

# Academic Press and Student Engagement: Can Academic Psychological Capital Intervene? Test of a Mediated Model on Business Graduates

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Received: April 4, 2018

Accepted: May 28, 2019

Online Published: May 31, 2019

doi:10.5430/ijhe.v8n3p134

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v8n3p134>

## Abstract

Psychological wellbeing has gained much prominence over the recent years. Parallel to organizational domains, empirical attention is also being paid across the academics as well. The present study attempted to examine the much important role and relationship between academic press and student engagement and to what length academic psychological capital can potentially mediate in the relationship. A total of 371 undergraduate students were sampled for the present study from a private university in Bahrain. Through using structural equation modelling using Smart PLS 3 the results of the mediated model reported significant relationship between academic press and academic psychological capital (i-e academic efficacy and resilience). Though the study did not find any support for academic press and student engagement relationship, nonetheless, found a significant mediation of academic psychological capital in the relationship between academic press and student engagement. The findings have suggested that students' perceptions about how much their teacher presses them to do thoughtful work, facilitation in explaining and motivating for full efforts can act as a key ingredient for nurturing students' connectivity with the studies in general and views about their own learning. Accordingly, the study has also underlined that students with positive academic press from their teachers tend to be higher in engagement due to enhanced efficacy and resilience. The present study has attempted to address a major research gap with acute empirical findings for academicians to enhance their students' wellbeing.

**Keywords:** engagement, psychological capital, press, mediation

## 1. Introduction

Higher education institutions are striving hard globally to compete in the tough market particularly in their struggle towards optimizing student outcomes (Ahmed, Umrani, Pahi & Shah, 2017). Henceforth, the need and importance for institutional bodies to comprehend with ways through which student behaviors and outcomes can be principally enhanced is becoming indispensable. Therein, psychological wellbeing has received much attention and scholarly appreciation over the recent times much of which is principally because of its acute role towards harnessing individual behaviors and outcomes in general (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009) and in academics (Pontius & Harper, 2006; Yaraghi & Shafiee 2018) in particular. Individuals with higher psychological wellbeing tend to perform better with high immersion, vigor and absorption thus expressing what is commonly known in the scholarly literatures as engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Yildirim, Elban & Yildirim 2018) Notably, this trend has also inspired academic enthusiasts to underline how students' positive state of mind could be potentially enhanced for better academic behaviors and outcomes (Ahmed et al., 2017; Quaye & Harper, 2014). Notably, higher education institutions have also understood the vitality of support and facilitation from teachers particularly the 'academic press' whereby, the teachers focuses on the cognitive aspects to help students put their greatest thoughtful efforts towards in studies. Nevertheless, regardless of the considerable scholarly evidence pertaining to the prominence of it on individual grounds, dearth of research exists regarding how it can possibly help in fostering student engagement and whether academic psychological capital would potentially intervene. Keeping these scholarly understandings beforehand, the present study attempted to examine the relationship between academic press and students' engagement followed by the mediation of academic psychological capital in the

relationship.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Engagement in Academics

Academic engagement is the least explored factor in the academic field and it is highly related to academic resilience (Finn and Rock, 1997). Accordingly, Lamborn and, Newmann, and wehlage (1992) define student engagement as: 'psychological investment in learning, comprehension and mastering the knowledge, skills, and crafts necessary'. This definition shows that engagements are about the level of the commitment of students, their eagerness to learn, comprehend, and master knowledge and skills.

Engagement is not only about the time spent in studies (Finn, 1989), but it also comprises one's behavior, feelings and one's approach about learning since it shapes the way students engage themselves during the course of their studies. Everyday situations of resilience can enrich the study of engagement through focusing on common situations at the educational setting, such as: what happens when students make mistakes, encounter difficulties and failure in school. When talking about academic resilience, we mentioned that coping skills are of a great importance since they may shape students' reactions to challenges and obstacles. Skinner and Pitzer (2012) stated that 'the same personal and interpersonal resources that promote engagement may shape students' reactions to challenges, with academic coping and bridge back to reengagement'. In fact, engagement is a psychological connection (Rothbard, 2001; Youwen, 2018). It is a positive state of mind (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker, 2002) since it allows students to be dedicated and able to handle any difficulties and this could be a clear portrayal of their commitment and efficacy.

Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) assumed that engagement is flexible to different situations, contextual features, features and open to environmental changes. The most important thing is that students should be self-confident and they need to believe in themselves and their abilities. They need to see that every negative situation is a bridge to a positive one. Moreover, support is needed from their surrounding environment (in our case family and professors) since it can influence engagement (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, and Kindermann, 2008). Many factors can influence academic engagement. The behavior of teachers (Skinner and Belmont, 1993), classroom climate (Reyes et al., 2012), and achievements (Denny, 2013). Academic engagement can be also influenced by the student's attitude towards himself/herself and this lead us to investigate how self-efficacy can be a one of the major factors of academic engagement.

### 2.2 Academic Psychological Capital

Across the major literatures pertaining to individual behaviors, psychological well-being is generally represented as a form of personal resources that underline positive evaluations relating to a person's view of its potential and ability to responsibly manage and influence their environment (Hobfoll et al., 2003). Studies have highlighted psychological capital comprising of self-efficacy and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007).

### 2.3 Academic Self-Efficacy

In the two previous sections, it is clear that there is a strong relation between academic resilience and academic engagement since Sun and Rueda (2012) added to these two variables Amitay and Gumpel (2015) pointed out that Academic resilience has an influence with the self-efficacy of the students. According to Bandura (1989) referred self-efficacy as beliefs about one's capabilities to learn or perform behaviors at designated levels. Self-efficacy is an important variable since it affects students' motivation and learning (Dinther, Dochy, and Segers, 2011) and thus influence academic engagement and performance.

The association between academic resilience with academic engagement and self-efficacy has been identified in the literature review. However, there is a gap in the literature as the association of these three factors on academic resilience since it has not been explored.

Since self-efficacy is related to students' beliefs of achievement, it has a direct influence on their motivation. Many factors help in improving and shaping self-efficacy. Pajares and Schunk (2001) stated that family, friends, school, and transitional influences are of extreme importance. Teachers' roles are also of huge importance since it would add to the shaping to student academic self-efficacy. Teachers' behavior can influence students' efficacy negatively or positively (Banfield). If the teacher encourages students and make them believe in themselves and their capacities the students' self-efficacy building becomes positive. However, if the teacher has negative behavior, blames students all the time, does not give them credit of the good deeds, and always provides negative feedback, the building of self-efficacy is impacted negatively. Teachers need to pay attention to their behavior with the students and type of

feedback they provide. When students who experienced failure are given instructive and positive feedback by their teachers, their self-efficacy improves and gains more strength.

It has been claimed by many researchers that students who have high academic self-efficacy manage their academic life and duties effectively, and use efficient learning strategies, however the ones who have low academic self-efficacy experience academic failure, are not aware of their learning strategies, and face many problems in their academic life. A strong academic self-efficacy is the major cause of academic success of students since it is assumed that their academic motivation is also high.

#### *2.4 Academic Resilience*

Most studies in resilience originate from psychology. However, it is always beneficial to extend them to other fields and see how human beings' behavior is different from one situation to the other. Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) defined resilience as to the process of positive adaptation in the face of significant stress or adversity. Nowadays, students face many challenges both in their daily and academic life that is way they need to be able to adapt to various situation in order to have a smooth learning experience. Luthans, Vogelgesang, and Lester (2006) stressed this fact by stating that resilience is a psychological capital that needs to be enhanced and developed in each person. An acceptable degree of resilience enables the person to transform stressful situations into positive opportunities. This for sure requires high order skills but at the same time some critical situations push people to react unconsciously in a positive and an acceptable way. It has been shown in many researches, such as Gillespie, Chaboyer and Wallis (2007), that Resilience is a process that can be developed during the life span and cannot be considered as the inherent characteristics of personality.

When talking about resilience taking into account culture can be of a great importance. Culture can be viewed as social markers that make people unique from each other based on their country of origin, race, or languages that they were born with. Although people are different because of their cultures, languages, races, religions, and other aspects; there are universal values and norms across human societies. The challenges of social work research are to investigate the similarities in the midst of obvious differences and diversity. Culture plays an important role in determining resilience and observing the relationship between some predictors and their outcomes (Celik, Cetin & Tutkun, 2015; Walsh, et.al 2018). Also, Gillespie, Chaboyer, and Wallis (2007) pointed out that resilience is mainly developed through a synergy between individuals, their environment and experiences.

Maintaining good academic standards is what is meant by academic resilience. This is topped with a pinch of motivation since students' academic success can be lost if they lack resilience, study under pressure or have stress in their institution (Martin, 2002; Sudaryana, 2018). Waxman, Gray, and Padron (2003) stressed the fact that Students with good academic resilience can succeed in school despite the presence of adverse conditions. This led us to question the way institutions work and help students believe in themselves and be resilient since at the end of the day they are educating citizens who will be active in the world and able to serve their countries. Individuals in general need to be equipped with coping skills. They need to be self-aware of their own abilities, relationships and skills. The development of this belief system may be influenced by variables such as personality, environment, and developmental stage. (Jew, Green, & Kroger, 1999).

#### *2.5 Academic Press*

Academic press is defined by Hoy, Smith and Sweetland (2002) as: "the extent to which the school is driven by a quest for academic excellence". An academic institution with strong policies, procedures, practices, and norms (Lee, Smith, Perry, & Smylie, 1999; Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1982) that are respected by all bodies namely: administration, top management, and professors can lead to academic press. McDill, Natriello, & Pallas, 1986, p.8 said that: "Academic press focuses on the extent to which school members, including teachers and students, experience a normative emphasis on academic success and conformity to specific standards of achievement". Every institution has standards of success and distinguishing itself in the market and to achieve that all bodies need to follow its culture or philosophy and adhere to its journey which can be very stressful and can put everyone under pressure. Hoy and Hannum (1997) believed that an orderly learning environment is set when the institution is characterized by a high academic press. In addition, Murphy, Weil, Hallinger and Mitman (1982) claimed that school policies, teachers' beliefs and objective, classroom practices that are directed towards academic press, obliges the students to work hard and respect their peers who have academic stress. The present study attempted to focus on the cognitive support prospect of teachers which focuses on encouraging students to think, give a careful thought to the academic tasks and activities and guides them to give their best in this regard. Notably, there is scarcity of evidence pertaining to how this can potentially help enhance psychological well-being prospects such as student engagement.

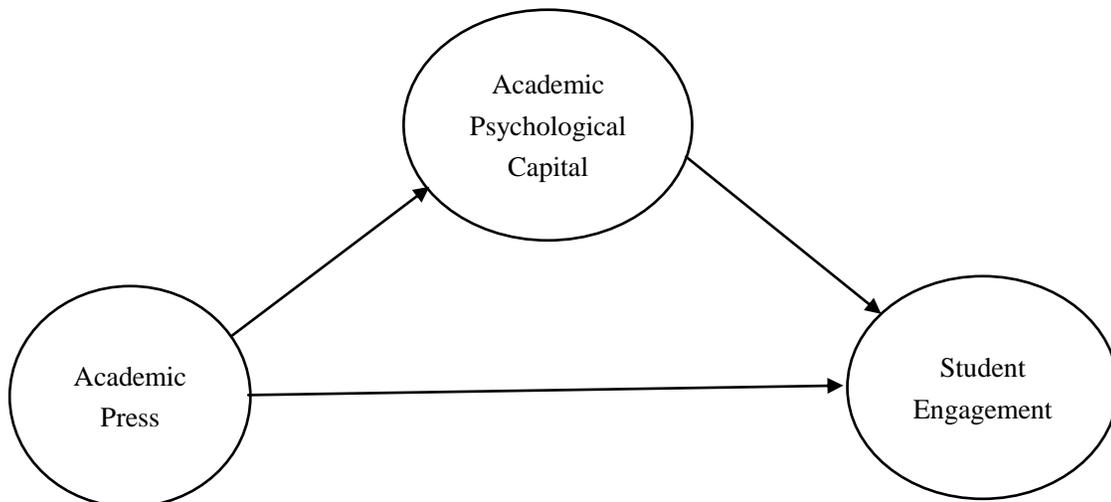
### 2.6 Mediation of Academic Psychological Capital

Several studies have confirmed the mediating potential of psychological capital in general (e.g. Luthans et al., 2008; Shen et al., 2014). Accordingly, prominent studies can be traced from engagement literatures testing the mediation effects of different individual and organizational factors. For example, Salanova, Agut and Peiro (2005) attempted to examine the role and impact of service climate as a mediator in organizational resources and engagement relationship. More Particularly, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti and Scheufeli (2009) tested and hence reported full mediation of psychological capital between job resources and engagement. The study concluded that resources help facilitate in enhancing individual psychological capital which further predicts engagement. In the likewise manner, scholarly work also underlines the acute role and influence of psychological capital towards harnessing engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009; Ramli, Muljono & Afendi2018) in general and amongst students (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003) in particular.

However, to what length academic psychological capital would mediate the academic press and student engagement relationship is still a mystery. Longitudinal study by Llorens, Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2007) found mediation of self-efficacy in the task resources and engagement relationship. parallel to this, Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2006) also found a significant mediating role of psychological capital including self-efficacy and resilience. The study reported that support from supervisor can help to boost psychological capital which in turn predicts positive behaviors and outcomes. Hence, based on these scholarly arguments, we aimed that academic press will potentially make students feel more academically efficacious and resilient which will result in predicting their engagement.

### 2.7 Hypotheses Tested

Based on the critical review of the literature, the present study conceptualized to test the following mediated model:



### Hypotheses Testing:

Based on the conceptualized framework, the present study attempted to examine the following relationships:

H1: there will be appositve relationship between Academic Press and Academic Psychological Capital

H2: There will be a positive relationship between Academic Press and Student Engagement

H3: There will be a positive relationship between Academic Psychological Capital and Student Engagement

H4: Academic Psychological Capital will mediate the relationship between Academic Press and Student Engagement.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Sampling

Students from a private university in Bahrain were sampled for the study. A total of 371 students enrolled in the business undergraduate program were sampled for the present study through using self-administered survey

technique whilst using simple random sampling approach. Since Kahn (1990) has asserted that engagement is an individual psychological component hence the unit of analysis was individual students. The reason behind selecting undergraduate students was based on the focus of higher education in the kingdom of Bahrain. Being an emerging educational economy, majority of the universities are offering undergraduate programs. The students were reminded with follow-up visits to the classes to yield better response rate. 218 questionnaires were received back at the end of 3-week data collection process out of which, 32 incomplete questionnaires were deemed unfitting for the final analysis and therefore were discarded and 196 were taken further for analysis.

### 3.2 Measures

We operationalized academic press as the efforts taken by Academic press was tested through adapting the 7-item scale from Patterns of Adaptive Learning (PALS). Accordingly, The Academic Psychological Capital was measured through two the teachers to help facilitate students in learning, understanding and overcoming academic challenges in the class. components i-e academic efficacy and academic resilience. We also measured academic efficacy through adapting 5-item scale from Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS). Accordingly, 6-item scale for academic resilience was adapted from Martin and Marsh (2006). Both the scales were recently used and hence reported with considerable CR value i-e 0.792 and 0.836 respectively (Ahmed et al., 2017). Student`s engagement was assessed through adapting 9-item engagement by Utrecht University (UWES) (Scheufeli et al., 2006). The scale caters to questions pertaining how energetic students were about their immersion and absorption towards their academic work in this regard. Students were asked to respond on a 5-point scale indicating as 1- “*Strongly Disagree*” and 5 as “*Strongly Agree*”.

### 3.3 PLS-Structural Equation Modeling

Since the purpose of this study is to predict the mediating effect of academic psychological capital on the relationship between academic press and student engagement. Therefore, drawing upon Hair et al., (2016), Ringle et al., (2012) the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was selected and SmartPLS 3 (Hair et al., 2012; Henseler et al., 2009; Ringle et al., 2012) was used to perform data analysis.

### 3.4 Data Analysis and Findings

The data collected from students in Behrain was entered into SPSS. The properly filled 186 questionnaires were entered into SPSS. The data set comprised of random missing values that were less than 5 percent, we therefore drawing upon (Hair et al., 2010) used mean-replacement method to treat the missing values. Secondly, the treatment of univariate and multivariate outliers was performed in order to find reasonably good data for reliable results.

### 3.5 Reliability and Validity Tests

SmartPLS 3 provides an effective choice in performing reliability and validity assessment by ascertaining measurement model. Drawing upon Hair et al., (2013) we established inter-item reliability through standardized loadings by retaining items with loadings 0.5 or above, internal consistency reliability through composite reliability (0.7 or above), and convergent validity through average variance extracted (0.5 or above). The discriminant validity was established following Fornell and Larker (1981) criterion. The assessment of these tests are provided in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Measurement Model

Construct	Item	Loadings	CR	AVE
Academic Efficacy	AE1	0.618	0.846	0.526
	AE2	0.615		
	AE3	0.795		
	AE4	0.807		
	AE5	0.766		
Academic Press	AP1	0.605	0.875	0.501
	AP2	0.754		
	AP3	0.718		
	AP4	0.687		
	AP5	0.691		
	AP6	0.816		
	AP7	0.665		
Academic Resilience	AR3	0.779	0.836	0.562
	AR4	0.776		
	AR5	0.762		
	AR6	0.676		
Student Engagement	SE1	0.655	0.823	0.500
	SE2	0.766		
	SE5	0.691		
	SE6	0.754		
	SE7	0.713		
	SE8	0.671		
	SE9	0.809		

According to Hulland (1999), the inter item reliability should be assessed through factor loadings. In the present study, the item loadings were found falling within the acceptable threshold, ranging between 0.50 to 0.70, as suggested by (Hair et al., 2013). Secondly, as indicated in Table 2, the composite reliability scores are above 0.70 (Bagozzi 1998) and the average variance extracted scores for each latent variable are also upto 0.50 or above (Hair et al., 2013). Hence, the present study meets reliability and validity criterion. Table 2 provides numerical evidence of established discriminant validity following upon Fornell and Larker, (1981).

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3	4
<b>Ac-Efficacy</b>	<b>0.725</b>			
<b>Ac-Resilience</b>	0.464	<b>0.749</b>		
<b>Academic Press</b>	0.386	0.423	<b>0.708</b>	
<b>Student Engagement</b>	0.544	0.335	0.379	<b>0.634</b>

### 3.6 Structural Model Assessment

We first assessed the collinearity issue where according Hair et al., (2016) the VIF score for each latent variable should be less than 5. Our study results indicated the VIF scores were below the suggested threshold. Next, use of Smart PLS provides opportunity to perform bootstrapping for obtaining path coefficients. The results are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Path coefficients

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta	SE	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Academic Press -> Acd-Psy-Capital	0.490	0.061	7.982	0.000	Supported
H2	Academic Press -> Student Engagement	0.137	0.086	1.586	0.057	Not-Supported
H3	Acd-Psy-Capital -> Student Engagement	0.494	0.079	6.238	0.000	Supported

The present study proposed four hypotheses; 1) positive relationship between academic press and academic psychological capital, 2) positive relationship between academic press and student engagement, 3) positive relationship between academic psychological capital and student engagement, and lastly 4) mediating effect of academic psychological capital on the relationship between academic press and student engagement.

The bootstrapping results revealed that H1 was supported ( $t=7.982$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Our second hypotheses could not find empirical support ( $t=1.586$ ,  $p=0.057$ ) as the cutoff for t-statistics is at-least 1.645,  $p=0.05$ ). However, H3 found empirical support ( $t=6.238$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The results related to hypotheses 4 are provided in mediation analysis section.

### 3.7 Predictive Power of the Model

For estimating predictive power of the research model, we relied upon r-squared and f-squared (Hair et al., 2016). The PLS-SEM algorithm results indicated r-squared value of 0.32 for student engagement explaining 32 percent variance. However, we found 0.24 percent variance for academic psychological capital. Although, researchers believe that r-squared value is always contextual and is based upon research settings (Hair et al., 2016). However, Falk and Miller (1992) suggest that if a square value, in the social science context, reaches upto 10 percent, it may be considered accepted.

Table 4. R-Squared Assessment

	R Square
Acd-Psy-Capital	0.240
Student Engagement	0.329

In order to understand the relative influence of every modeled construct on the latent construct student engagement, we evaluated f-square (Hair et al., 2016). As per our findings, the f-squared value for academic press was  $f=0.021$ ; whereas an f-squared value of  $f=0.276$  was found for academic psychological capital. As per guidelines forwarded by Cohen, (1988) the f-squared values are small, medium and large when the value is up to 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 respectively. Accordingly, we found that the effect size of academic press over student engagement was small (0.021) and the effect size of academic psychological capital for student engagement was medium (0.276).

Table 5. f-Squared Assessment

Exogenous Latent Variable	Student Engagement
Academic Press	0.021
Academic Psychological Capital	0.276

We lastly, evaluated Q-squared for the purpose of predictive relevance of the model. The Blindfolding procedure was used to ascertain Q-square test in the SmartPLS software. Results provided in the following table are in-line with Chin, (1998); indicating that the Q-square score for both endogenous latent variables is greater than zero. Hence, this model demonstrates adequate predictive relevance.

Table 6. test of predictive relevance

	SSO	SSE	Q <sup>2</sup>
Acd-Psy-Capital	2,046.000	1,894.222	0.074
Student Engagement	1,302.000	1,155.302	0.113

### 3.8 Mediation Test

The bootstrapping approach was used to determine indirect effects for the mediation test (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; 2008). Our results revealed that there is an indirect influence of academic psychological capital on the relationship between academic press and student engagement ( $\beta=0.242$ ,  $t\text{-value}=4.787$ ,  $CIL=0.169$ ,  $CIU =0.335$ ).

Table 7. Path coefficients for mediation analysis

Relationship	beta	SE	t-value	P Values	Confidence Intervals	
					5.0%	95.0%
<b>Academic Press -&gt; Academic Psychological Cap -&gt;Student Engagement</b>	0.242	0.051	4.787	0.000	0.169	0.335

Hence, it is concluded that academic psychological capital mediates the relationship between academic press and student engagement.

### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Academic support and facilitation by teachers have been largely accepted and acknowledged for predicting promising student behaviors and outcomes (e.g. Reddy, Rhodes & Mulhall, 2003). The present study has resulted that academic press whereby, the teachers support students in troubleshooting student problems; enriches them to do a more thoughtful work; encourages them to use critical thinking and motivates them to give their best results in enabling students enhance their psychological energies thus enhancing their self-efficacy and resilience. The finding evidently underlines that teacher can play a transformational role when it comes to student behaviors and outcomes and their effective help and guidance can take them to embark on the course of believing in their skills, abilities to resolve academic challenges and handle work pressures. The finding has also highlighted that academic press can help students to become mentally strong and become dedicated to overcoming academic challenges despite facing setbacks in their academic journey. Since majority of the studies in past can be tracked investigating the link role and impact of teacher support and facilitation in general (e.g. Lee & Bierman, 2015; Perry, Liu & Pabiam, 2010); the present study is one of its kind in this regard as hardly any empirical studies can be highlighted showcasing this side of teacher support and its positive relationship with students' academic psychological capital.

However, to what extent the academic press can lead students to further students' overall engagement has been made questionable by the current study. With insignificant relationship between academic press and student engagement ( $B=0.137$ ;  $t=0.057$ ), the finding suggest that students perceptions about how much their teacher presses them to do thoughtful work, facilitation in explaining and motivating for full efforts can may not necessarily act as the key ingredient for nurturing students' connectivity with the studies in general, enrolled degree programme and views about their own learning. The insignificant results related to hypothesis 2 in a way, have raised questions for studies that concluded positive impact of any kind of teachers and academic support on students' performance and outcomes (e.g. Hughes, Luo, Kwok & Loyd, 2008; Rowan-Kenyon, Swan & Creager, 2012) hence opening further avenues of research in this regard. Teachers acts as a major source of support in learning and academic performance (e.g. Brewster & Bowen, 2004; Reddy, Rhodes, & Mulhall, 2003) but despite of this, one possible reason behind this insignificant relationship from the current study findings could be the nature of the predicting variable (academic press) which talks about a very specific aspect of teacher's support hence, resulting in limited impact and influence towards enhancing the general engagement of students with their studies.

Accordingly, the findings of the present study have reported significant relationship between academic psychological capital and student engagement. The findings are in parallel to prior study on doctoral students (Ahmed et al., 2017) that also reported positive influence of students' academic psychological capital including efficacy and resilience on their engagement with PhD studies. This hence leads to establish the understanding that individual perception and their self- belief and mental strength can be of great value in enhancing students' immersion, absorption and vigor for their studies, degree program and learning in general thus, predicting engagement. The findings have also landed support to the broader assertion that students require to have faith in their capabilities and ability to tackle all the academic difficulties and be strong enough to face all setback with resilience in the due course in order to perform well in academics (Luthans, Luthans & Jensen, 2012). More importantly, the results have also confirmed and hence strengthened the assertions of Conservation of Resource Theory (COR), suggesting that psychological resources (i-e psychological capital in the present study) can enhance individual behaviors (i-e engagement).

In connection to the mediation, the present study has found support for the mediating role of academic psychological

capital in the relationship between academic press and student engagement. The finding is parallel to the renowned studies Ahmed et al. (2017) and Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) who underlined that resources can enhance psychological wellbeing which in turn improve engagement. In simple, students with positive academic press from their teachers tend to be higher in engagement due to enhanced efficacy and resilience. Henceforth, this leads to the expression that academic psychological capital is a prominent player when it comes to addressing students' engagement.

#### *4.1 Implications for Theory and Practice*

Noteworthy implications can be drawn from the findings of the present study. The study findings have underlined the acute role and importance of academic press towards boosting individual psychological capabilities. The findings have crucially underlined that teachers have a deeper role than just recognizing and appreciating students which caters to enabling them in becoming a better problem solver with better thinking and understanding approach. The findings have educated us with the knowledge that apart from all other benefits of teachers' support (e.g. Anderman, Andrzejewski & Allen, 2011) they can also act as a great support resource through encouraging to think and work with a considerate mindset in class which will help students to further their psychological capabilities in academics. Henceforth, the findings imply teachers concerned about making their students resilient and efficacious to emphasize on the component of academic press. Management in the higher education institutions can play a major role in this through training interventions (Byrge & Tang, 2015; Sluijsmans, Brand-Gruwel & van Merriënboer, 2002). Henceforth, it would be worthy to capitalize upon such interventions for teachers to learn how they can foster self-beliefs and academically resilient behaviors amongst the students for responsive performance.

Importantly, on the grounds of mediation of academic psychological capital, the present study implies educationists to develop their self-confidence and belief in their abilities and the strength to face and overcome challenges in their studies. Students generally experience a lot of stress and burnout which potentially can be addressed through enhancing their personal psychological resources (Jacobs & Dodd, 2003) thus facilitating them in boosting their engagement. This assertion has been confirmed by the present study whereby, the findings of the hypothesis 3 imply that efficacious and resilient students perform well through boosting their engagement. Keeping in view the scholarly work done in the corporate sector pertaining to engagement (e.g. Rich et al., 2010), the present study findings assert that students with higher psychological capital can enrich their engagement with the studies which would then help them to further their academic performance (Chemers, Hu & Garcia, 2001; Adewale, 2016; Alfauzan and Tarchouna, 2017; Amogechukwu and Unoma, 2017; Flake, 2017; Foulidi, et.al. 2018; Guirguis, 2018). This leads to implication for theory as well as practice suggesting that students should be facilitated to reach to the higher level of self-efficacy and resilience in order to express immersion, vigor and full absorption in their studies and degree programme. Higher education institutions can use the aspect of Individual student counselling to help students in this regard (Pajares & Graham, 1999; Caifen, Hailun and Rongrong, 2018; Çetinkaya, et.al. 2018; Dierker, et.al. 2018; Dündar and Koç 2018).

The findings encourage teachers to understand their role and importance in motivating students in developing their thinking and helping them to overcome academic challenges and perform work more thoughtfully. The finding also implies universities to realize the vitality of teachers' academic press towards shaping psychological capital of the students for better engagement.

#### *4.2 Contributions of the Study*

Some of the major contributions of the present study are as following. The current study has shed light on the scholarly gap on academic press and its potential role towards harnessing individual well-being. The findings have empirically outlined that receiving support from teachers that motivates students to critically use cognitive skills; do more thoughtful work and energizes them to give their best effort in class can be very helpful harness students' self-belief and mental strength in academics.

Furthermore, the findings have also served paucity of research and empirical gaps pertaining to the mediating role of academic psychological capital (Ahmed et al., 2017) thereby, landing support to the empirical outcomes of very limited notable studies available on this matter (e.g. Llorens, Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2007; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007). In parallel, the study is one of its kind as per our knowledge and scholarly understanding investigating academic press and engagement in a model mediated by academic psychological capital.

The present study has also strengthened the underpinning of Conservation of Resources Theory (COR (Hobfoll, 1989) at the first instance through investigating the role of resources in fostering individual behaviors and outcomes. Accordingly, the present study has also added credits to the UWES-9 Utrecht University scale (Schaufeli, Bakker &

Salanova, 2006) through deploying it in demographics (Bahrain) where empirical investigation on the concept of engagement is fairly new.

#### 4.3 Limitations and Scope for Further Research

Despite considerable findings, the present forwards noteworthy limitations to pave way for future scholars for future research. The study was done on a small sample size whilst focusing on one private university in the kingdom of Bahrain which hence limits the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future studies may possibly look into examining the framework across wider target audience to enrich understanding on the topic and unfold results with more generalizability. Accordingly, the present study did not find any significant results pertaining to academic press and student engagement relationship which hence requires further investigation for mature conclusion and implications. Accordingly, future scholars may also consider looking at the potential of academic press across other educational sectors(s) and how academic psychological capital could be of prominence to explain student engagement. In parallel, since there is a possibility of variation in engagement levels on a daily basis (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009) thus, future studies may consider testing engagement of students on daily basis accordingly as well.

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