

Bridging the Gap: The Role of Growth Mindset and Self-Efficacy in Enhancing Resilience and Coping Strategies

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Abstract: The capacity to adapt and thrive in adversity, known as resilience, is imperative for optimal mental health and well-being. Growth mindset and self-efficacy, two pivotal psychological constructs, have garnered significant attention for their ability to fortify resilience. This paper explores the interplay between these constructs and their collective impact on resilience across a range of demographic and cultural contexts. A comprehensive review of extant research, encompassing cross-sectional, longitudinal, and intervention studies, has been undertaken. The findings reveal that a growth mindset fosters resilience by promoting adaptive coping strategies and persistence, while self-efficacy enhances resilience by supporting effective stress management and confidence in overcoming challenges. The synergistic effects of growth mindset and self-efficacy are further demonstrated to mediate positive outcomes, such as improved well-being and academic performance. Practical implications include recommendations for incorporating these constructs into educational and mental health interventions. However, the cross-sectional designs of the studies do have limitations, and it is therefore recommended that longitudinal and culturally inclusive research be undertaken to better understand these relationships. The study highlights the critical role of fostering growth mindset and self-efficacy in enhancing resilience, particularly in high-stress educational environments.

1 INTRODUCTION

Resilience, the ability to adapt and recover from adversity, is central to mental health, well-being and performance, whether in the face of academic pressures, workplace challenges or global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In a world of increasing complexity and uncertainty, understanding the factors that shape resilience is increasingly important. Among these factors, growth mindset and self-efficacy have received considerable attention partly because of their potential to foster resilience (Kyeong et al., 2024; Zeng et al., 2016).

Dweck's growth mindset reflects the belief that skills and attributes are developed through effort and learning. This mindset promotes adaptive coping strategies and encourages individuals to perceive challenges as opportunities to grow rather than as insurmountable obstacles (Zeng et al., 2016). In contrast, self-efficacy, rooted in Bandura's social cognitive theory, refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform certain tasks. A high level of self-efficacy increases motivation, engagement, and persistence, all of which are essential for coping with adversity (Meng & Zhang, 2023).

These constructs have profound implications in practice. For example, Students that have a growth mentality are more likely to stick with their studies when they face difficulties, while those with high self-efficacy show greater engagement and less stress under pressure ((Kyeong et al., 2024; Meng & Zhang, 2023).

Although extensive research on the individual effects of growth mindset and self-efficacy, their interactive role in shaping resilience remains underexplored. By investigating the simultaneous contributions of growth mindset and self-efficacy to resilience, the current study aims at narrowing this gap.

The study's goal is to look into the relationships that exist between resilience, self-efficacy, and growth mindset in various settings. The findings will inform interventions designed to enhance adaptive capacities in educational, occupational, and personal contexts by deepening this paper's understanding of these mechanisms. It helps to promote mental health and performance in an increasingly complex world.

2 KEY CONCEPT

The constructs of resilience, growth mindset and self-efficacy are interconnected and play pivotal roles in determining an individual's ability. These concepts are foundational to understanding the mechanisms that enhance adaptability, mental well-being and academic or professional performance, especially in the context of adapting and thriving in the face of adversity.

Resilience is defined as an individual's capacity to recover and adapt effectively after experiencing stress, setbacks, or adversity (American Psychological Association, 2024). It encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes that enable individuals to maintain functionality and well-being despite challenging circumstances. Resilience is not a static attribute; rather, it is a dynamic process influenced by both internal and external factors. Theoretical models, for example the protective factors model (Jone, 2020), underpin the idea that environments which are supportive, and individual resources which are in place, can help to foster an individual's resilience to stress.

In pragmatic terms, resilience functions as a psychological cushion that helps to cushion individuals against stress, enabling them to sustain motivation, cultivate and maintain relationships, and accomplish goals even under high-pressure conditions (Kyeong et al., 2024).

The concept of growth mindset, as initially defined by Dweck (2006), posits the notion that individuals' cognitive abilities and intelligence can be cultivated through dedication and perseverance (Dweck, 2006). This theoretical framework encourages the perception of challenges as opportunities for personal development, thereby facilitating adaptive responses to failure and stress. Evidence indicates that students with a growth mindset are more inclined to demonstrate perseverance in academic pursuits., even in the face of initial setbacks (Zeng et al., 2016; Jones, 2020). This theoretical framework provides a basis for the promotion of psychological resilience, by fostering perseverance, learning, and adaptive coping mechanisms.

Self-efficacy, a pivotal construct within Bandura's social cognitive theory, denotes an individual's conviction in their capability to accomplish particular tasks or attain specific objectives. A high level of self-efficacy has been demonstrated to enhance motivation, engagement, and persistence, which are all essential for overcoming challenges and maintaining resilience (Meng & Zhang, 2023). The

concept of self-efficacy is understood to be context-dependent, with its development being influenced by mastery experiences, social modelling, and verbal encouragement (Kim & Seo, 2015). For instance, students who possess higher self-efficacy have been observed to demonstrate greater engagement in learning tasks and are better equipped to handle academic stress (Kim & Seo, 2015). In the context of resilience, self-efficacy functions as a personal resource that empowers individuals to navigate adversity and maintain psychological well-being (Meng & Zhang, 2023).

A growth mindset has been shown to foster a belief in one's potential, thereby enhancing self-efficacy and, in turn, strengthening resilience (Zhao et al., 2024). Collectively, these psychological variables form a systemic framework that equips individuals to face challenges with confidence and adaptability (Zhao et al., 2024). This interconnected framework serves as the foundation for exploring their combined impact on mental health and performance.

3 IMPACT OF GROWTH MINDSET ON RESILIENCE

This study explored at how Chinese and American students' resilience to persistent self-doubt is impacted by growth mindset and performance anxiety. Participants included 200 university students from the United States and 200 from China (Zhao et al., 2021).

The present study sought to assess growth mindset, using the Implicit Theories of Intelligence Scale. Concerns of performance and self-doubt were measured through the utilization of validated questionnaires. The evaluation of cognitive performance was conducted via the implementation of numerical and visual reasoning tasks.

The study examined the role of a growth mindset in moderating the effects of self-doubt on cognitive performance by examining how individuals with different levels of self-doubt performed on tasks requiring cognitive effort and problem solving. Concerns of performance and self-doubt were measured through validated questionnaires, while cognitive performance was evaluated via numerical and visual reasoning tasks. The choice to measure cognitive performance is grounded in its connection to resilience, as cognitive performance often reflects an individual's ability to function effectively under stress or adversity. Higher cognitive performance in the face of self-doubt may signal adaptive coping

mechanisms, which are integral to resilience. Thus, examining cognitive performance allows for a deeper understanding of how growth mindset can buffer against the detrimental effects of self-doubt, an essential component of resilience.

The analysis of the collected data involved the execution of moderation analyses. The objective of this analysis was the exploration of how growth mindset and concerns related to performance influenced the relationship between self-doubt and cognitive performance within both cultural contexts.

Self-doubt's effects on US student performance across visual and numerical reasoning were mitigated by growth mindset. Specifically, a strong growth mindset was associated with better performance despite self-doubt. The impact of self-doubt on numerical reasoning performance has been reduced for Chinese students by growth mindset and performance concern, with concern with performance having a more substantial impact.

The study highlights cultural differences in how growth mindset and performance concerns influence resilience to self-doubt, the choice to use self-doubt as a variable for the assessment of resilience to self-doubt stems from the study's focus on examining how individuals cope with specific psychological stressors, such as internal doubts about competence. Unlike general resilience, which is often measured using standardized scales, resilience to self-doubt is context-specific and refers to the ability to maintain performance and composure despite feelings of self-doubt. The use of self-doubt as a targeted measure enables a more nuanced comprehension about how growth mindset and performance concerns interact with situational challenges, suggesting that Western cultures may benefit more from fostering a growth mindset, while Eastern cultures might also consider the role of performance concerns. Because of the cross-sectional design of the study, implications for causality are limited, and the focus on university students may not generalize to other age groups.

The present study examined how resilience functions as a mediator in the connection between growth mindset, school engagement, and mental well-being among 1260 Chinese primary and middle school students from five schools in Guangdong province (Zeng et al., 2016). The sample was diverse, including students from two primary schools and two middle schools and one vocational middle school.

To assess growth mindset, validated psychological measures were employed. Additionally, demographic factors such as gender and parental education were controlled for in the analysis. The final sample consisted of 658 male and 602 female

participants, with an average age of 13.49 years (SD = 3.20), ranging from 7 to 20 years. Resilience was evaluated using standardized self-report measures, while school engagement and well-being were assessed through validated questionnaires. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to investigate the mediating influence of resilience in the relationships between growth mindset, engagement, and well-being. The results indicated that growth mindset had a positive impact on resilience, which subsequently enhanced both school engagement and psychological well-being. The findings emphasize the importance of cultivating a growth mindset in educational settings to promote resilience. In comparison with other studies, this research emphasizes resilience as a pivotal mechanism that connects mindset to broader psychological outcomes. Because of the cross-sectional design, causal explanations are not possible. Furthermore, the exclusive focus on Chinese students may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts.

An investigation was conducted into the role of a growth mindset elements that promote such as resilience, well-being and adjustment, with a focus on the period of the pandemic (N=1,200) and across the demographic of adults residing in the United States (Kyeong et al., 2024). Growth mindset and resilience were assessed using self-reported measures, while depression and well-being were also evaluated through similar self-assessments. A two-year longitudinal design was employed, incorporating repeated measures collected at three time points: Wave 1 (June–July 2020), Wave 2 (March–April 2021), and Wave 3 (August–September 2022). Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was utilized to examine the associations between growth mindset, resilience, and mental health outcomes over time. Individuals who demonstrated a higher growth mindset exhibited greater increases in resilience and well-being, and lower levels of depression, during the pandemic. The protective effect of a growth mindset was evident across all time points. The findings are consistent with those reported by Zeng et al., which also demonstrated the resilience-enhancing effects of a growth mindset (Zeng et al., 2016). The longitudinal design strengthens causal inferences, offering robust evidence for the enduring impact of mindset. However, response biases could be introduced by depending too much on self-reported data. The cultural diversity of the sample was found to be limited.

This research examined the impact of intervention based on growth mindset on secondary school

students' motivation and self-efficacy (Rhew et al., 2018). Participants included 120 high school students from diverse backgrounds. The intervention involved teaching methods to develop a growth mindset over six weeks. The measurement of self-efficacy and motivation was conducted prior to the intervention, and subsequently at the conclusion of the intervention, utilizing validated questionnaires.

The result shows students who received the intervention designed to develop growth mindset demonstrated notable enhancements in self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation in contrast to those in the control group. The study posits that cultivating a growth mindset can raise students' self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning. These traits, particularly self-belief and motivation, are foundational components of resilience, as they enable individuals to persevere through challenges and adapt to adversity. The results are in accordance with prior research shows that growth mindset interventions positively affect educational outcomes by boosting self-belief and motivation, thereby indirectly fostering resilience.

The study's short duration limits understanding of long-term effects. Furthermore, the dependence on self-reported metrics may engender response biases.

This research aimed to examine how a positive education intervention helped Chinese high school students in boarding schools build a growth mindset and become more resilient (Gao et al., 2024). The study includes 150 students aged between 13 and 17. The intervention encompassed workshops and activities that were meticulously designed to promote positive psychology principles over a period of eight weeks. Growth mindset and resilience were measured pre- and post-intervention using standardized scales. Paired sample t-tests and ANCOVA were utilized to assess changes in growth mindset and resilience, controlling for baseline differences. The intervention group demonstrated significant enhancements in both growth mindset and resilience in comparison to the control group which doesn't get a specialized intervention targeting growth mindset or resilience. The experimental group engaged in a 12-week intervention focused on positive education, structured around the PERMA framework. Meanwhile, the control group underwent standard mental health instruction, aligned with the Special Action Plan aimed at strengthening and advancing student mental health from 2023 to 2025. This distinction is pivotal in ensuring that the comparison between the two groups captures the added impact of the positive education intervention, rather than merely highlighting the absence of mental health initiatives

in the control condition. The findings provide a robust indication that positive educational interventions can meaningfully enhance key psychological characteristics essential for adolescent well-being. This research supports the hypothesis that the implementation of structured psychological interventions fosters a growth-oriented mindset and improves resilience among adolescents, thereby aligning with the findings of preceding studies emphasizing the merits of positive psychology within educational contexts. However, a key limitation of this study is the lack of extended follow-up measures, preventing an assessment of the long-term sustainability of intervention outcomes. Additionally, as conducted within a single boarding school, its applicability to broader populations may require further validation.

The reviewed studies collectively provide evidence that adopting a growth mindset enhances resilience by promoting persistence through difficulties, encouraging individuals to develop adaptive coping strategies. Furthermore, resilience has been shown to act as a mediator in the connection between a growth-oriented mindset and various psychological benefits, including mental well-being, academic engagement, and mental health. Notably, these findings are consistent across diverse populations, including school-aged children, college students and adults.

However, several research gaps persist, a notable limitation is the focus on specific cultural contexts (e.g., Chinese or Western populations), which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the use of cross-sectional designs in most studies necessitates the incorporation of longitudinal research to establish causal relationships, highlighting a research gap in this area.

4 SELF-EFFICACY

This study investigated how psychological factors such as resilience, coherence in perspective, and confidence in one's abilities contribute to different stress response strategies in university students. (Konaszewski et al., 2019). The study's sample population comprised 632 students from a variety of universities in Poland. The participants completed validated questionnaires measuring resilience, cognitive coherence, perceived self-efficacy, and approaches to stress regulation. To evaluate these constructs, resilience was measured through a validated self-report scale, coherence in perspective was assessed using an established instrument, and

self-efficacy was gauged through a standardized metric. Stress coping strategies were examined in terms of their orientation. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to ascertain the extent to which resilience, sense of coherence, and self-efficacy influenced different coping styles in response to stress.

The findings of the study revealed a strong positive association between self-efficacy and resilience, indicating that higher levels of self-efficacy were associated with enhanced resilience. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated that coherence and resilience served as key predictors of coping strategies. Specifically, coherence was linked to both distraction and social diversion as avoidance mechanisms, whereas resilience was uniquely associated with social diversion. These findings underscore the role of self-efficacy, resilience, and coherence as fundamental factors in shaping stress response patterns among university students. Strengthening these attributes may facilitate more adaptive coping strategies, particularly problem-solving approaches. Moreover, the observed results align with prior research, reinforcing the importance of personal psychological resources in effective stress regulation. However, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The study's cross-sectional methodology restricts causal interpretations, and the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases.

The present study set out with the objective of exploring the relationship between general self-efficacy (GSE) and psychological resilience (PR) among college students during COVID-19 (Zeng et al., 2016). The study examined the mediating role of posttraumatic growth (PTG) and the moderating role of deliberate rumination (DR). A total sample of 881 undergraduate students enrolled in a private college in Guangdong Province, China, participated in the study. Participants completed standardized questionnaires measuring GSE, PTG, PR. GSE was evaluated using a validated self-efficacy scale, PTG through an established posttraumatic growth measure, PR via a recognized resilience scale, and DR with an event-related rumination inventory. To analyze the data, Pearson's correlation and hierarchical regression analyses were applied, investigating the relationships among GSE, PTG, PR, and DR. Furthermore, a moderated mediation model was employed to explore the potential mediating role of PTG and the moderating effect of DR on these psychological constructs.

The results showed that GSE positively predicted PR, suggesting that individuals with higher self-

efficacy are better at handling challenges. Additionally, PTG partially mediated this relationship, indicating that self-efficacy fosters resilience by promoting personal growth. The study also examined the moderating role of DR. Findings revealed that DR influenced how GSE impacted PTG and how PTG affected PR. Specifically, higher deliberate rumination strengthened the effect of GSE on PTG but reduced PTG's effect on PR. This suggests that while reflection can support growth, excessive rumination may limit resilience. Overall, these findings highlight the complex relationship between self-efficacy, posttraumatic growth, rumination, and resilience, emphasizing the importance of fostering self-efficacy to build resilience, especially during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings imply a non-linear relationship between self-efficacy and resilience, involving multiple mediating and moderating factors. Posttraumatic growth serves as a mediating factor, enabling individuals to reframe adversity into opportunities for personal development, while deliberate rumination acts as a moderating factor, shaping the way individuals process stressful events. This underscores the multifaceted nature of resilience-building processes and the importance of addressing these additional factors in interventions. Understanding how individuals cope with stress highlights the diverse components involved in resilience development. This underscores the need to consider multiple factors when designing interventions to enhance resilience. Additionally, the results align with prior studies that emphasize the influence of self-efficacy in strengthening resilience, while also identifying key mediating and moderating variables. However, the study's cross-sectional approach limits causal interpretations, and the reliance on self-reported data introduces potential bias.

This study explored the relationship between self-efficacy, resilience, and academic motivation among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in an online learning setting during the COVID-19 period (Abdolrezaei et al., 2023). 120 university students from two universities in southern Iran participated in the study. Participants completed self-reported surveys that assessed their self-efficacy, resilience levels, and academic motivation.

To analyze these relationships, correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted, exploring how self-efficacy and resilience predict students' academic motivation in online learning environment. The results demonstrated a positive association of self-efficacy, resilience, and academic

motivation, suggesting that students with higher levels of self-efficacy and resilience tend to be more academically motivated. Multiple regression analysis further indicated that these psychological traits significantly contribute to predicting academic motivation, accounting for a substantial portion of the variance. The conclusion drawn from these findings is that enhancing self-efficacy and resilience has the potential to boost academic motivation among EFL learners in online education settings. This study extends previous research by focusing on the online learning context, which has become increasingly prevalent. The results align with existing literature shows again the importance of various factors in academic achievement. Nevertheless, the reliance on a limited convenience sample introduces constraints on the broader applicability. The cross-sectional approach limits establishing causal relationships, emphasizing the need for longitudinal research to further validate these insights.

This study examined the role of self-efficacy, resilience, optimism, and perceived stress contribute to academic performance among medical students, both objectively through GPA and subjectively through students' self-evaluations of their academic competence (Popa-Velea et al., 2021). The researchers targeted medical students as their population due to the high academic demands and stress levels they typically face, which makes resilience and self-efficacy critical factors in determining their academic success. The participants comprised 200 medical students from a university in Romania, ensuring representation across different years of study to capture a breadth of academic experiences. Participants completed self-assessments evaluating their confidence in academic abilities, ability to handle stress, and level of optimism. Academic performance was captured both objectively through participants' GPA and subjectively via self-reported evaluations of their academic abilities.

The findings demonstrate that both self-efficacy and resilience positively correlate with GPA and subjective assessments of academic competence. Self-efficacy was found to play a critical role in promoting resilience, as individuals with strong self-belief were better able to adapt to adversity and persevere in the face of difficulties. Students have higher levels of self-efficacy demonstrated greater resilience and were better equipped to manage academic challenges.

This study reveals the mediating role of resilience in the relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance. Students with greater self-

efficacy tended to develop greater resilience, which in turn contributed to better academic results. However, perceived stress was found to moderate this relationship, diminishing its positive effects under heightened stress conditions. The findings corroborate previous research, highlighting the importance of self-efficacy and resilience in educational settings, but this study extends the literature by identifying the nuanced roles of optimism and perceived stress.

While certain limitations exist. The study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw conclusions about causality, so it is uncertain whether self-efficacy and resilience directly result in enhanced academic outcomes or if other factors are implicated. Furthermore, the findings' generalizability is limited by the sample's concentration on Romanian medical students and the possible biases introduced by the use of self-reported data.

5 DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTION

The extant literature has demonstrated the pivotal roles of both growth mindset and self-efficacy in strengthening resilience. Growth mindset, which involves the belief that abilities can develop through effort, encourages individuals to view challenges as opportunities for learning and growth.

There is a strong and consistent link between this mindset and an enhanced state of psychological well-being, greater engagement in educational institutions and reduced stress (Kyeong et al., 2024; Zeng et al., 2016; Jones, 2020). Self-efficacy, defined as individual's confidence in their capacity to achieve goals, has been identified as a cornerstone of resilience by researchers (Meng & Zhang, 2023; Konaszewski et al., 2019). The interaction between these two psychological concepts has been shown to amplify their individual benefits, creating a synergistic effect on resilience (Zeng et al., 2016). Collectively, these findings underline the importance of psychological constructs in promoting adaptive responses to challenges, particularly in academic and pandemic-related contexts.

Considering existing research and theoretical insights, several practical recommendations can be proposed for the enhancement of resilience through interventions targeting growth mindset and self-efficacy. The extant research, as evidenced by Li et al. (2024), posits that structured interventions are efficacious in the promotion of specific psychological

traits (Li et al., 2024). Programs which encourage students to perceive challenges as opportunities for learning and believe in their capabilities have demonstrated substantial benefits for resilience and academic success. Furthermore, mentorship programs should focus on fostering self-efficacy by providing positive reinforcement, role modelling, and opportunities for mastery experiences. For instance, mentoring relationships have been found to act as a stress-mitigating agent and enhance resilience in academic settings (Zeng et al., 2016).

However, there are several limitations and gaps warrant further investigation: Most existing research, including the present studies, relies on cross-sectional designs, limiting causal inferences. Longitudinal studies are needed to understand how growth mindset and self-efficacy evolve over time and their sustained impact on resilience. Moreover, experimental research using randomized controlled trial designs could be conducted to provide more robust evidence for the causal effects of interventions based on a growth mindset and self-efficacy on resilience. While most existing research has examined specific cultural settings, further studies should assess whether cultural differences influence how growth mindset and self-efficacy contribute to resilience. Secondly, research into resilience should expand its scope to include outcomes beyond academic performance, such as interpersonal relationships, professional achievements, and physical health. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of resilience as a multifaceted construct. Furthermore, future studies should endeavor to reduce reliance on self-reported data, incorporating objective measures and evaluations to minimize biases.

6 CONCLUSION

This paper presents a thorough investigation of the connection of growth mindset, self-efficacy, and resilience. The study underscores their pivotal functions in cultivating adaptability and psychological well-being in challenging circumstances. The findings reveal that a growth mindset, defined as the conviction in one's capacity for personal evolution, facilitates the perception of challenges as opportunities for growth. In a similar vein, the psychological construct of self-efficacy, defined as the conviction in one's capacity for personal evolution, has been shown to exert a considerable influence on resilience. This influence is typified by its capacity to nurture confidence, persistence, and adaptive coping mechanisms.

Collectively, these psychological constructs form a synergistic framework that serves to promote resilience, a phenomenon particularly salient within highly stressful educational environments. The principal contribution of this analysis lies in its capacity to synthesize evidence from a variety of studies, thereby emphasizing how growth mindset and self-efficacy contribute to resilience. However, the analysis is not without its limitations; the reliance on cross-sectional research designs in much of the extant literature limits causal inferences, while the focus on specific cultural or demographic groups constrains the generalizability of the findings.

In summary, this paper underscores the impact of a growth mindset and self-efficacy in strengthening resilience. By presenting theoretical insights and practical recommendations, it contributes to the expanding corpus of literature on psychological resilience and establishes a basis for subsequent research and application. Through ongoing exploration and targeted interventions, the principles identified here can be utilized to promote resilience and well-being across diverse contexts.

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