

## **Abstract**

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) has emerged as a valuable resource for organisational and academic performance. Based on both positive psychology and Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB), PsyCap consists of efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism. Hope and optimism are acknowledged in the literature as beneficial for student performance and university adjustment, respectively. Hence the study examines PsyCap with a focus on developing hope and optimism in university students for academic and professional advancement, using a tailored Best Possible Self (BPS) intervention that incorporates smart goal setting. The effect of the intervention on levels of hope, optimism and overall PsyCap, and perceptions of its contribution and delivery is assessed. The mixed methods research approach employed entails a quasi-experiment and follow-up semi-structured interviews. The experimental condition comprises the BPS intervention and the control condition involves the Daily Activities (DA) task. A sample of 30 students was randomly assigned to the experimental (N=14) and control group (N=16) and measures of PsyCap were taken before and after the intervention or task. A sample of 6 students who completed the BPS intervention took part in the interviews. The mixed model ANOVA results show that the effect of the current BPS on hope, optimism, and PsyCap is not statistically significant. The outcomes from the semi-structured interviews offer a positive perspective of an intervention with the potential to impact valuable psychological constructs which can be explored in future research. The qualitative findings and design considerations provide possible explanations for the main findings. The research has practical implications and recommendations are presented for future research and to enhance the BPS intervention.