



Psychological Capital and English as a Second Language Classroom Management in Malaysia: The Moderating Effect of Teaching Experience

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This research explores the influence of the psychological capital of elementary English as a second language (ESL) teachers in Malaysia on their classroom management and the moderation effect of their working experience on the influential relationship between psychological capital and ESL classroom management. A survey conducted with 675 Malaysian elementary teachers took part in this research, with 24 teachers identified by followed up interviewing. From quantitative and qualitative analyses, the results show that psychological capital of elementary ESL teachers has a significant positive influence on classroom management. Teaching experience demonstrates a significant moderation effect in the casual correlation of psychological capital to ESL classroom management. The influence of the psychological capital of novice teachers on their classroom management is better than experienced teachers. Some implications and limitations are put forward.

Keywords: PsyCap, teaching experience, Malaysia, ESL, elementary teachers

INTRODUCTION

Recent research into classroom management in foreign language teaching is sparse (Wright, 2005; Macías, 2018). Difficulty in establishing and maintaining effective foreign language classroom management is a primary reason for teachers experiencing a reduced commitment to their work, mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, and burnout (Berger et al., 2018; Jin et al., 2021). A teacher who displays these mental conditions will negatively affect the learning environment, and it is important to find effective methods of reducing the stresses that teachers are subject to. There is a considerable body of research from a linguistic perspective on teaching ESL (English as a second language), but it includes little examination of the value of the teacher having a positive psychological attitude (Gabryś-Barker and Gałajda, 2016; MacIntyre et al., 2019). The concept of psychological capital (PsyCap) is a basis for developing practical techniques for protecting an individual from stress, negative emotions, and burnout (Liu et al., 2012).

Psychological capital is derived from research into positive psychology and positive organizational behavior. It has been defined as the “positive appraisal of circumstance and probability for success based on motivated effort, and perseverance” (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 550). PsyCap integrates four positive psychological dimensions as variables that form criteria for

identifying an individual's psychological capital: hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism. PsyCap has been shown to influence individual stress management and coping mechanisms and to enable an individual to overcome difficulties and so enjoy a productive life (Avey et al., 2010; Newman et al., 2014; Luthans and Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Adil and Kamal, 2020; Rabenu and Tziner, 2020).

Psychological capital was developed in the context of business management (Luthans and Youssef-Morgan, 2017), but little is known of its effectiveness in an educational context or of any benefits, it may confer in terms of educational outcomes, especially in non-Western educational contexts (Luthans et al., 2006; Datu and Valdez, 2019). Malaysia is considered a collectivist society, and the exploitation of PsyCap is still in its infancy in ESL teaching (Burhanuddin and Ahmad, 2018). The results of this study could provide some evidence on the adaptive role of PsyCap in non-Western socio-cultural society and academic context.

Both training and field experience are required to acquire skills in classroom management (Bosh, 2006). Empirical organizational behavior studies have shown that demographic differences such as age, sex, work experience, and education affect outcome variables (Tsui et al., 1992; Tsui and Gutek, 1999). However, there is an unclear and inconsistent conclusion that teaching experience affects ESL classrooms (Berger et al., 2018; Wolff, 2021). Research focusing on PsyCap in Malaysia is still new, with little evidence highlighting results from this real relationship in education context.

The purpose of the current study was to provide knowledge about teachers' teaching experiences on the relationship between PsyCap and ESL classroom management using mixed methods based on job demands-resources theory (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). A better understanding of the relationship between PsyCap and classroom management will enable Malaysian teachers to improve the provision of positive education (Seligman et al., 2009). Positive psychology (Seligman, 2002) promotes ESL teachers' inner strengths and helps them thrive in their workplace. This study will clarify how teachers create quality educational environments and thus inform both policy and practice in teacher education.

Literature Review

To theoretically contextualize this research, we draw on the job-demands resource model (JD-R) suggested by Luthans et al. (2016). The JD-R model proposes that job strain is caused by high job demands (such as organizational, social, psychological, and physical) and low resources. The model consists of two processes (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). The first part is the demand chain, where constant demands wear down employees' mental and physical health over time and have an impact on motivation, energy levels and burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001). The second part is the resource part of the model, which has the motivational potential to buffer the impact of job demands and the associated undesirable physical and psychological costs. The resources can be split into external (organizational or job) and internal (personal or cognitive) factors (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Personal psychological resources are considered to be particularly effective in increasing engagement and improving

job performance (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker et al., 2003). Accordingly, we propose that ESL teachers with dual needs seek to maintain their resources to improve classroom management and personal well-being. In addition, Luthans et al. (2016) demonstrated the influence of psychological resources in guiding ESL teachers' classroom management in the form of PsyCap, which provided the basis for this study. More specifically, we looked to examine the relationship between PsyCap and ESL classroom management to establish whether the findings of Luthans and colleagues extend to Malaysian ESL teachers, as to the researchers' knowledge, no previous study has been conducted with this sample. In addition, due to the nature and characteristics of ESL teachers, we examine whether the teaching experience acts as a moderating buffer on this relationship.

Psychological Capital and English as a Second Language Classroom Management

Psychological capital has been used to predict employee work performance, attitude, and behavior (Avey et al., 2011). Despite the potential benefits of PsyCap in the organization, little is known about the beneficial effects of PsyCap on positive foreign language educational field and in non-Western academic contexts (Datu and Valdez, 2019). Elementary ESL teachers have rarely been included in studies of PsyCap, and existing literature has shown that the psychological benefits of PsyCap in the general education field. For example, empirical research has shown that teachers with increased PsyCap display more positive work attitudes and improved performance, characteristics that are instantiated by better classroom management (Fu, 2014; Wang et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2017), although most of these studies involved teachers from Taiwan.

Some characteristics make the foreign language class different from the general classroom management. Effective foreign language classroom management needs teachers to use the foreign language to teach instructions and methods by creating communication contexts and maximizing student involvement (Borg, 2006). Hence, language, instructional, and behavior management are three of the most important characteristics (Borg, 2006; Akbari and Bolouri, 2015; Katz, 2017). However, few investigations highlight the benefits of PsyCap in foreign language classroom management.

Luthans et al. (2010) demonstrated that the four variables of PsyCap, singly or in combination, were significant predictors of employee work performance (Luthans et al., 2007). Therefore, we decided to use the four variables of psychological capital to indicate the effectiveness of foreign language classroom management. Hope is an attitude of mind or a way of thinking that governs how an individual performs their job (Snyder, 1994). Snyder's (1994) cognitive model of hope indicated that teachers with high hope tend to perceive themselves as effective problem-solvers who develop multiple strategies to achieve their goals in classroom management. This claim was supported by Kumarakulasingam (2002), who found that foreign language teachers with a high level of hope were associated with low burnout and highly effective class management.

Efficacy is an individual's perception of and belief in their abilities (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's social cognition theory includes the view that teacher efficacy positively affects work performance in the classroom. Moafian and Ghanizadeh (2009) found that foreign language teacher efficacy was positively correlated with effective practical instruction and positive classroom management, as did Delale-O'Connor et al. (2017) and Poulou et al. (2019). Similar findings were made for teachers in other countries, such as Venezuela (Chacon, 2005), Australia (Ma and Cavanagh, 2018), and Turkey (Tilfarlioglu and Ulusoy, 2012).

Resilience is the ability to remain positive and bounce back from adversity (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2002). Teacher resilience is a relatively new field of research (Goddard and Foster, 2011). Ergün and Dewaele (2021) found that a resilient teacher can handle power, fulfill teaching goals, and take great enjoyment in the classroom by investigating 174 Italian foreign language teachers. Stavradi and Karagianni (2020), in a quantitative study of 169 Greek English teachers found that teacher resilience was significantly correlated with effective classroom management and class characteristics. Boldrini et al. (2018) interviewed 37 vocational teachers in Switzerland and found that resilience affected their stress and work performance and that they could increase their capacity for resilience through resilient strategies.

Optimism is the expectation of a positive outcome of an act or situation; it is thus an attitude, not an ability (Scheier and Carver, 1985). Hoy et al. (2008) established a relationship between teachers' humanistic classroom behaviors, student-centered teaching, citizenship activity, and optimism. Moghtadaie and Hoveida (2015) investigated 384 teachers in Iran found a significant correlation between teacher optimism and classroom management. Ronald (2016) conducted mixed-method research in Puerto Rico and found that teacher optimism positively influenced both student behavior and classroom management. This result was supported by the work of Jin and Dewaele (2018), who found that foreign language teachers' optimism reduced foreign language student anxiety in the classroom. In summary, it is clear that the construct PsyCap can improve foreign language classroom management.

Moderating the Effects of Psychological Capital on English as a Second Language Classroom Management

Teacher experience is a key factor in classroom management (Berger et al., 2018) and is a primary concern for both newly trained and experienced teachers (Weinstein, 1996; Stoughton, 2007). However, some studies have found that classroom management poses difficulties only for novice teachers and that experienced teachers can handle complex classroom situations well (Hagger and McIntyre, 2000; Wolff et al., 2014). It is hard to determine if teaching experience affects classroom management in ESL teaching due to unclear and inconsistent results.

There has been little research into adjustment variables related to psychological capital. However, Wiersema and Bantel (1992) suggest that teaching experience might be a factor that moderates

the effects of PsyCap on classroom management. Lee et al. (2017) surveyed 400 preschool teachers in Taiwan. They found that years of teaching experience acted as a moderating factor in the critical relationship between PsyCap and teacher commitment to their profession. Wang et al. (2014) found that as teaching experience increased over time, elementary teachers in Taiwan possessed more PsyCap. Mesurado and Laudadio (2019) found that among university teachers in Argentina, more experienced teachers had higher levels of PsyCap and higher levels of teaching engagement than less experienced teachers. There is little literature concerning teaching experience as a moderating factor in the relationship between teacher PsyCap and ESL classroom management. The quantitative finding of Gkonou and Mercer (2017) revealed the variety of past classroom experiences to interpret and respond to current classroom events. Varied teaching experience could shape English teachers' emotions and decisions in class.

Hypotheses

Our study was designed to test the following hypotheses:

- H1: There is a significant relationship between PsyCap and ESL classroom management.
- H2: Teaching experience moderates the relationship between PsyCap and ESL classroom management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Framework

The conceptual framework of our research is shown in **Figure 1**. We investigated the influence of PsyCap on ESL classroom management and examined the effect of teaching experience on the relationship between PsyCap and ESL classroom management.

Participants and Procedure

Data were collected in Bahasa Melayu from a sample of ESL teachers in elementary schools in Malaysia in a cross-sectional survey using an online questionnaire. The use of a conventional survey method was not feasible due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak (Pressley, 2021), so Google survey was used to rapidly collect responses from an extensive and diverse sample, as it was easy for both participants and researchers to use and was more flexible and accurate than other alternatives (Ali et al., 2020). The language of this survey was kept simple, specific and conscious; and back translation was conducted. A pilot study among 56 elementary ESL teachers involved, and the validity of the research instruments was verified (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The online survey remained open from 2021-04-27 to 2021-05-27 and provided both quantitative and qualitative data. All respondents were informed of ethical issues by short, succinct online messages. The confidentiality of each participant and their responses were assured, and our intention to publish subsequent findings from the data was made clear.

In total, 675 usable questionnaires were received from 27 elementary schools in nine different states in Malaysia.

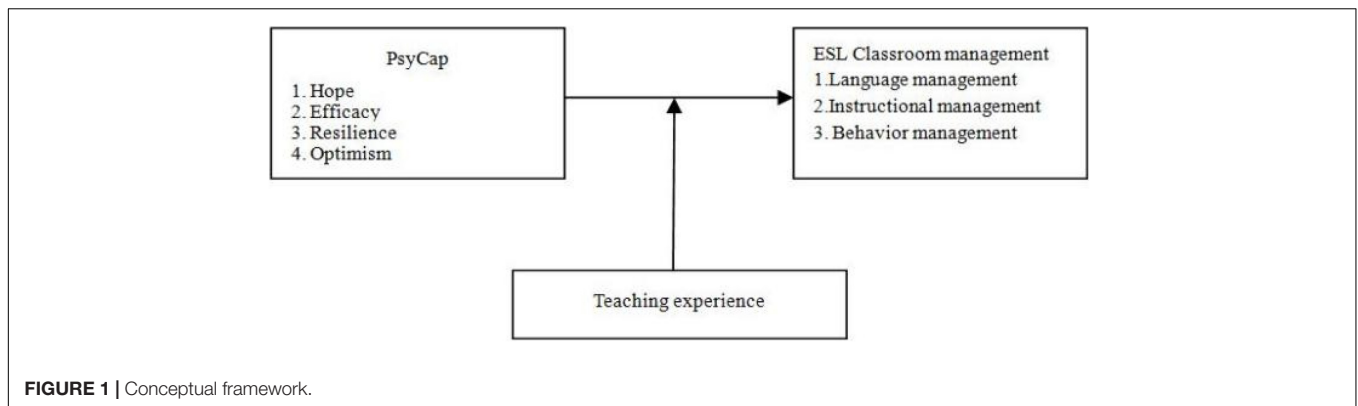


FIGURE 1 | Conceptual framework.

Participants were categorized by age: <30 years ($n = 224$, 33.2%), 30–40 years ($n = 209$, 31.0%), 41–50 years ($n = 179$, 26.5%) and >50 years ($n = 63$, 9.3%); by sex: male ($n = 254$, 37.63%) and female ($n = 421$, 62.37%); and by years of teaching experience: ≥ 5 years ($n = 359$, 53.19%) and <5 years ($n = 316$, 46.81%).

Semi-structural individual interviews were subsequently conducted with 24 teachers (12 females and 12 males) from 6 schools in Kuala Lumpur. Twenty-four teachers were interviewed from six schools, ranging in age from 24 to 58 years (12 novice teachers and 12 experienced teachers). The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Melayu to express ideas accurately via Zoom. Each interview lasted for 10–15 minutes and was recorded with participants' permission.

Measurements

Psychological Capital

The PsyCap of the subjects was measured using the 24 items of the PCQ-24 scale developed by Luthans et al. (2007). Each of the four dimensions (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) was measured using six items with a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The PCQ-24 instrument is widely used and has been well validated (Luthans and Youssef-Morgan, 2017; Datu and Valdez, 2019).

English as a Second Language Classroom Management

The 22-item ELT-CMS instrument (Akbari and Bolouri, 2015) was used to quantify classroom management skills. The instrument uses a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) for responses; it measures three dimensions: language (5 items), instructional technique (12 items), and behavior management (5 items). Previous studies have demonstrated the validity and reliability of this instrument (Akbari and Bolouri, 2015; Tasci and Atar, 2016).

Qualitative Items

Interview subjects were asked two qualitative questions: (1) How does PsyCap (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) affect your classroom management? and (2) How does your teaching experience affect your PsyCap and classroom management?

Analysis

Quantitative Data

SPSS 23.0 and AMOS 21.0 were used for statistical analysis of the quantitative data. Data were screened and checked for missing data, outliers, multicollinearity, and normality. Mean and standard deviations were used for descriptive analysis. The Pearson r correlation coefficient was used to indicate the strength of the relationship between each dimension of PsyCap and ESL classroom management.

Structural equation models (SEM) were used to test the two hypotheses following the two-step approach Awang (2014) suggested. The first step used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to establish confidence in each measurement model. The second step used SEM to quantify the effect of teaching experience in moderating the relationship between PsyCap and ESL classroom management. Multi-group analysis to test for the effect of teaching experience was conducted in two steps. The data were partitioned into two groups, experienced teachers and novice teachers. The path of interest was selected for each group to test for differing effects. If the difference in chi-square values between the constrained model and the unconstrained model for each path was > 3.84 , then there was a moderating effect in the path (Awang, 2014). The structural model was tested using AMOS 21.0. The following statistics were used to indicate the overall fit of the model to the data: χ^2/df (≤ 5.0), $p < 0.05$, root mean square error of the approximation (RMSEA) (≤ 0.08), comparative fit index (CFI) (≥ 0.90), the normed fit index (NFI) (≥ 0.90) and goodness-of-fit index (GFI) (≥ 0.90).

Qualitative Data

A thematic analysis approach was adopted for the qualitative analysis (Coleman and Unrau, 2008). It consisted of five steps: (1) transcription, (2) reliability analysis, (3) coding, (4) establishing themes and categories, and (5) writing up and interpreting the results. An inductive data analysis approach (Mackey and Gass, 2005) was used to generate categories, themes, and patterns. The data analysis program Dedoose was used for coding (version 6.1.11)¹.

Inter-rater agreement tests of 10% of all verbal data were created using Dedoose (version 6.1.11) to verify the reliability

¹www.dedoose.com

TABLE 1 | Descriptive statistics and correlational coefficients among the variables.

Variable	M	SD	r									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
PsyCap	4.53	0.63	–									
ECM	5.38	0.74	0.164**	1								
LM	5.55	0.79	0.182**	0.736**	1							
IM	5.71	0.79	0.055	0.661**	0.227**	1						
BM	4.51	1.24	0.158**	0.900**	0.647**	0.320**	1					
Hope	4.54	0.81	0.749**	0.151**	0.146**	0.044	0.157**	1				
Efficacy	4.76	0.81	0.801**	0.113*	0.127**	0.019	0.121**	0.483**	1			
Resilience	4.54	0.83	0.756**	0.124**	0.146**	0.056	0.108*	0.416**	0.521**	1		
Optimism	4.65	0.84	0.723**	0.113*	0.137**	0.048	0.099*	0.393**	0.427**	0.353**	1	

M, mean; SD, standard deviation; r, correlation coefficient; PsyCap, psychological capital; ECM, ESL classroom management; LM, language management; IM, instructional management; BM, behavior management.

*Significant at the 0.05 level.

**Significant at the 0.01 level.

and face validity of the coded data based on the degree of agreement and consistency between two independent coders. Pooled Cohen’s kappa was used to indicate reliability across all coding categories (DeVries et al., 2008). The average of pooled Cohen’s kappa was 0.89. Values for individual tests were in the range of 0.85–0.91, indicating excellent consistency between the two raters (Viera and Garrett, 2005).

RESULTS

Quantitative Findings

Preliminary Analysis

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of the responses of ESL teachers to the survey questions (n = 675). Pearson correlation coefficients between the variables are also shown. All correlations were significant but at different levels.

Validity and Reliability

The measurement model was tested for validity and reliability (Table 2). When the constructs of the SEM model have average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) values

above their cut-off points (0.5 and 0.7), the construct has convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010). CR ranged in value from 0.781 to 0.897, above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). AVE and discriminant validity were tested to quantify the construct validity of the measurements (Hair et al., 2014). AVE ranged in value from 0.525 to 0.601, satisfying the criteria for convergent validity given in Cheung and Wang (2017): convergent validity is acceptable if neither AVE nor the standardized factor loadings of all items are significantly <0.50.

The square root of AVE for each construct was calculated to determine discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 3 shows that the square root of AVE (on the diagonal) for each construct was greater than the correlations between it and all other constructs in the model.

Relationship Between Psychological Capital and English as a Second Language Classroom Management

The basic model (Figure 1) was created to determine the influence of PsyCap on ESL classroom management. The SEM model was tested using the maximum-likelihood estimation in Amos 21.0. Figure 2 shows there was a good fit of the model to the

TABLE 2 | The validity and reliability indexes.

Construct	Items	Factor loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach's alpha
Psychological capital	Hope	0.673	0.781	0.601	0.838
	Efficacy	0.761			
	Resilience	0.683			
	Optimism	0.620			
ESL classroom management	Language management	0.879	0.897	0.525	0.901
	Behavior management	0.899			
	Instructional management	0.840			

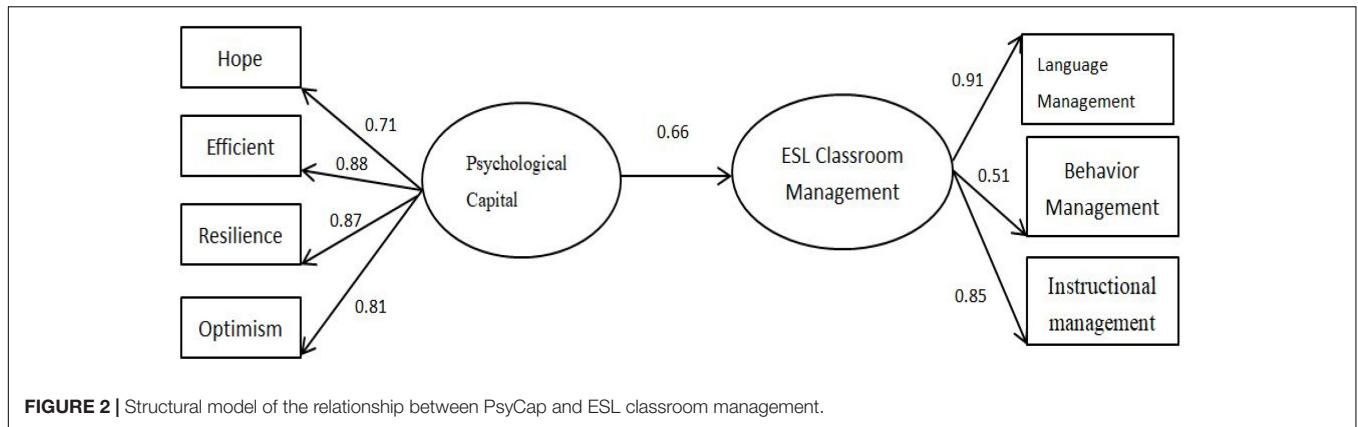
CR, composite reliability; AVE, average variance extracted.

TABLE 3 | The discriminate validity index summary for measurement models.

H	IM	LM	BM	E	R	O
0.828						
0.394	0.720					
0.406	0.718	0.753				
0.281	0.342	0.275	0.725			
0.605	0.481	0.472	0.320	0.895		
0.465	0.456	0.526	0.258	0.763	0.798	
0.634	0.422	0.462	0.282	0.763	0.627	0.790

Bolded numbers are the square root of AVE.

H, hope; IM, instructional management; LM, language management; BM, behavior management; E, efficient; R, resilience; O, optimism.



data: $\chi^2(979) = 1.956, p < 0.001, RMSEA = 0.045, CFI = 0.936,$ and $GFI = 0.901.$

Table 4 shows that PsyCap had a significant positive direct effect on ESL classroom management ($\beta = 0.664, p < 0.001$). PsyCap accounted for 44% of the variance in ESL classroom management. The remaining 56% of the variance was unpredictable ($R^2 = 0.44$).

Moderating Effect of Teacher Experience

Hicks (2012) separated experienced teachers from novice teachers by the number of years they had been teaching: novice teachers < 5 years classroom management and experienced teachers ≥ 5 years. We adopted this categorization. Measurement invariance analysis was conducted on six models (**Table 5**): a pooled sample model, a model for experienced teachers, a model for novice teachers, and models for each configurational invariance, metric invariance, and scalar invariance. The analysis showed acceptable goodness-of-fit for the pooled sample, experienced teachers, and novice teachers models.

Table 6 shows the differences in chi-square values between the constrained and unconstrained models for path testing. The difference in chi-square values between experienced teachers and novice teachers was 87.660 (2761.944-2674.284), and the

difference in degrees of freedom was 41 (1,649-1,608), which is greater than 3.84. The result of the moderation test of teaching experience was significant.

Table 7 shows that the standardized parameter estimates of PsyCap were 0.581 ($p = 0.000$) for the experienced teachers group and 0.726 ($p = 0.000$) for the novice teachers group. This result led us to conclude that the effect of PsyCap on ESL classroom management was greater in the novice teachers group than in the experienced teachers group.

Qualitative Findings

Effects of Psychological Capital on English as a Second Language Classroom Management

The responses to question 1 [How does PsyCap (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) affect your classroom management?] were coded into four categories and 16 sub-themes (**Appendix 1**).

English as a Second Language Teachers' Efficacy

Efficacy was the most commonly observed dimension, present in 96% of responses. For example, one teacher stated, “I can help students improve their English achievement. Having these beliefs, I was more likely to plan appropriate language lessons, maintain instructions with difficult students, meet challenges with more

TABLE 4 | The relationship between PsyCap and ESL classroom management.

	β	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	p
ECM ← PsyCap	0.664	0.271	0.047	5.78	***

***Significant at the 0.001 level.
ECM, ESL classroom management.

TABLE 5 | Measurement invariance tests for experienced and novice teachers.

Test	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	p	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Pooled sample model	433.270	143	3.03	0.000	0.910	0.932	0.064
Experienced teachers	321.337	143	2.247	0.000	0.911	0.916	0.073
Novice teachers	278.192	143	1.945	0.000	0.934	0.934	0.069
Configural invariance	589.181	287	2.053	0.000	0.908	0.927	0.051
Metric invariance	591.167	302	1.956	0.000	0.908	0.923	0.045
Scalar invariance	678.056	321	2.112	0.000	0.901	0.927	0.047

TABLE 6 | The chi-square value and DF for the constrained and unconstrained models for experienced teachers group.

Chi-square value and DF						
Constrained	Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	p	CMIN/DF
Constrained	Default model	157	2761.944	1649	0.000	1.675
	Saturated model	1806	0.000	0		
	Independence model	84	16344.968	1722	0.000	9.492
Unconstrained	Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	p	CMIN/DF
Unconstrained	Default model	198	2674.284	1608	0.000	1.663
	Saturated model	1806	0.000	0		
	Independence model	84	16344.968	1722	0.000	9.492

TABLE 7 | The effect of ESL teachers' PsyCap on ESL classroom management for experienced and novice teachers' groups.

Causal relationship	Group	Standardized beta estimate	p-value	Results
ECM ← PsyCap	Experienced	0.581	0.000	"Novice teachers group" is more pronounced than "experienced teachers group"
	Novice	0.726	0.000	

ECM, ESL classroom management.

persistence, search harder for resources and materials and also take responsibility for their success and failure" (T15). Another respondent wrote, "I believe that students will be better if the students are active in the process of learning. I also keep student-centered teaching strategies to meet the students' needs, approach challenging tasks, and recover from disappointment" (T17).

When individuals believe that they can act in a particular way to achieve a specific goal in a particular situation under certain conditions, they tend to be successful (Bandura, 1997). Teachers with efficacy show skill in incorporating different strategies into their lessons and are more effective than those with a less flexible instructional approach. The higher the efficacy teachers possess, the more they are likely to increase student interest and curiosity in learning and grow students' cognitive abilities.

English as a Second Language Teachers' Resilience

Resilience was the second most frequently observed dimension, appearing in 83.3% of responses. An example of resilience is the teacher's response "In the classroom, students always made me feel anger, but I think I must be more patient and tolerate with my students. I must set an example for my students and not complain" (T24). Resilience in a teacher is the ability to adjust in response to various situations and become a more competent teacher to thrive in their profession rather than simply survive (Fredrickson, 2016).

English as a Second Language Teachers' Optimism

The third and fourth most commonly observed dimensions were optimism and hope, which were observed in 45.8% and 33.3% of the responses. An example of optimism is in the response, "To be honest, I am optimistic about controlling my class. Although some troubled students made me a headache, I always use some innovative teaching methods to attract them to learn the language—I mean to make the students depth thinking to expect these students to understand my efforts" (T11).

Teachers showed positive expectations and displayed positive work attitudes and effective work behaviors. These attitudes affected their stress levels and helped them to reflect on their teaching methods.

English as a Second Language Teachers' Hope

An example of hope is given in the response, "I often bothered by students' discipline problems, particularly when students misbehavior escalated, I will make some plans or adjust my teaching methods know their demands" (T4). Hope is important for teachers because it increases their ability to cope with the

stress of classroom management and the demands of students. Teaching is inherently stressful (Montgomery and Rupp, 2005), so teachers face an elevated risk of burnout. Hope can strengthen a teacher's commitment to their work and help them cope with the challenges faced.

Psychological Capital of Experienced English as a Second Language Teachers

Responses to the second question (How does working experience affect your psychological capital and classroom management?) were classified as experienced or novice. The responses were subdivided into factors that had a negative influence and those that had a positive influence. Of the experienced teachers, 70.83% identified negative influences. One teacher responded, "I have taught English more than 10 years, and just like a teaching machine, repeat and repeat the teaching contents to students day and night. I do not know where is my new hope and directions." Another teacher responded, "As a more than 12 years ESL teacher, I think I have some authority to tell how to manage and control class, don't let me change my teaching method, I only want to remain the same" (T1).

In the group of experienced teachers, 29.17% of participants identified factors that were a positive influence. One teacher exemplified this theme by stating, "I can get more respect and understanding from parents, students, and colleagues because I have stayed at this school more than 15 years. They would like to consult me about classroom management issues. I would like to share these with them. I sometimes feel proud of" (T12).

Experienced teachers had less positive attitudes (PsyCap) toward their teaching, although they explicitly enjoyed working authority from parents, students, and colleagues. Stress and burnout might affect their acquisition of PsyCap. Malaysian work culture is such that experienced teachers often gain more power and resources than novice teachers. Experienced teachers have authority and high status in a school and are likely to be unwilling to change their behavior to support societal demands.

Psychological Capital of Novice English as a Second Language Teachers

Of the novice teachers, 79.17% of responses identified factors that were a positive influence. One teacher responded, "I have gained working experience in harsh conditions for 4 years, where there is a lack of sufficient recourse and support, but I think it made me more capable and braver to overcome difficulties. I gave students autonomy in my class, and they treated me like elder sister, they all like me" (T14). Another teacher responded, "Before entering school, the government provides the program (Native Speaker program) to train me how to manage the classroom. I learn a lot of skills and teaching methods from the program. When I enter into the classroom, I do not fear and am very confident to teach my students well" (T23).

Novice teachers identified negative factors found in 20.83% of their responses and were mainly associated with disagreements with administrators and colleagues, which hindered them in developing PsyCap. One teacher responded, "I have always tried to do it by many attempts, and it is our responsibility to create a conducive situation in the teaching processes. However, my

colleagues and administrators seem that I need to learn more from experienced teachers, and they do not trust I can make it” (T16).

Psychological capital has a more significant effect in ESL classrooms for novice teachers than experienced teachers. Novice teachers take advantage of their PsyCap to learn and accept new things. PsyCap helps them meet student needs and improve their class management abilities. Novice teachers require training programs that encourage them to improve their professional competency and thereby reduce their anxiety surrounding their language competency. Training and professional development have increased the ability to innovate novice teachers and have enabled them to use new pedagogies such as flipped classrooms, blended learning, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), micro-courses, and artificial intelligence courses.

DISCUSSION

We investigated the effects of PsyCap on ESL classroom management in elementary teachers in Malaysia using a mixed-methods approach and found that teaching experience was a factor that moderated the effects of PsyCap on ESL classroom management.

Effects of Teacher Psychological Capital on English as a Second Language Classroom Management

Structural equation model analysis showed that PsyCap had a significant positive effect on elementary ESL teacher classroom management. This result supports hypothesis 1, which means that teachers with greater PsyCap put greater effort into classroom management. This finding is consistent with the outcomes of previous studies, such as Avey et al. (2010), Luthans et al. (2010), Fu (2014), and Lee et al. (2017), which all noted that teachers with a high level of PsyCap had a more positive attitude toward their performance at work.

This evidence can be contextualized by theory in line with the JD-R model, illustrating that those with higher PsyCap possess higher levels of internal resources from which to counteract the effects of the dual demands they are experiencing via classroom management. Higher resources are better equipped to overcome the demands faced. Thus, the findings would suggest PsyCap is a psychological resource and positively influences individual work attitudes and work performance. Moreover, higher PsyCap levels predicting higher classroom management is an especially important finding given the developmental capacities of PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2006, 2010, 2014). ESL teachers need to be able to adapt and redirect their plans (hope), have a positive belief that they can succeed (efficacy and optimism) and be resilient to setback (resilience). The current study indicates that ESL teachers who possess the resources to do this will improve their classroom management and teaching. This also provides further evidence to support the need to look at implementing PsyCap development interventions for ESL teachers to maximize their potential in teaching while also safe-guarding their wellbeing from burnout.

This research specifically related to the combined effects of the PsyCap components of hope, efficacy, resilience and

optimism. ESL teachers who are more positive in their approach, have the belief to put in the required effort to succeed, persevere toward their goals and are able to overcome any setbacks they faced are in turn better equipped to be less susceptible to burnout. Analysis of the qualitative findings showed that many respondents found that Efficacy was the factor that most influenced teachers in using techniques to improve classroom management. Teachers who had high efficacy viewed themselves as adequate classroom managers who used their management skills to deal with unforeseen classroom situations. They developed caring relationships with students to meet students' needs and control the classroom environment while fostering student responsibility for learning and engaged students in learning. Thus, administrators and educational policymakers in Malaysia must pay attention to the effects and benefits of PsyCap and provide PsyCap intervention, as described in Luthans et al. (2006), in order to increase awareness of the value of positive psychology in ESL education. For example, administrators could provide constructive feedback and identify those ESL teachers who are lower in PsyCap, therefore, are at a higher risk of burnout. This would enable early intervention to support those teachers in their teaching, which would help in their teaching. Another way is by enhancing PsyCap levels through developmental interventions akin to the one-off 2-hour session by Luthans et al. (2014), as this would increase wellbeing of teachers and reduce burnout. Having lower levels of burnout and more engaged ESL teachers would also be beneficial for education institutes more broadly.

Moderating Effect of Teaching Experience on the Effects of Psychological Capital on Classroom Management

Analysis showed that teaching experience had a significant effect in moderating the relationship between PsyCap and ESL classroom management. This result supports hypothesis 2. Thus, this evidence also strongly supported the JD-R model, where the presence of PsyCap and teaching experience play a vital role in teaching.

The quantitative analysis implies that PsyCap of novice ESL teachers increased their classroom management abilities to a level that made them superior to experienced teachers in this respect. However, it is surprising that the role of teaching experience was not replicated in relation to classroom management, which means more teaching experience is not equal to better classroom management. This result is consistent with the findings of Wang et al. (2014), Lee et al. (2017), and Mesurado and Laudadio (2019). However, the result drawn from this study is different from Weinstein (1996) and Stoughton (2007). Analysis of the qualitative data showed that novice teachers could create a classroom environment in which students were comfortable, set achievement goals that inspired student learning, and resolve a range of classroom problems. In creating a harmonious classroom environment and fostering good relationships with students, teachers increase their PsyCap and earn respect from students and parents who recognize their achievements. This

approach promotes shared responsibility for classroom control and the development of classroom norms (Cakiroglu et al., 2005). Another reason is professional training, which is also vital to developing teacher PsyCap and classroom management skills. Novice teachers tend to integrate advanced pedagogical techniques into their ESL teaching to create an environment where students feel comfortable and confident when interacting with other students and teachers. Novice teachers in this study reported that the Native Speaker program inaugurated by the Malaysian government had a positive effect because it promoted positive values in teachers, increased their self-efficacy, promoted positive perception of the teaching profession, and inspired teachers to increase their PsyCap. These benefits can transform a teacher who has developed a teacher-centered classroom into better developed professionally, has more positive interactions with their students, and can minimize the adverse effects of any classroom management issues (Jin and Jun Zhang, 2018).

Qualitative responses indicated that experienced teachers often expect their students to follow classroom rules and principles already in place. They believe that a teacher has full responsibility for student learning, and so they focus on student behaviors to quickly redirect negative behavior to positive behavior and use established behavioral management techniques (Swanson et al., 1990). As teachers become more experienced, they become more controlling in both behavioral and instructional management. This rapidly leads them into conflicts with students and can destroy previously good teacher-student relationships as teachers attempt to pursue their own goals that may conflict with student goals and maintain formal authority in the classroom. This behavior also increases teacher stress and reduces their PsyCap; it reduces classroom activity and discourages teachers from interacting with students.

Analysis of the sub-themes in qualitative responses showed that experienced teachers become part of an existing culture that dictates the way things are done. In contrast to many Western countries, Malaysia is a country that prizes social conformity, so experienced teachers must constantly ensure they meet existing cultural norms and are thus reluctant to implement newly learned strategies (Johnson and Kardos, 2002). Without hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism, they lose the courage to make changes. This situation results in teachers becoming automata who follow everyday routines and lack self-reflection and think little about how they teach or what they are teaching.

Therefore, policymakers and school administrators in Malaysia must consider PsyCap as crucial to teaching ESL effectively and create programs that develop PsyCap. Equally, experienced teachers should demand training to improve their PsyCap and other practical professional skills. Schools must also work to create consistently harmonious school environments that help teachers to overcome their limitations.

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CONCLUSION

Psychological capital is a concept that has only recently been introduced into ESL teaching in Malaysia. This study shows that teaching experience is a factor that cannot be ignored because it moderates the relationship between PsyCap and classroom management for elementary ESL teachers in Malaysia.

One limitation of this study is that only elementary ESL teachers in Malaysia were subjects, so the results might differ if pre-elementary and high school teachers or college and university lecturers had been included. Another limitation is that data were collected at a single point in time. Future longitudinal experimental studies may facilitate more comprehensive causal analysis. Finally, due to COVID-19 and the Malaysia movement control order, the data used in this study were collected through an online survey; future research might consider a greater variety of epistemological and methodological techniques, such as classroom observation.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author/s.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The study involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Education Department of University of Malaya and Education Department of Zhejiang Province, China (2017SCG387). The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

YW designed, collected, and analyzed the data, and wrote the manuscript. HT and SLL edited the draft of the manuscript. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1 | Teachers' responses.

Theme	Category	Sub-theme	%	
PsyCap	Hope	Assist in setting goals	33.33	
		Continuously conduct positive behaviors		
		Meet students' needs		
	Efficacy	Coping with difficulties	96.0	
		Perform better		
		Mobilize motivation		
		Engaged and help students		
		Adjust teaching methods		
		Enhance problem-solving abilities		
	Resilience	Help to sustain teaching effectiveness	83.3	
		More commitment		
		Reduce occupation stress		
Optimism	Tolerate to students' discipline problems	45.8		
	Teaching effectively			
	Brave to meet challenges			
Experienced teachers	Negative influence	Adjusting teaching plan	70.83	
		Stress and burnout		
		Teacher-centered classroom		
	Positive influence	Authority and controlling the classroom		29.17
		Fear to change		
		Get more respect from students, parents, and colleagues		
Novice teachers	Positive influence	More problem-solving skills	79.17	
		Meet students' needs		
		Building harmony classroom climate		
	Negative influence	Build a good relationship with students	20.83	
		Professional development		
		Teaching with new technologies		
		More knowledge need to learn		
		Stress from colleagues, administrators, parents		

The percentage was calculated from the number of respondents mentioned with the sub-theme over the number of participants who responded to the open-ended questions.