scale*

To measure how Chinese EFL teachers perceive this variable, the researcher used Tösten's (2015) scale. The scale included 26 items disseminated across six components of self-efficacy, optimism, confidence, extroversion, psychological resilience, and hope. The scale followed a five-point Likert rating from (1) never to (5) totally participating. The reliability of the scale was examined through Cronbach's α whose results revealed an acceptable index of internal consistency ($r = .84$).

3.2.3. *Teacher effectiveness questionnaire*

The third instrument used in this study was the questionnaire developed by Shizari *et al.* (2022), which measured EFL teachers' perceptions of teachers and teaching effectiveness. The questionnaire encompassed 42 Likert-point items in which the respondents had to select an option from (1) "strongly agree" to (6) "strongly disagree". To obtain reliable results, the researcher re-examined the reliability of the scale in the context of China. The results of Cronbach's α illustrated that the tool had a high-reliability index ($r = .89$).

3.3. Data collection procedure

To collect the data for this study, the researcher designed an online form of the three

questionnaires related to teacher optimism, psychological capital, and pedagogical effectiveness. Before initiating the procedure, the participants were assured that the information they provided would remain completely confidential and used only for research purposes. Moreover, to comply with basic research ethics, the researcher examined whether he had any conflict of interest with the participants. After taking these steps, the data collection phase was completed at 12:00 on January 5, 2023. More precisely, it took the researcher three days to collect the whole data. Next, the data were carefully checked to ensure their authenticity and relevance to the specified objectives of the study. Then the researcher entered the questionnaire data into SPSS software and ran different statistical analyses. The quantitative results were then illustrated through Figures and Tables as explicated in the results section.

3.4. Data analysis

To answer the research question, the obtained questionnaire data were statistically analyzed using different statistical techniques. First, structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to provide a hypothetical model of the interplay of EFL teachers' optimism, psychological capital, and pedagogical effectiveness. Next, the Chi-square test was used to spot any possible differences in the frequency of the variables. Furthermore, standardized regression weights were separately calculated for each variable to estimate their correlation and predicting power. The quantitative results were then depicted through different schematic representations.

4. RESULTS

To answer the research question, which explored how much variance in the EFL teachers' effectiveness can be predicted by EFL teachers' demographic factors, academic optimism, and positive psychological capital, the researcher conducted SEM analyses as shown in Figure 3.

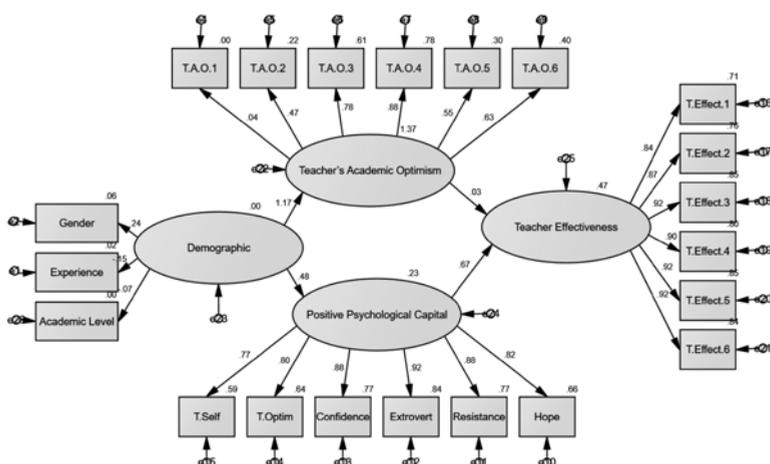


Figure 3. *The Research Models in the Standardized Estimation Mode***Table 1.** *Result (Default model)*

Chi-square	1075.743
Degrees of freedom	187
Probability level	.000

According to the software output, Chi-square = 1075.743, Degrees of freedom = 187, and Probability level = .000, Chi-square test is significant (Sig = 0.000 < 0.05), so it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the frequency of variables (see table 1).

With regard to the second confounding variable, as stated in Section 3.1 our participants were naturally divided into two groups according to their course type (i.e., a compulsory group and a non-compulsory group). Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests showed that the FLE and FLCA scores from the compulsory group and the FLCA scores of the non-compulsory group were not normally distributed ($p < .05$). An independent-samples Mann-Whitney U-test indicated that the differences in the FLE and FLCA scores between students from the two study groups were not statistically significant ($p > .05$). Thus, these two groups were collapsed together in the subsequent analyses.

Table 2. *The Results of Chi-square value*

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	65	1075.743	187	.000	5.753
Saturated model	252	.000	0		
Independence model	42	5835.049	210	.000	27.786

The results of Table 2 reveal that the CMIN value is near 3, so the model is fitted, and there are significant associations between the variables.

Table 3. *Baseline Comparisons*

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.816	.793	.843	.823	.842
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 4. *The Results of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation*

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.118	.112	.125	.000
Independence model	.281	.275	.287	.000

The results of Tables 3 and 4 show that the CFI value is near .9 and RMSEA is a little above .08 that demonstrate a significant association between the variables.

Table 5. *The Results of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation*

		Estimate
Teacher's Academic Optimism	← Demographic factors	1.171
Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital	← Demographic factors	.484
Teacher Effectiveness	← Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital	.668
Teacher Effectiveness	← Teacher's Academic Optimism	.028
Hope	← Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital	.815
Psychological Resistance	← Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital	.878
Extroversion	← Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital	.916
Confidence	← Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital	.878
Optimism	← Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital	.803
Self-efficacy	← Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital	.769

The results of Table 5 present the standardized regression weights for the variables. The results show there is a strong association between demographic factors and Teacher's Academic Optimism and Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital. In other words, 48 percent of changes in Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital can be predicted by the gender, academic level, and teaching experiences of the teachers. While the results of the study demonstrated that there was not a significant association between teachers' academic optimism and pedagogical effectiveness, they revealed a significant and strong association between teacher's Positive Psychological Capital and teacher effectiveness. In other words, about 67 percent of changes in teacher effectiveness could be predicted by their Positive Psychological Capital. Moreover, among the three subfactors of the Teacher's Positive Psychological Capital *Extroversion* with about 91 percent attribution had the strongest prediction power, and *Self-efficacy* with about 77 percent attribution had the weakest prediction power.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study took a quantitative approach to explore the role of EFL/ESL teachers' academic optimism and positive psychological capital in mediating their pedagogical effectiveness in light of demographic factors. The results of SEM and the standardized regression weights revealed a strong association between demographic factors and teacher's academic optimism and teacher's positive psychological capital. More specifically, it was found that 48 percent of changes in teacher's positive psychological capital could be predicted by gender, academic degree, and teaching experience. The results are in line with Hoy *et al.* (2008), who contended that the establishment and growth of teacher's academic optimism are affected by several factors including demographic factors and sociopolitical particularities. Likewise, the findings confirm those obtained by Ganotice *et al.* (2016), who ran a study in the Philippine and found that demographic factors influenced teachers' positive psychological capital and career outcomes. An explanation for these findings could be the interconnected nature of many psycho-emotional factors related to teachers and their background factors. Many psycho-emotional constructs including optimism and positive psychological capital

are normally affected by EFL teachers' gender, academic degree, and amount of teaching experience. It is illogical to consider teachers with different genders, academic qualifications, and prior experiences equal in perceiving and experiencing psycho-emotional states. Hence, these background factors and variations play a pivotal role in shaping teachers' optimism and positive psychological capital.

In this study, the results also demonstrated that there was not a significant association between teachers' academic optimism and teacher effectiveness. This is partly in contrast with Liu's (2022) study, which highlighted the impact of teacher-related psychological factors on English teachers' perceived pedagogical effectiveness. It is likely that the participants of this study have considered optimism and teaching effectiveness as two separate factors, one related to teachers' mind and psychology, while the other to teaching practices. They seem to regard academic optimism as a personal trait concerning future outlooks of their profession, whereas pedagogical effectiveness has been witnessed from a practice-oriented angle. That is why; these constructs have been found uncorrelated. To put it simply, the participants of this study detached optimism and teaching effectiveness probably because of their low emotional literacy and awareness of the idea that emotions (e.g., optimism) are contagious and easily permeated into teachers' pedagogy. Therefore, they considered these constructs uncorrelated. Another finding in this research concerned the significant and strong association identified between teacher's positive psychological capital and teachers' pedagogical effectiveness. In other words, about 67 percent of changes in teacher effectiveness could be predicted by their positive psychological capital. The results concur with previous research endorsing the strong impact of positive psychological capital on teachers' pedagogical performance and practices in academia (Khajavy *et al.*, 2018; Luthans *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, the interplay of teacher's positive psychological capital and their pedagogical effectiveness could be partially justified by Luthans *et al.*'s (2007) model of positive psychological capital in which teacher efficacy was considered a core component. In other words, when an EFL/ESL teacher has self-efficacy regarding teaching, he/she is more likely to possess positive psychological capital. When a teacher is doubtful if his/her pedagogical expertise, he/she hardly uses psychological resources to face challenges and stay positive.

This finding can also be attributed to Chinese teachers' improved knowledge and awareness regarding L2 teaching and teacher education which probably made them consider pedagogical effectiveness as a construct directed by both psycho-emotional and practical factors. They seem to consider teacher and teaching efficacy and effectiveness a function of using proper psychological resources and instructional techniques/strategies. This might be due to their university education and training courses highlighting the multiplex nature of teacher psychology and teacher education.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the results of this study, it could be concluded that EFL/ESL teachers' academic optimism, positive psychological capital, and pedagogical effectiveness are crucial constructs in L2 teaching and teacher education. Like other positive psychology variables, these three constructs may also vary in relation to different individual, contextual, and sociopolitical factors. They are by no means controlled by teachers' inner world, but affected by external

factors related to teachers' background and working context. Moreover, it can be asserted that materializing pedagogical effectiveness is no longer merely practice-oriented to be formed in professional development courses. Instead, it is governed by EFL/ESL teachers' psycho-emotional factors and their use of psychological resources. In other words, being effective in teaching English depends on both pedagogical content knowledge and expertise and psychological awareness. When teachers feel positive and look on the bright side of L2 education, they are more likely to withstand difficulties and use psychological resources to present an efficacious instruction to learners. This contention approves the multi-layered nature of English language education, which has made it a tough job across the world.

Drawing on these assertions, the researcher argues that this study may be of benefit for EFL/ESL teachers, who can gain a deep understanding of the nature of L2 education and its linkage to psycho-emotional factors. They may come to realize that their pedagogical efficacy and optimistic views play an essential role in the process and product of their instruction. In addition, Chinese teacher educators may find the results momentous by injecting them into their training courses to EFL/ESL teachers in the country. They can enrich their programs by integrating the psychology of L2 teaching into pedagogical issues commonly taught in pre-and-in-service training programs. They may revise their conceptions that L2 teaching training courses should only revolve around instructional techniques but assign a special place to psycho-emotional factors. Moreover, policy-makers can use this study and design teaching and learning environments for EFL/ESL teachers in which they feel optimistic and positive about their occupation despite the existing challenges of L2 education. In simple words, due attention is required to be paid to the psychology of L2 education in EFL contexts like China, where the focus is more on the outcome of instruction rather than the hidden and inner world of teaching an L2.

Notwithstanding these implications, there were some limitations in this study. First, this study used a quantitative research design, which could not present the dynamics of the interaction among the three constructs examined. Second, the data was collected from a single context (China) that limits the scope and generalizability of the results. Third, the sample was mostly included of female teachers, while a balanced sample could provide richer data for making comparisons between genders. Fourth, this study only used questionnaires to gather data, while qualitative instruments could deepen the understanding of the interplay of teacher academic optimism, positive psychological capital, and teaching effectiveness. Fifth, the sampling technique was non-random, which poses some challenges on the findings and interpretations. Hence, different lines of research could be suggested regarding this strand. Further research is recommended to examine how these variables interact in different countries. Further research can be done through intervention studies to offer more evidence concerning the impact of optimism and positive psychological capital on EFL teachers' teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, the role of psycho-emotional factors in L2 assessment practices and professionalism can be studied from teachers' perspectives. Moreover, teachers' perceived emotions in alternative assessment techniques like learning-oriented assessment (Banitalebi & Ghiasvand, 2023; Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2022) and their contribution to identity as L2 assessors (Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2021, 2022) is a novel line of research in the future. In sum, the findings of this study demand actions to be taken by L2 educators and decision-makers to change training and professional development programs in EFL/ESL

contexts in a way that the psycho-emotional side of L2 teaching and teacher education is more seriously taken into account.

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