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Personal growth initiative as a predictor of resilience and optimism among young adults

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Abstract
The present study examined whether Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) predicts resilience and optimism among young adults and whether gender differences exist in these variables. The sample included 200 young adults (100 males and 100 females) aged 18-35 years from Kerala. Standardized scales were used to measure PGI, resilience, and optimism, and data were analyzed using t-tests, correlation, and regression. Results showed that PGI significantly predicted both resilience and optimism. No significant gender differences were found in PGI and resilience, while optimism differed significantly based on gender.

Keywords: Personal growth initiative, resilience, optimism, young adults

1. Introduction

Adulthood is marked by physical, intellectual, and psychosocial maturity, independence, and responsibility. Young adulthood generally spans from the late teens or early twenties to the mid-30s or early 40s. Erikson (1950) described this phase as intimacy versus isolation, emphasizing the formation of close relationships following identity development. Arnett (2000, 2001) further identified emerging adulthood as a distinct period characterized by identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between adolescence and adulthood, and optimism about future possibilities. Physically, young adulthood represents peak functioning, although gradual biological decline begins during this stage. Cognitively, young adults show high learning capacity and adaptability, while socially they experience major transitions such as higher education, employment, financial independence, and family formation. Research highlights considerable variability in the assumption of adult roles, underscoring young adulthood as a fluid and transitional developmental phase.

Personal Growth Initiative refers to an individual's active and intentional involvement in self-improvement. Unlike general personal development, PGI focuses on holistic growth guided by personal values. Conceptualized PGI as a metacognitive construct involving awareness, motivation, and deliberate action toward growth.

PGI comprises four components: readiness for change, planfulness, use of resources, and intentional behavior. Individuals high in PGI are proactive in identifying growth areas, planning strategies, seeking support, and implementing change. Research consistently links PGI with psychological well-being, adaptive functioning, and reduced psychological distress. Two key tenets-intentionality and transferability highlight that PGI skills are consciously applied and can be used across life domains and developmental stages.

Resilience is the capacity to adapt positively in the face of stress, adversity, or trauma, often described as the ability to "bounce back." It involves both external adaptation to societal expectations and internal psychological well-being. Resilience is dynamic rather than fixed and is influenced by individual, social, and cultural factors .Protective factors contributing to resilience include effective problem-solving, emotional regulation, confidence, realistic planning, social support, and positive self-concept. Resilience can be cultivated over time through experience and intervention. Joseph identified three forms of resilience: natural (innate), adaptive (developed through challenges), and restored or learned resilience.

Optimism is defined as a stable tendency to expect positive outcomes (Scheier & Carver, 1985) [28].

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Optimistic individuals typically employ approach-oriented coping strategies, positively reframe stressors, and persist toward goals, whereas pessimists rely more on avoidance and denial. Empirical evidence links optimism to better physical health, reduced stress, greater achievement, persistence, and overall well-being.

Interventions such as cognitive-behavioral techniques and positive visualization have been shown to enhance optimism by strengthening positive expectancies and adaptive coping styles.

1.1 Need and significance of the study
Young adulthood is a critical developmental period marked by increasing demands and stressors. Rapid societal changes may challenge psychological well-being if individuals lack effective growth and coping resources. Personal Growth Initiative, resilience, and optimism serve as essential psychological strengths that promote adaptive functioning and mental health. Examining PGI as a predictor of resilience and optimism is therefore important for understanding positive psychological development and for informing interventions aimed at enhancing well-being among young adults.

2. Review of literature
Previous research has consistently highlighted the importance of Personal Growth Initiative (PGI), resilience, and optimism in psychological well-being across diverse populations. Kealy, Rice, and Ogrodniczuk (2021) [12] found that impaired reflective functioning significantly mediated the relationship between resilience and PGI among men with mental health concerns, emphasizing reflective functioning as a key factor in resilience and personal change. Similarly, Pagavathsing (2021) [19] reported that emotional intelligence positively influenced PGI through resilience among postsecondary students, highlighting resilience as a crucial mediating variable.

Several studies have demonstrated a strong positive association between PGI and resilience across educational and occupational settings. Sapriina, Cherian, and Rajan (2020) [27] observed significant positive relationships among PGI, resilience, and psychological well-being in nursing and non-nursing students, with differences based on education and age. Gunjan and Asmita (2020) [8], as well as Thapa and Singh (2018) [37], reported that PGI and resilience were significantly related and contributed to enhanced workplace productivity and organizational performance.

Optimism has also been examined in relation to PGI and resilience. Ain (2019) [1] found PGI to positively influence positive interpretation of illness among asthma patients, although optimism showed no significant association. Thong (2018) [39] reported no significant differences in resilience and PGI between first-generation and non-first-generation college students. Research by Mishra (2013) [18] and Erdogan et al. (2015) [6] indicated gender differences in optimism and resilience, though findings across studies remain mixed.

Intervention-based studies provide further support for the modifiability of PGI and resilience. Woerkom and Meyers (2019) [40], along with Meyers, Woerkom, and Bakk (2015) [17], demonstrated that strength-based interventions significantly enhanced PGI and self-efficacy. Psychometric studies by Freitas et al. (2018) [7] and Bhattacharya and

Mehrotra (2014) [5] confirmed the reliability and validity of PGIS-II across diverse cultural contexts.

Overall, the reviewed literature underscores PGI as a significant psychological resource closely linked with resilience, optimism, mental health, and adaptive functioning. However, limited research has simultaneously examined PGI as a predictor of both resilience and optimism among young adults, particularly within the Indian context, indicating a clear research gap addressed by the present study.

3. Research Methodology
3.1 Research Design
A descriptive research design using a questionnaire method was employed to examine whether Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) predicts resilience and optimism among young adults and to assess gender differences in these variables.

3.2 Statement of the problem
To determine whether Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) is a significant predictor of resilience and optimism among young adults.

3.3 Objectives of the study
- To examine the relationship between personal growth Initiative and resilience among young adults.
- To assess the predictive role of Personal Growth Initiative on resilience.
- To examine the relationship between personal growth Initiative and optimism among young adults.
- To assess the predictive role of Personal Growth Initiative on optimism.
- To study gender differences in personal growth Initiative, resilience, and optimism among young adults.

3.4 Hypotheses
- **H01:** There is no significant relationship between Personal Growth Initiative and resilience among young adults.
- **H02:** Personal Growth Initiative does not significantly predict resilience among young adults.
- **H03:** There is no significant relationship between Personal Growth Initiative and optimism among young adults.
- **H04:** Personal Growth Initiative does not significantly predict optimism among young adults.
- **H05:** There is no significant gender difference in Personal Growth Initiative among young adults.
- **H06:** There is no significant gender difference in resilience among young adults.
- **H07:** There is no significant gender difference in optimism among young adults.

3.5 Operational Definitions
- **Personal Growth Initiative:** The intentional and active involvement of an individual in behaviors aimed at self-improvement across various life domains.
- **Resilience:** The ability to adapt positively and recover from stress, adversity, or difficult life experiences.
- **Optimism:** A generalized expectancy that positive outcomes will occur in the future.

3.6 Sampling Procedure: The sample consisted of 200 young adults (100 males and 100 females) aged 18-35 years from various parts of Kerala. Purposive sampling was used.

Inclusion Criteria
- Young adults aged 18-35 years
- Ability to read and comprehend English
- Students and working professionals

Exclusion Criteria
- Differently-abled individuals
- Individuals residing outside Kerala

3.7 Tools Used
- **Personal Growth Initiative Scale (PGIS):** Developed by Robitschek (1999), a self-report measure assessing intentional personal growth. It consists of 9 items rated on a Likert scale and has high reliability ($\alpha = 0.94$).
- **Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10):** Developed by Campbell-Sills and Stein, this 10-item scale measures resilience on a 5-point Likert scale. It demonstrates good reliability and validity.
- **Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R):** Developed by Scheier and Carver (1985) [28], this 10-item scale assesses dispositional optimism. The scale shows acceptable reliability ($\alpha=0.79$).

3.8 Procedure
Data were collected using Google Forms. Participants were provided with informed consent and assured of confidentiality. The questionnaire included PGIS, CD-RISC 10, and LOT-R. Clear instructions were given, and participation was voluntary. Collected data were coded and analyzed using SPSS.

3.9 Statistical Techniques
Data analysis was performed using SPSS.
- **Descriptive statistics:** Mean and standard deviation
- **Inferential statistics:** Pearson's correlation, independent samples t-test, and linear regression

3.10 Ethical Considerations
- Informed consent was obtained from all participants
- Confidentiality and anonymity were ensure.

4. Results and Discussion
Descriptive statistics for personal growth initiative, resilience and optimism among young adult
Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables under study. A total sample size of 200 young adults were surveyed, out of which 100 were males and 100 were females. The average male and female value of participants for personal growth initiative are 37.05 and 37.78 with a standard deviation of 7.291 and 7.231 respectively. The average male and female value of participants for resilience are 24.63 and 23.63 with a standard deviation of 6.598 and 7.726 respectively. The average male and female value of male and female participants for optimism are 12.82 and 13.52 with a standard deviation of 2.380 and 2.544 respectively.

Table 1: Shows the descriptive statistics of the variables under study

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Personal Growth Initiative	Male	100	37.05	7.29
	Female	100	37.78	7.23
Resilience	Male	100	24.63	6.59
	Female	100	23.63	7.72
Optimism	Male	100	12.82	2.38
	Female	100	13.52	2.54

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between Personal Growth Initiative and Resilience among young adults
In order to test the hypothesis, descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used. Since the sample size was large, the significance of relationship between personal growth initiative and resilience was computed using Pearson's correlation test.

Table 2: Showing the relationship between personal growth initiative and resilience among young adults

Variables	Mean	SD	Sig. Value (P)	Correlation Value (r)
Personal Growth Initiative	37.42	7.25	0.00	0.55**
Resilience	24.13	7.18		

**Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

An examination of the table reveals that there were 200 young adults, personal growth initiative of young the average score for adults is 37.42, standard deviation of 7.25 which is interpreted to be within normal range. The resilience had a mean score of 24.13, and a standard deviation of 7.18 which can be translated as "satisfied".
To establish if there was a link between the two, personal growth initiative and resilience among young adults, the scores were subjected to Pearson's correlation test, which yielded the Pearson's correlation coefficient 'r' as 0.55, and the corresponding p-value is 0.00. And it is significant at 0.01 level. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. Hence there is a significant moderate positive correlation between personal growth initiative and resilience among young adults.

H₀2: There is no significant prediction of personal growth initiative on resilience among young adults
The objective was examined using linear regression. For the regression model, personal growth initiative was entered as the independent variable and resilience was entered as the dependent variable.

Table 3: Showing the prediction of personal growth initiative on resilience among young adults

Variables	R square(R^2)	Adjusted R-square (adj.R^2)	Standardized Beta	F	P
Personal Growth Initiative Resilience	0.30	0.30	0.55	87.45	0.00**

** Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The regression results for all respondents are shown in the table above. The R^2 for regression model is found to be 0.30. This indicates that, 30% of the dependent variable's variation resilience for the overall responders is explained by the research variable. It also demonstrates that adjusted R^2 is 0.30 for the overall, this suggests that the R2 will grow as more independent variables are added to the model (even if only slightly). The ANOVA, which is presented by, is the output of this regression model. F-ratio 87.45 (P=0.00). This shows that the regression model is significant for all respondents. On examination of the standardized beta coefficients, it is found that personal growth initiative is intimately linked to resilience at 0.01 level. Hence we reject the null hypothesis.

H₀3: There is no significant relationship between Personal Growth Initiative and Optimism among young adults
The hypothesis was tested using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Since the sample size was large, the importance of the connection between personal growth initiative and optimism was calculated with Pearson's correlation test.
An examination of the table reveals that there were 200 young adults, the average score for young adults is 37.42 for personal growth initiative, standard deviation of 7.25 which can be translated as within normal range. The optimism had a mean score of 13.17, standard deviation of 2.48, since the

SD value is quite low in comparison to their average, it is consistent.

Table 4: Showing the relationship between personal growth initiative and optimism among young adults

Variables	Mean	SD	Sig. Value (P)	Correlation Value (r)
Personal Growth Initiative	37.42	7.25	0.00	0.25**
Optimism	13.17	2.48		

**Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

To establish if there was a link between the two, researchers looked at the data. personal growth initiative and optimism among young adults, the scores were subjected to Pearson's correlation test, This resulted in Pearson's correlation coefficient 'r' as 0.250, and the corresponding p value is 0.000. And it is significant at 0.01 level. Since the p value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. Hence there is a significant low positive correlation between personal growth initiative and optimism among young adults.

H₀4: There is no significant prediction of personal growth initiative on optimism among young adults
This objective was investigated utilising linear regression. For the regression model, personal growth initiative, as the independent variable, was entered and optimism as the dependent variable was entered.

Table 5: Showing the prediction of personal growth initiative on optimism among young adults

Variables	R square(R^2)	Adjusted R-square (adj.R^2)	Standardized Beta	F	P
Personal Growth Initiative Optimism	0.06	0.05	0.25	13.17	0.00**

**Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The table reports the overall respondents' regression findings. The R^2 for regression model is found to be 0.06. This implies that 6% of the dependent variable's variation optimism, for the overall responders is explained by the research variable. It also demonstrates that adjusted R^2 =0.05 for the overall, which means that any time another independent variable is added to this model, the R^2 will increase (even if only slightly). This regression model results in the ANOVA which is reported by F-ratio 13.17 (P=0.00). This shows that the regression model is significant for all respondents. On examination of the standardized beta coefficients, it has been discovered that personal growth

initiative is intimately linked to optimism at 0.01 level. Hence we reject the null hypothesis.

H₀5: There is no significant difference in personal growth initiative among young adults based on gender

The mean scores and standard deviation obtained by males and females were used to test the hypothesis on personal growth initiative was computed. Furthermore, the significance of the difference between the two groups' mean scores was calculated using Independent samples t test, this resulted in the following outcomes.

Table 6: Showing the difference in personal growth initiative among male and female participants

Variable	Gender	Mean	SD	Sig. Value (P)	T-Value
Personal Growth Initiative	Male	37.05	7.29	0.47	0.71
	Female	37.78	7.23		

According to the data in the table above, the mean value derived for personal growth initiative among males is 37.05 and female is 37.78. The value demonstrates that females had slightly a higher level personal growth initiative in comparison to males. The t-value for personal growth initiative is 0.71 and the corresponding p value is 0.47.

Since the p value is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis. Thus, there is no discernible change in personal growth initiative among male and female participants.

H₀6: There is no significant difference in Resilience among young adults based on gender

The mean scores and standard deviation obtained by males and females on resilience were used to test the hypothesis. Furthermore, the significance of the difference between the two groups' mean scores was calculated using Independent samples t test, which yielded the following results

Table 7: Showing the difference in resilience among male and female participants

Variable	Gender	Mean	SD	Sig. Value (P)	T-Value
Resilience	Male	24.63	6.59	0.32	- 0.98
	Female	23.63	7.72		

According to the data in the table above, the mean value derived for resilience among males is 24.63 and females is 23.63. The value demonstrates that males had slightly a higher level resilience in comparison to females. The t-value for resilience is -0.98 and the corresponding p-value is 0.32. Since the p value is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis. Thus there is no discernible change in resilience among male and female participants.

H₀7: There is no significant difference in Optimism among young adults based on gender

The mean scores and standard deviation obtained by males and females on optimism were used to test the hypothesis. The significance of the difference between the two groups' mean scores was also calculated using an independent samples t test, yielding the following results.

Table 8: Showing the difference in optimism among male and female participants

Variable	Gender	Mean	SD	Sig. value (P)	T-Value
Optimism	Male	12.82	2.38	0.04*	2.00
	Female	13.52	2.54		

Note: *$p<0.05$

According to the data in the table above, the mean value obtained for optimism among males is 12.82 and females is 13.52. The value demonstrates that females had a slightly higher level of optimism in comparison to males. The t-value for optimism is 2.00 and the corresponding p-value is 0.04. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. Thus there is significant difference in optimism among male and female participants.

5. Summary and Conclusion
5.1 Summary
The present study examined whether Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) predicts resilience and optimism among young adults and whether gender differences exist in these variables. The sample consisted of 200 young adults (100 males and 100 females) from Kerala. PGI, resilience, and optimism were measured using standardized tools, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, *t*-tests, correlation, and regression. The findings revealed that PGI significantly predicts both resilience and optimism. No significant gender differences were found in PGI and resilience, while females scored higher than males in optimism.

5.2 Tenability of Hypotheses
Hypotheses related to the relationships and predictive role of PGI on resilience and optimism were not supported, indicating significant associations. Hypotheses regarding gender differences in PGI and resilience were supported, while the hypothesis related to optimism was not supported due to significant gender differences.

5.3 Limitations
The study was limited by purposive sampling and a geographically restricted sample, limiting generalizability. The use of self-report questionnaires and online data collection restricted deeper exploration of the variables.

5.4 Implications
The findings highlight PGI as an important psychological resource for enhancing resilience and optimism in young adults. Interventions focusing on intentional growth, resilience-building strategies, and optimism-enhancing practices may promote psychological well-being during young adulthood.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Studies
Future research may include qualitative methods, larger and more diverse samples, and exploration of these variables across different demographic and cultural groups, including differently-abled young adults.

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