

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG THE CITIZENS OF NIGERIA

### ZWIĄZEK MIĘDZY ODPORNOŚCIĄ A SAMOSKUTECZNOŚCIĄ WŚRÓD OBYWATELI NIGERII

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**Abstract:** Nigerians develop resilience and self-efficacy to counteract the impact of adversity in the country. It is as if they know that a strong sense of self-efficacy is an important component of resilience. The purpose of this research work is to see the link between resilience and self-efficacy. We studied this particular problem using the theory of self-efficacy.

**Material and methods:** The target of this research was the citizens of Nigeria from different ethnic groups. Our sample was composed of 343 individuals: 139 males (40.5%) while 204 were females (59.5%).

**Results:** The result shows that a good number of those who answered the questionnaire calm their anxiety in the face of crisis and tend not to avoid conflict.

**Conclusions:** To this effect, Nigerians build their resilience and self-efficacy, because without these traits the individual risk becoming overwhelmed by adversity, crisis, and succumbing to feelings of hopelessness and despair.

**Keywords:** resilience, self-efficacy, adversity

**Streszczenie:** Nigeryjczycy rozwijają odporność i poczucie własnej skuteczności, aby przeciwdziałać skutkom trudności w kraju. To tak, jakby wiedzieli, że silne poczucie własnej skuteczności jest ważnym elementem odporności. Celem tej pracy badawczej jest sprawdzenie związku między odpornością a poczuciem własnej skuteczności. Zbadaliśmy ten konkretny problem, korzystając z teorii własnej skuteczności.

**Materiał i metody:** Celem badań byli obywatele Nigerii wywodzący się z różnych grup etnicznych. Próba badawcza liczyła 343 osoby: 139 mężczyzn (40,5%) i 204 kobiety (59,5%).

**Wyniki:** Wynik pokazuje, że znaczna liczba osób, które odpowiedziały na kwestionariusz, potrafi kierować swoimi niepokojami w obliczu kryzysu i nie unika stawiania czoła konfliktom.

**Wnioski:** W tym celu Nigeryjczycy budują swoją odporność i poczucie własnej skuteczności, ponieważ bez tych cech jednostka naraża się na ryzyko przytłoczenia przeciwnościami losu, kryzysu oraz poddania się poczuciu beznadziejności i rozpacz.

**Słowa kluczowe:** odporność, poczucie własnej skuteczności, przeciwności losu

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## Introduction

The term resilience cuts across many disciplines. For example, resilience is common in psychology, psychiatry, human development, change management, etc. This topic is equally common both in the civilian and military sectors, as well as public and private sector. The word resilience goes back to the early seventh century. It derives from the Latin *resiliens*, a form of the verb *resilire*, to jump back, recoil, or rebound. Over time, the word took on many meanings, and by the 1830s, resilience was being used to describe the human ability to endure or recover from adversity. This kind of resilience was closely associated with fortitude, the strength of mind necessary to face danger and adversity with courage. But it took a long time before resilience entered the vocabulary of psychological science (Bourke & Schott, 2022, 31).

Resilience is not an easy term and as such it becomes very difficult for researchers to come out with a single definition. In fact, in the past, the term resilience originally was used in the material sciences to refer to the ability of certain materials, like rubber, to withstand compression or expansion and return to their original shape or position. Recently, psychologist and ecologists adopted the concept of resilience to describe how individual human beings and ecosystems can bounce back when changed (Reich et al., 2010, 334).

So far, our understanding of resilience is like a bouncing ball. When the ball hits the ground, we expect it to bounce back. Resilience means you bounce back from, or deal with, difficult times, new situations, unexpected changes, or other experiences that cause you stress. Keeping in mind that being resilient does not mean that one does not feel pain or that everything goes your way. Actually, one is more resilient after going through a stressful situation and learning to deal with the challenge or set back. In fact, resilience helps one to maintain a positive attitude, learn from one's mistakes, and grow from one's experiences (Rishi, 2023, 48).

In Nigeria, there are a lot of issues associated with resilience. They include the following; Poverty, intergroup conflict, displacement and climate issues, poor health system, water scarcity, pollution, land degradation, flash floods, landslides, gully erosion, drug abuse, rape, cybercrime, armed robbery, kidnapping, domestic crime, extrajudicial killings, herder-farmer conflicts, ritual killings, banditry, commercial crime, secessionist agitation, kidnapping, , attacks by unknown gunmen, ethno religious killings, etc. *Building resilience as a Nigerian citizen or building a resilient community* is very pertinent since no community is immune from problems or disaster both natural and man-made (Ugwu & Ugwueze, 2020, 42905).

## Method

It is interesting to know that we did not have any tribe or ethnic group in mind while carrying out this research. Since we are in a digital world, we decided to reach out to the citizens through computer assisted technique. It is a link form survey that is unique. It was shared to the participants online. The link was sent through emails, WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, and other social medial handles. By clicking on the link to the survey it will open. The participant will fill and submit it online. They are free to responded with their phones or computers. The most important factor is that the participant must be connected on the internet to be able to fill and submit the questionnaire. This research was carried out in the month of October, 2023. When we checked the result, we found out that Igbo ethnic group happened to be the majority of the participants.

Therefore, the purpose of this research work is to see the relationship between resilience and self-efficacy among Nigeria citizens. We shall explain it by presenting the theory of self-efficacy and seeing how it relates with resilience. Self-efficacy, a concept introduced by psychologist Albert Bandura was defined as beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations. Efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves and act. Consequently, it reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. The exercise of control over one's own consciousness is summed up well in

proverb: you cannot prevent the birds of worry and care from flying over your head. But you can stop them from building a nest in your hair (Bandura, 1995, 9).

Self-efficacy consists of four major drivers: mastery experiences, social modeling, social persuasion, and physiological responses. These are a combination of internal and external factors that result in a person assessing their own capability in an experience, and motivation to pursue the experience again in the future. Mastery experiences are a person's prior successes in similar types of activities. Social modeling involves the person having seen someone successfully execute a similar task and that behavior is imitated. Social persuasion involves encouragement and discouragement from another person. A person's physiological responses to stress also affect self-efficacy. Therefore, development of self-efficacy is a lifelong process as people continuously acquire new skills, experiences, and knowledge (Milner, 2017, 35).

Bandura hypothesized that the level of self-efficacy can be used to determine whether a task will be initiated, the amount of effort that will be expended and the level of persistence to complete the task when faced with obstacles and aversive experiences. Once a person has acquired a high level of self-efficacy belief, he will become motivated to invest more effort in his life. The process of creating and using self-efficacy beliefs is intuitive. An individual gets engaged in an event, interprets the results of one's actions, uses these interpretations to create and develop beliefs about one's capability to engage in subsequent behaviours in similar tasks and activities, and behaves according to the beliefs created (Meera & Jumana, 2015, 25)

## Measures and procedure

Our research instrument was composed of two different tools; the first is the socio-demographic profile. The second includes the questionnaire that studied resilience and how people successfully adapt to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. The questionnaires were distributed in Nigeria through computer assisted techniques. Unfortunately, we did not distribute the hard copy. Having a paper copy is another good method of reaching out to people and people will not complain of not being able to download the document. However, we decided to use the computer assisted technique because it is easier to reach a lot of people. Basically, we distributed the questionnaires with the help of four other Nigerian professors teaching in different universities. The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaires once they receive the questionnaire on their phones or computers. They were expected to submit it online after answering all the questions. In fact, they responded within a short period of time. It took majority of the respondents 10 minutes to complete the questionnaires but they were others that took up to 15 minutes to complete.

## Subjects

Our sample was composed of 343 individuals: 139 were males (40.5%) while 204 were females (59.5%). The age group in our questionnaire was distributed according to the following ages: 20-30 years (36.2%), 31-40 years (19%), 41-50 years (25.4%) and those over 51 years (19.5%). Nigeria is made up of ethnic groups and they include the following: Igbo (88.3%), Hausa (0.3%), Yoruba (3.2%), Others (8.2%). The religion of the individuals that filled the questionnaire: Christianity (99.7%), Islam (0.3%). The educational levels of the participants are: Nursery (0.3%), Secondary (2.3%), Bachelor degrees (57.1%), Masters (18.7%), Others (21.3%). Employment status includes: Full time (37.3%), Part time (6.1%), Self employed (12.8%), Student (29.2%), Unemployed (6.7%), others (7.9%). Residence: Urban (81.3%), Rural (18.7%). Those who filled the questionnaires comprised of the following: Those living in Nigeria (88%), Nigerians living abroad (12%). Level of income: Below Average (38.2%), Average (51.6%), Above Average (10.2%). Marital status of the individuals are: Married (39.7%), Divorce (0.6%), Cohabit (0.6%), Single (56.6%), Widowed (1.7%), separated (0.6%), Remarried (0.3%).

Find Below the charts representing some of the socio-demographic profile.

We tried to reach to a good number of persons in the country. We sent the link to different persons through different medium. But the number above are the persons who responded. Nigeria is composed of different types of people including the educated and people with little education. Those who received the link with little or no formal education at a school will find it hard to fill the questionnaire. It is pertinent to note that Nigeria has three largest ethnic groups, the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo who altogether represent 71 percent of the entire population. Other large ethnic groups include the Kanuri, who centered in Borno State; the Tiv, from the Benue Valley near Makurdi; the Ibibio and Efik in the Calabar area; the Edo from the Benin region; and the Nupe, who centered in the Bida area (Oladipo, 2013, 79).

## Results

Different questions on self-esteem were asked in the questionnaires to ascertain people's resilience and the results are shown below. The results below represent the most significant.

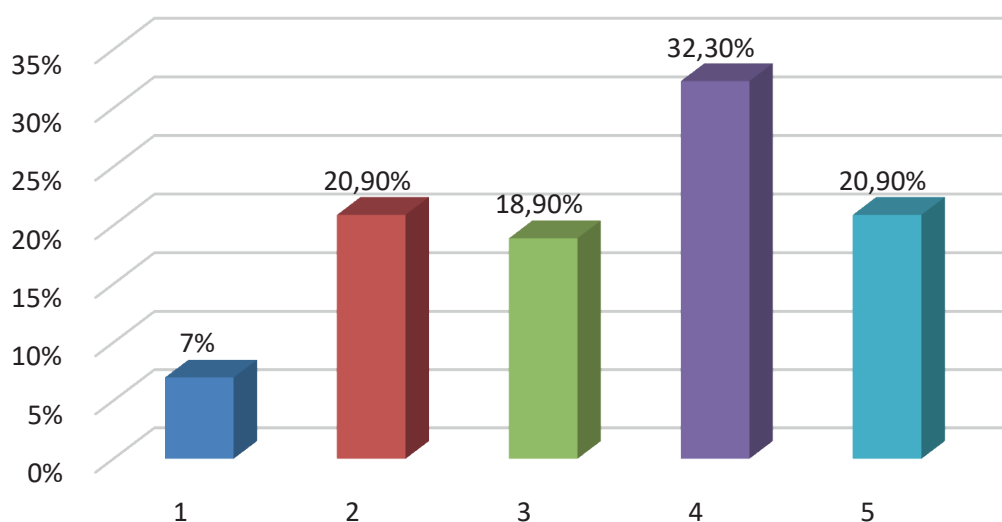


Diagram 1: I am calm in a crisis (343 responses)

Source: own elaboration.

The results show that individuals who answered Strongly Disagree are: (1) – 23 (7%); (2) – Disagree 72 (20.9%); (3) – Neither Agree nor Disagree 65 (18.9%); (4) – Agree 111 (32.3%); (5) – Strongly Agree 72 (20.9%). The result shows that a good number of those who answered the questionnaire calm their anxiety in the face of crisis. Obviously, by shifting the negative thoughts and activating memories of safety. Above all, self-efficacy beliefs help determine how much effort individuals will expend on critical times. How long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilience they will be in the face of adverse situations. Efficacy beliefs engender effort, persistence, and resilience, by which they can powerfully influence the level of accomplishment that one ultimately achieves (Karabenick & Urdan, 2010, 5). So, Nigerians try to rise above challenges and scale through tough times.

On the other hand, the result equally showed that a good number of those who answered the questionnaire are not calm in a crisis. Some individuals hardly stay focused and present under pressure especially in crisis period. Such individuals give up easily. In other words, their self-efficacy affects their capacity to respond to pressure and daily demands that life throws at them. It is likely that occasional failures in different occasions of their lives could contribute to this problem. In fact, when they experience negative thoughts and fears about their capabilities these affective reactions can lower self-efficacy perception and trigger additional stress and agitation that help ensure the inadequate performance they fear (Jarvela, 2011, 207).

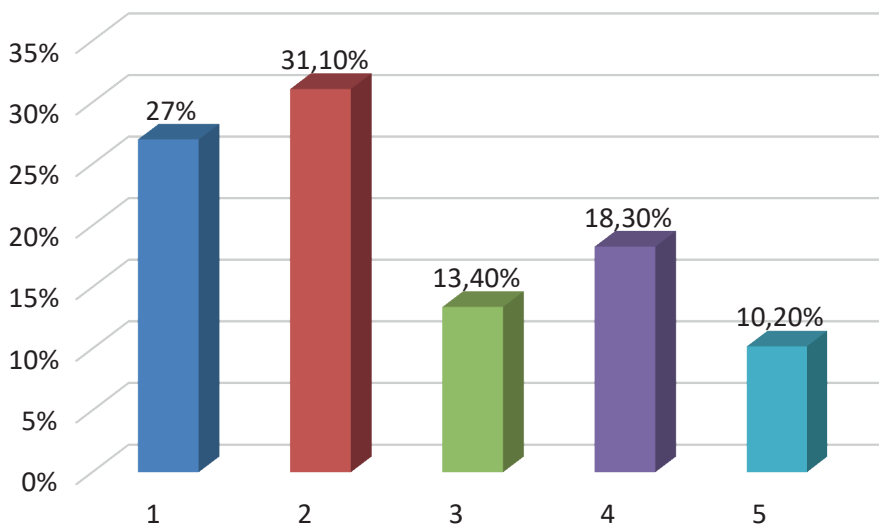


Diagram 2: I don't tend to avoid conflict (343 responses)

Source: own elaboration.

The results show that individuals who answered Strongly Disagree (1) are 93 (27%), Disagree (2) – 107 (31.1%), Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) – 46 (13.4%), Agree (4) – 63 (18.3%), Strongly Agree (5) – 34 (10.2%). The result shows that a good number of those who answered the questionnaire tend to avoid conflict while others do not avoid conflict. Facing, crisis, predicament and adversity is an inevitable part of life, and the ability to adapt and bounce back from these challenges is crucial to one's overall well-being and success. Without resilience, the individual risks becoming overwhelmed by adversity, crisis, and succumbing to feelings of hopelessness and despair. When faced with crisis, setbacks and obstacles, it is all too easy to become consumed by negative emotions and lose sight of our goals. Those who possess resilience are able to view adversity as a learning opportunity and a chance for growth (Sandua, 2023, 17). The resilient and self-efficacy of Nigerians help them weather through storms.

There are other results which we will present below. It reflects some of the responses of the respondents.

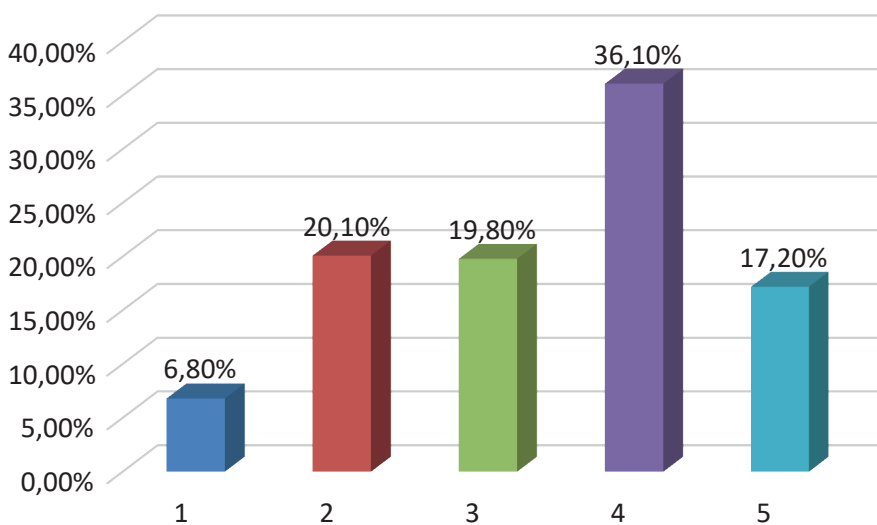


Diagram 3: I wouldn't myself as an anxious person

Source: own elaboration.

The results show that individuals who answered Strongly Disagree (1) are 6,8%); Disagree (2) – 20.1%; Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) – 19.8%; Agree (4) – 36.1%; Strongly Agree – 17.2%).

Resilience offers a strange challenge. It is not an attribute evaluated on a test. It evolves as life reveals. If no adversity occurs, it will not be possible to detect how resilient one is. It is only when confronted with hindrances, obstacles or environmental threats that resilience, or the lack of it, emerges (Pinto et al., 2018, 2). Developing a growth mindset involves adopting the belief that your abilities and qualities can be developed and improved through effort and learning. This mindset can be a powerful tool in helping one to build resilience and to cope with life's challenges (Acarsoy, 2023, 61).

All individuals will face some challenges to well-being and thriving throughout life. Learning to work these challenges is necessary for basic survival, but offers a powerful opportunity for enhancing growth and well-being. Resilience will not make one's problem to go away but resilience can give one the ability to see past them, find enjoyment in life and better handle stress. If one is not resilient as he or she aspires to be, one can develop and learn skills to become more resilient. Therefore, resilience is the ability to adapt to difficult situations. When stress, adversity or trauma strikes, one will experience anger, grief and pain, but at the same time be able to keep functioning both physically and psychologically (Souers, & Hall, 2016, 154).

### Possible factors that contribute to resilience

**a. Social Support:** Social support is described as psychological, physical and financial support accessible to an individual through social ties to other individuals, groups and larger community, which can provide a buffer against adverse life events, foster resilience and provide a positive resource for health (WHO, 2021, 31). Social support affects people's physical and mental health and behavioral patterns, and can effectively get help from their own support system. Social support can make individuals who were under pressure more easily obtain self-esteem and self-efficacy, enhance their coping ability and reduce the harm caused by stress, and resist the occurrence of negative emotions such as depressive systems. Social support has proven to be health promoting by strengthening individual's coping abilities, health, and quality of life while facing stress (Oakley, 2019, 32).

The social support of Nigerian families including nuclear and extended family is remarkable in showing love and affection. Social support can have a positive impact on emotional well-being. It can reduce stress levels, enhance mood, and provide a sense of comfort during difficult times. Knowing that one is not alone in their struggles can foster resilience and emotional strength. Engaging with supportive community can provide access to a wealth of knowledge and resources. Other's experiences and insights can help offer practical tips, coping strategies, and information on treatment options that individuals may not have considered. Again, social support helps one to connect with others who are experiencing similar challenges which can provide a sense of validation and understanding. Sharing experiences, frustrations, and triumphs with individuals who can help alleviate feelings of isolation and offer a sense of belonging (Chaddha, 2023, 23).

**b. Good Problem-solving skill:** Problem solving is part of everyday life. We face problems daily and we think of how to overcome barriers and reach our goals. However, the fundamental question is, what is problem solving? Problem solving ability is the ability of a person to participate in intellectual processing in order to understand and solve problems in which a solution process is not immediately apparent. It also entails a willingness to collaborate with certain governments in order to reach one's maximum potential as a responsible citizen (Naz et al., 2020, 1325).

Problem solving skills involve selecting tools and procedures that serve to overcome the difficulty. Problem solving is a complex process requiring a set of skills in which some are cognitive and some are affective. Cognitive aspect of problem solving is about reasoning, critical thinking, and decision making. Problem solving is also related with affective variables such as self confidence, communicative skills, motivation and self-efficacy. Problem solving has also a behavioral aspect, which is going to action and ability to implement generated solutions (Çetinkaya, 2018, 13). Most Nigerians do not know when they apply these skills in trying to solve their problems.

Resilient individuals exemplify interpersonal skills and problem solving ability in dealing with difficult situations. They display inbuilt strength and have the capability to withstand stress by holding a broader perspective and keeping high expectation in life. They seem to be proficient in dealing with the turmoil of life irrespective of the obstacles that occur due to the lack of resource available at their end. Resilient individuals cope with life catastrophe in spite of the anticipated effects of harsh conditions and are able to excel under both chronic as well as acute circumstances. In fact, resilient people have confidence in their ability for solving problems and coping with stress (Kumar, 2017, 92).

**c. Emotional intelligence:** The concept of emotional intelligence has gained popularity and accepted in recent years. The ability to appropriately identify, recognize and manage your emotions for one's own well-being as well-being of people around you is what is described as emotional intelligence (Singh, 2021, 144). In addition, emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage one's emotions as well as handle interpersonal relationships with people around you. People with high emotional intelligence are able to remain calm, control their tempers and manage a crisis with great skill. They are able to recognize their own emotions, what these emotions mean, how these emotions can influence others, and are then able to modulate their behavior based on this information (Kibbe & Chen, 2019, 29). Most Nigerians develop emotional intelligence skills that enable them to competently deal with the myriads of problems.

Resilient individuals with high emotional intelligence are able to think critically and evaluate different options when faced with adversity. They can consider the emotions and perspective of others, which allow them to make informed decisions that are not solely driven by their own emotions. This ability to approach challenges in a thoughtful and rational manner increases the likelihood of finding effective solutions and bouncing back from setbacks. Emotional intelligence also promotes effective communication skills, which are vital for building and maintaining relationships. Resilient individuals are able to express their emotions and thoughts openly and honestly, which fosters understanding and collaboration with others (Sandua, 2023, 102).

Furthermore, if you have high emotional intelligence then you are emotionally resilient. The other attributes of high emotional intelligence include feeling optimistic but also realistic and can allow certain amounts of pessimism. With high emotional intelligence, an individual will not internalize failure. The competence of being interested in other people's feelings and being comfortable talking about feelings is considered part of high emotional intelligence. If a person is not immortalized by worry then the person is likely to have high emotional intelligence. The ability to identify multiple concurrent feelings helps build high emotional intelligence (Miller, 2020, 34).

**d. Positive attitude:** positive attitude could be described in so many ways. In fact, it includes the following; a positive attitude is a state of mind that envisions and expects favorable results, the willingness to try doing new things, the belief that everything will turn out right, an attitude that helps one to see the good in people, a mental attitude that sees the good and accomplishments in one's life rather than the negative and the failures, a mindset that helps one to see and recognize opportunities, a positive thinking, mental attitude that focuses on the bright side of life, a mindset that uses the words, I can and it is possible (Swamy & Udayakumar, 2021, 235). The world is full of challenges and cultivating positive attitude in life is an effective tool to overcome the worries of life. Nigerians always try to approach the adversities with positive mindsets and remain hopeful for a better outcome.

Some of the factors that make someone resilient include positive attitude, optimism, the ability to regulate emotions, and the ability to see failure as a form of helpful feedback (Hemming, 2013, 73). A person with a positive state of mind does not dwell on the problems and difficulties of the past and equally does not let them dictate his or her life. Such a person will rather learn from the past and move on. People with positive outlook view life challenges and the situations they go through with confidence and equally are sure they can deal with them. In fact, people with a positive attitude will not let failure or obstacles stand in their way. They always try to find ways to overcome them. Above all, they are easier to get along with, are happy and spread joy around them (Swamy & Udayakumar, 2021, 235).

## Conclusion

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse federation of 36 autonomous states and the Federal Capital Territory. It has many natural resources like oil, natural gas, tin, coal, limestone, lead, zinc, etc yet the citizens still face a lot of challenges. The citizens still face problems of cybercrime, armed robbery, kidnapping, domestic crime, extrajudicial killings, herder-farmer conflicts, ritual killings, poor leadership, bad economy, high rate of unemployment, etc. Nigerians represent the definitions of resilience and self-efficacy. Despite what they pass through in the country they refuse to be defeated by the problems. Instead, they see light at the end of the tunnel. The citizens believe that tomorrow will be better.

The questions that were asked in the questionnaire reflects the problems of resilience and self-efficacy. Some of the questions including the following; In a difficult spot, I turn at once to what can be done to put things right, I try to control events rather than being a victim of circumstances, I manage my stress levels well, I feel confident and secure in my position, etc. The results show that most Nigerians have some traits like recoverability, flexibility, and adaptability. "Recoverability is the ability to quickly return to a previous state of well-being after encountering hardship. Flexibility is the emotional capability of being able to handle any unexpected shock or stress. Adaptability is the ability to accept a situation that may be stressful and logically handle it" (Kuze, 2022, 33).

Their resilience shows that they can survive under any condition. Nigerians develop resilience and self-efficacy to counteract the impact of adversity in the country. It is as if they know that a strong sense of self-efficacy is an important component of resilience. To rebound from setbacks and adversity, one needs the strength of self-efficacy beliefs. Building resilience and self-efficacy is an important aspect in one's life. Resilience is the ability to adapt and recover from adversity, while self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to successfully execute a specific task or behavior. Together, these traits can help one to develop the skills and mindset needed to overcome challenges in Nigeria and equally live a fulfilled life (Andrews, 2023, 220).

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