



Theoretical article

RELATION BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The multitude of definitions of resilience highlights the multidimensional and multifaceted nature of the term, which characterizes resilience as a developmental process and a dynamic skill, rather than as a passive aftereffect or a temperamental trait. Resilience is described as a process with multifaceted dimensions that studies both individual and environmental factors. Inherent resilience is developed and strengthened through supervision and counseling, with practical application, emotional education, empathy, and support from social networks. Therefore, resilience is considered an innate ability that can be developed and learned throughout one's life. Literature shows that there are many ways to evaluate and measure resilience. The most notable are the checklists, scales and interviews that were created to measure resilience and protective and risk factors. Although there are many stressors faced by students in the school environment, there is a need to study how resilience can help them face these difficult factors. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to investigate the relationship between resilience and academic performance.

Keywords: Resilience, academic performance, personal traits, coping, school environment.

Resilience is important as it concerns mental health and is a key factor in successful mental and social adjustment (Shastri, 2013). The conceptual determination, which concerns mental resilience {resiliency (when the term is mentioned as a personality trait) and resilience (when it refers to a person's ability in the face of adversity)} (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000) derives from the Latin term "resilire" which means the ability to react or recover and refers to a broader concept that falls under the positive adaptation to an environment experiencing a crisis (Masten & Gewirtz, 2006).

At the same time, the term "resilience" also identifies dissimilar actions that a person adopts and subsequently adapts adequately to adversities, tragedies, threats or significant sources of stress such as family or professional, physical or mental problems (Aburn, Gott & Hoare, 2016). More specifically, the potentially traumatic events include the following (Tol, Song, & Jordans, 2013): exposure to interpersonal violence, war trauma, death of a loved one, natural disasters, severe accidents and terrorism.

The literature shows that there are definitions that focus on the effects of processes that occur between risk and protective factors. A commonly accepted definition is the one given by Luthar (2006), who defines resilience as an interactive process involving positive adaptation in the context of serious crises. According to this definition, two critical conditions must be considered. The first is the individual's exposure to danger or significant adverse conditions and the second is a positive adaptive realization of these adversities. Thus, Luthar (2006), like other researchers, suggests that resilience is not a personal trait but a result of the interaction between the environment and the individual.

The multitude of definitions of resilience highlights the multidimensional and multifaceted nature of the term, characterizing resilience as a developmental process and a dynamic skill, rather than as a passive aftereffect or a temperamental trait (Yates, Tyrell & Masten, 2014), which has validity in a multitude of systems, from individuals and families to institutions and societies (Masten, 2014). In the same year, Masten amended the definition to include "successful adjustment in some adversity," ultimately defining resilience as "the ability of a dynamic system to successfully adapt to disturbances that threaten the system's operation, viability or development" (Masten, 2014, p. 17). This newer definition shows that individuals change according to their circumstances to deal with danger.

Resilience is described as a process with multifaceted dimensions that studies both individual and environmental factors (Reyes & Elias, 2011). Inherent resilience is developed and strengthened through supervision and counseling, with practical application, emotional education, empathy and support from social networks (Grant & Kinman, 2012). Therefore, resilience is considered an innate ability that can be developed and learned throughout one's life (Masten & O'Dougherty Wright, 2010). This ability can be cultivated through the following (Wald et al., 2006): 1) problem-solving, 2) emotional management, 3) creative and critical thinking, 4) goal setting, 5) personal characteristics such as self-esteem and optimism, 6) self-confidence, 7) social networks, and 8) acquiring positive experiences.

Consequently, as defined by the American Psychological Association, resilience is not a fixed and established trait for every person, but it rather encompasses attitudes, actions, and thoughts that can be mastered and developed. In this way, resilience is variable and determined by the environment in which the adversity takes place, as stated by many researchers, it is a dynamic process during events and over time (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001; Masten, 2007.)

In conclusion, resilience can be defined as a positive resource that can be activated in the context of stress to prevent the development of negative mental health outcomes. As a protective mechanism, resilience increases the likelihood of adaptive responses. Thus, resilient individuals harness positive emotions to recover and adapt to adverse situations (Makryonitou & Loudianou, 2016).

Resilient individuals' characteristics

Resilience, as defined and analyzed in previous chapters, is an individual's ability to adapt to adverse situations. Simultaneously, resilience is a special characteristic of a person that is recalled only when the person faces negative experiences, but it is distinguished in the operation of fundamental mechanisms that affect adaptation. If the systems function properly, the individuals' developmental path continues despite the obstacles they encounter. However, if the functioning of the system is disturbed, the risk of developmental problems increases (especially if the risks are continuous) (Masten, 2001).

The literature points out that the personality or temperament of a person is directly related to resilience. On the opposite of this point of view is the position that the circumstances are shaped according to the individual's character and that personality traits may influence exposure to negative situations (Masten, 2014). In addition, individual characteristics may act as risk or protective factors, depending on the individual characteristics of the person and the social and cultural environment (Shiner & Masten, 2012).

When approaching the concept of resilience in adolescents, researchers have recorded some basic characteristics that distinguish resilient adolescents from nonresilient adolescents. Studies so far have highlighted the importance of childhood and further study on resilience, because during that developmental period (and earlier), skills and fundamental protective mechanisms emerge. In some children and adolescents, the emergence of these characteristics is intrinsic, whereas others require assistance (Masten & Gewirtz, 2008).

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Wolin and Wolin (1993) listed eight characteristics that demonstrate the presence of resilience in young people. These characteristics are: 1) intuition, and more specifically, one's ability to react to any kind of message of a transmitter; 2) independence; 3) ability to recognize a risk; 4) ability to form positive bonds both with peers and with the social environment; 5) creativity; 6) decisiveness; 7) moral values; and 8) coping with stress.

Everly and Lating (2013) and Everly et al. (2013) state that resilient children and adolescents have six key characteristics: 1) innovation, 2) courage, 3) persistence, 4) mental fortitude, 5) self-control, and 6) buoyancy.

Self-control is positively related to physical, psychological, and social outcomes, especially in childhood and adolescence (Hornor, 2017). Several studies have added creativity and intelligence as extra personality traits in individuals with high levels of resilience (Tusaie & Dyer, 2004).

Other researchers mention other very important traits of adolescents with increased resilience which are the following:

- adequate support from the wider family and social environment (Wolin & Wolin, 1993)
- self-confidence (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005)
- their values and
- the ability to solve problems (Wolin & Wolin, 1993)

Although these characteristics are present in a large proportion of adolescents, they are even more prevalent among adolescents characterized by high levels of resilience (Bonanno & Mancini, 2008; Netuveli et al., 2008).

Studies that mention the characteristics of resilience also mention self-esteem as an idiosyncratic individual characteristic of coping or even progressing after adverse situations (Gilligan, 2000). Miller and Daniel (2007) and Chung et al. (2020) reported that resilience and self-esteem are inextricably linked.

Another characteristic of resilience is the ability to achieve personal goals and create good living conditions (de la Fuente et al., 2017). Another essential characteristic of resilience is autonomy, which is determined by an individual's skill to act voluntarily and simultaneously determine his environment (Kajabadi et al., 2016). In her research, Masten (1994) argued that resilience must be considered a dynamic process and explained that it should be considered as an outcome of the individual's characteristics and wider environment, which are very important in the transitional stages of an individual's life.

Resilience, in addition to other traits, protects against adverse conditions such as depression and anxiety disorders (Kajabadi et al., 2016). Additionally, it is a feature that changes with the revision of attitudes and actions. By revising their way of thinking, adolescents can broaden their views and become more adaptive to different types of changes. In this way, resilience is considered a personal characteristic and its conquest is of utmost importance for dealing with adverse circumstances (Tzortzoglou, 2021).

According to Sikorska and Paluch (2015), there are various ways to increase resilience in individuals. These include learning new skills and acquiring innovative concepts. In the literature, there is a reference to other actions as well; some of them, according to Richardson (2017), is participation in groups, in which individuals can come into contact with people with similar and shared perspectives and

experiences, the provision of assistance in emergencies, and the perspective of the positive points of a situation.

Measuring resilience

Literature shows that there are many ways of evaluating and measuring resilience. The most notable are the checklists, scales and interviews that were created to measure resilience and protective and risk factors (Baruth & Carroll, 2002). Although there are many research tools aimed at measuring resilience, researchers have not settled on which is the best (Connor & Davidson, 2003), because the degree of resilience must be observed in truly adverse situations. It is worth mentioning that measurement depends on factors such as culture, approach and interpretation (Hoffman and Hancock, 2017).

Measurement scales include questions on the types of behavior. More specifically, they include (Hoge et al., 2007) personal and social competence, acceptance of self and life, self-esteem, action orientation, adaptability, targeted strategies, problem-solving skills, social support, family cohesion, personal structure, sense of humor, endurance, and optimism.

Important examples of resilience-related scales include the Resilience Scale developed by Wagnild and Young (1993) and the Coping Scale for Children and Youth. These scales were used for this study and are briefly described below.

Resilience Scale

The Resilience Scale is the oldest scale for measuring resilience; however, it is still used by many researchers. Developed by Wagnild and Young (1993), it was created and validated using a sample of older adults (aged 53–95 years). More specifically, the scale consists of 25 items that are positively related to physical health, morale and life satisfaction and negatively correlated with depression.

This scale is intended to measure resilience based on five fundamental characteristics:

- The meaning of life
- Perseverance
- Self-reliance
- The peace
- Existential loneliness

The above characteristics were assessed using two subscales: Personal Ability and Acceptance of Self and Life. Wagnild (2009) confirmed the scale in 2009, and confirmed its internal consistency and construct validity in a subsequent validation of the scale, supporting its continued effectiveness as a tool for evaluating resilience. In addition to the original 25-item scale, there is an abbreviated 14-item scale that has also been shown to be valid and reliable for measuring resilience (Abiola & Udofia, 2011).

Coping Scale for Children and Youth

The importance of CSCY lies in its usefulness in facilitating large-scale data collection for children's coping. Although interviews have many benefits, they also have some serious logistical and standardization challenges that can reduce the amount of data that can be gathered. The use of self-report questionnaires, specifically the CSCY, offers another procedural option for investigating the development and manifestation of coping behaviors. The CSCY format has been designed for maximum

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flexibility, allowing subjects to respond either to self-identified stressors or to stressors identified by the investigator (Brodzinsky et al., 1992).

It consists of 28 questions rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Never and 4 = Very Often) and includes four (4) subscales: a) help-seeking, b) Cognitive-Behavioral Problem Solving, c) Cognitive Avoidance, and d) Behavioral Avoidance (Brodzinsky et al., 1992).

School environment and coping

Although the stressors faced by students in the school environment are many, there is a need to study how resilience can help them face these difficult factors. There are not many studies that have investigated how junior high school students' resilience can help them deal with stressful situations regarding academic and school life (e.g. exams, problems with peers, etc.) (Green et al., 2006). Surveys of junior high school students confirmed the positive relationship between resilience and the ability to deal with difficult situations within the school environment. According to Chan (2000), students with high levels of resilience face stressful situations in school more effectively and experience more positive emotions than students with low resilience levels. These students had positive thoughts and greater resilience under adverse conditions (Chan, 2000).

Most studies have come to common results regarding the relationship between resilience and coping with school problems. Kinder (2008) states that the achievement of learning goals in school is carried out depending on the existence of high or low resilience levels. People with high resilience levels interpret a stressful event differently, such as an exam or a fight with peers, compared with individuals with low resilience. As pointed out in the literature, resilient students succeed in achieving learning goals and have better academic performance than non-resistant students (Rouse, 2001). From this, we conclude that high resilience levels have a positive effect both in dealing with problems in the school environment and on students' academic performance.

A similar study concluded that high resilience levels create conditions for students to adapt smoothly to the new circumstances of learning and student life, while Piran (2014) indicated that students with high resilience levels face the new challenges of the new environment more positively. This can also be seen in a study conducted by Green et al. (2007), who reported that high levels of resilience in adolescents strengthen their ability to deal with stressful situations and enhance their academic performance. Research findings have confirmed that high resilience levels form a framework for achieving students' goals, making them more involved in the learning process, increasing academic performance and reducing student stress (Green et al., 2007).

Resilience and academic performance

The inseparable relationship and the importance of the relationship between school and learning have already been discussed. The school is considered the most suitable environment, which promotes learning, mental and social integration and the development of all involved parties (students and teachers), but also strengthens their resilience and mental health in general (Hatzichristou, 2015).

More specifically, resilience improves individuals' capacity and helps them to develop proper functioning within the school community (Hatzichristou, 2015). School classes can constitute communities of resilience, which helps them with the following (Henderson & Milstein, 2008):

- learn
- create and develop their resilience
- receive support
- become more adaptive

According to Henderson and Milstein (2008), a school's main intention is to strengthen and build all its stakeholders' resilience.

For the most part, resilience should be associated with the environment's importance to the learner, and not with the learner's abilities (Doll et al., 2009). As a system, the school is obliged to facilitate learning, strengthen skills, and enrich and utilize the students', the members of the school community and the teachers' strengths, so all these stakeholders can face the adversities and various difficulties that arise (Rutter & Maughan, 2002). Schools characterized by resilience can contribute to the satisfaction of stakeholders' educational, emotional, and interpersonal characteristics, regardless of their weaknesses or needs (Henderson & Milstein, 2008).

Primarily, studies on resilience focus on individuals who have survived vulnerable and stressful situations or on individuals who belong to certain minorities. However, the development of resilience in the school environment focuses on the processes that bring about social development and the high school performance of all students (Cefai, 2011).

The school environment constitutes a social system that can support learning, progress, prosperity, and development and can provide a protective environment. To achieve this, schools should embrace their members and include them in a meaningful way. Additionally, the school's stakeholders must transmit the feeling of belonging, especially to those who are prone to low academic performance, face psychosocial difficulties, and share common values (Cefai, 2011).

A culture of care and affection helps the learning process and teaching while simultaneously developing students' emotional and social skills and improving their ability to think and intellect. In such an environment, it is more likely to engage in positive behaviors, be motivated, and work harder (Cefai, 2011).

Additionally, in school classrooms where teachers are not focused solely on student performance and cognitive goals, they aim to teach a holistic formation of the student's character, aiming for higher school performance (Rutter & Maughan, 2002). This can be achieved by revising some common techniques that teachers can use to form a "class society," characterized by the following (Cefai, 2011):

- emphasis on knowledge
- inclusion
- affection
- caring
- empowering and
- the learner's engagement

In the school classroom, in which resilience is developed, students and teachers compose a group in which everyone feels like a member. In the school environment, students realize that their personalities are respected, they feel safe and consequently, feel valued (Cefai, 2011). Teachers nurture and reinforce their students' learning efforts, and they try to help them satisfy and cope with their social and emotional needs (Rutter & Maughan, 2002). They show genuine interest in understanding and getting to know their students, invest time in them, shape and change their teaching practices, and provide encouragement, support, care, affection and respect for each student (Cefai, 2011; Rutter & Maughan, 2002).

The principles that define a school class with resilience are as follows (Doll et al. 2014):

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- cooperation
- acceptance of diversity
- solidarity and
- care

Students encourage each other to work collaboratively (Doll et al., 2014). Helping and supporting schoolwork between classmates is an integral part of everyday school reality. Conflicts and difficulties were resolved in a friendly and benevolent manner. There is zero tolerance for bullying, and competitive-type behaviors are discouraged (Cefai, 2011).

Students actively participated in experiential activities. Student-centered methods have been used for teaching (Doll et al., 2014). Students' group and individual efforts and successes are rewarded within the class, where resilience develops (Hargeaves, 2003). How the teaching approach is selected ensures an educational framework that motivates students to be more involved in the learning process (Cefai, 2011). In addition, all students participate without discrimination in social and school activities organized by the school (Doll et al., 2014). There is a mood where all students have to be helped, especially those who have behavioral, learning, social, and emotional difficulties. This is achieved through peer support and personalized attention (Cefai, 2011).

Teachers are role models for students. In addition, they help, support and collaborate with other teachers (Hargeaves, 2003). In addition, they had high expectations from all students. They offer them help, care about them, spend time and finally use pedagogical methods to satisfy their various learning needs (Cefai, 2011).

Students' interaction in the context of the smooth development of relationships between them enhances the exchange of information, mutual feedback and mutual aid, resulting in improved school performance and effectiveness of learning activities (Matsangouras, 2008). Cooperation favors students who show weaknesses, because mutual guidance and assistance, which develop in the group, strengthen the feeling of security and help them feel and experience success, resulting in increased self-esteem (Matsangouras, 2008).

In conclusion, the teacher undertakes responsibility for the guide, empowers, and inspires students (Hargeaves, 2003). Furthermore, teachers promote self-reliance, encourage students and have high expectations (Day & Gu, 2013). Students assess their learning, contribute to the enactment of rules, and participate in the actions of the school team; they have the freedom to shape their behavior in the school classroom, undertake initiatives to resolve their conflicts and problems, and through all this, they are directed towards autonomy (Cefai, 2011).

The role of resilience in the context of knowledge formation is important and constitutes an integral part of education (Hargeaves, 2003). The learning process includes parameters such as the learning background of the class and the strengthening of the social and emotional potential of education in general. A new educational resilience perspective is attained by strengthening the operations of school classes (Cefai, 2007; Doll et al., 2014; Goldstein & Brooks, 2007).

Conclusion

The large number of definitions of resilience highlights the multidimensional and multifaceted nature of the term that characterizes resilience as a developmental process and a dynamic skill, rather than as a passive aftereffect or a temperamental trait. There is much evidence indicating that an individual's personality or temperament is directly related to resilience. It is also clear that there are various ways to increase resilience in individuals. These include learning new skills and acquiring innovative concepts. Students with high levels of resilience face stressful situations in school more

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effectively and experience more positive emotions than students with low resilience levels. This article shows that academic performance is largely affected by a student's level of resilience. Of course, teachers also play a significant role.

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