A Study on the Relationship between Psychological Resilience and Classroom Environment among English Majors

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Abstract: *This study aims to explore the relationship between psychological resilience and classroom environment among English major students. The research involved 318 third-year undergraduate English majors from universities in Inner Mongolia, employing a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative data were collected using the 10-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale and the Classroom Environment Scale. Subsequently, eight students were randomly selected for interviews. The findings reveal that both classroom environment and psychological resilience among English majors are at moderate levels, and a significant positive correlation exists between classroom environment and psychological resilience. Theoretically, this study enriches research in educational psychology for English majors. Practically, it provides concrete and actionable strategies for optimizing English classroom environments and fostering students' psychological resilience, thereby holding significant implications for enhancing the quality of English major education and teaching.*

Keywords: *psychological resilience; classroom environment; English major students*

Introduction

With the rapid development of positive psychology in the field of foreign language studies, psychological resilience has been gradually applied to foreign language teaching, demonstrating strong explanatory power regarding learners' psychology, motivation, and behavior [1]. As a positive individual characteristic within positive psychology, it serves as a significant internal driving force for foreign language learning. The language classroom is the primary platform where learners experience using the target language for interaction and communication; consequently, the classroom environment constitutes a crucial external factor influencing foreign language learning. Although scholars domestically and internationally have made some progress in researching classroom environment and psychological resilience, and existing studies have found that both classroom environment and psychological resilience can predict academic achievement and that they are positively correlated, research specifically on the relationship between classroom environment and psychological resilience remains relatively scarce. The mechanisms through which various elements of the classroom environment influence psychological resilience require further investigation.

1. Research on Psychological Resilience and Classroom Environment

Psychological resilience is one of the important topics in personality research within positive psychology, and it helps learners perceive adverse factors in the environment [2]. Wang et al. empirically found through multinational samples that interactive teaching (such as group collaboration and immediate teacher feedback) and curriculum flexibility significantly enhance students' resilience levels, particularly when coping with academic stress [3]. Other studies have found that social skills, empathy, and interpersonal relationships, as important factors of psychological resilience, can prompt students to actively seek help and support from teachers, peers, and parents [4], meaning that psychological resilience can enable students to regulate their psychosocial environment. The above studies indicate that the classroom environment can influence the effects of psychological resilience, that is, a supportive classroom (such as high teacher responsiveness and peer support) can enhance the promoting effect of psychological resilience on academic achievement. However, based on a database literature search, it is found that there is limited research on the relationship between classroom

environment and psychological resilience, and the mechanisms through which various elements of the classroom environment influence psychological resilience require further investigation.

2. Research Design

2.1 Research Instruments

To measure psychological resilience, the study employed the Chinese version of the 10-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale translated by Ye Zengjie et al. [5]. This scale consists of 10 items forming a single dimension and uses a 5-point scoring method. The internal consistency coefficient for this study was 0.965, and the validity KMO value was 0.933.

The student cooperation, teacher support, task orientation, and equity subscales of the classroom environment scale were adapted from the "What Is Happening in This Class?" questionnaire [6]. After adaptation, the classroom environment scale used in this study included 14 items and employed a 5-point scoring method. Through item analysis and factor analysis (KMO=0.861, x^2=1911.603, df=91, α=0.000), the overall internal consistency coefficient was 0.868.

To further verify the relationship between psychological resilience and classroom environment, the study conducted semi-structured interviews focusing on the four dimensions of classroom environment and psychological resilience. Through in-depth exchanges with research subjects, the study explored the current status and interrelationships between classroom environment and its four dimensions with psychological resilience. Eight subjects were randomly selected and designated as S1-S8 for analytical convenience.

2.2 Research Subjects

This study selected third-year undergraduate English majors from four universities in Inner Mongolia as the survey participants, with 318 valid respondents.

2.3 Testing Procedure and Data Processing

The testing was administered by class. All scales were distributed through Questionnaire Star, requiring students to carefully read the instructions and provide responses uniformly according to the guidelines. The completion of all scales took approximately 3 minutes. Subsequently, eight participants were randomly selected for interviews. The scale data were analyzed using SPSS 26 for descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

This study conducted descriptive statistical analyses on the classroom environment and its four dimensions (student cooperation, teacher support, task orientation, and equity) as well as psychological resilience to clarify the basic distribution characteristics of the research variables. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics (N=318)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Classroom Environment	1.85	4.94	3.2874	0.69056
Student Cooperation	1.33	5	3.2872	0.99207
Teacher Support	1.25	5	3.283	0.97711
Task Orientation	1	5	3.327	0.93382
Equity	1	5	3.2524	0.93256
Psychological Resilience	1.3	5	3.1925	0.98737

Based on the data presented in the table, the mean value for Classroom Environment is 3.2874, which falls within the moderate range, reflecting a relatively positive overall perception of the classroom environment. The standard deviation is 0.69056, indicating that the participants' evaluations of the classroom environment are relatively concentrated, with minimal divergence among individuals. The mean value for Student Cooperation is 3.2872, close to that of the overall classroom environment, suggesting a moderate level of collaborative experience overall. The standard deviation of 0.99207, approaching 1, indicates significant variation in students' cooperative experiences, with some participants reporting positive collaboration experiences while others reported weaker ones. The mean value for Teacher Support is 3.283, slightly lower than those for "Classroom Environment" and "Student Cooperation," yet still within the moderate range. The standard deviation of 0.97711, close to 1, reflects noticeable divergence in participants' perceptions of teacher support, likely associated with individual differences in teaching styles and interaction frequencies. The mean value for Task Orientation is 3.327, the highest among the six variables, indicating that students generally perceive classroom tasks as well-guided and purposeful. The relatively large standard deviation of 0.93382 shows significant individual differences in perceptions of task orientation. The mean value for the Equity dimension is 3.2524, within the moderate range. The substantial standard deviation of 0.93256 suggests clearly divergent experiences of classroom fairness among different participants.

The mean score for psychological resilience is 3.1925, indicating a moderate level. The standard deviation of 0.98737, approaching 1, suggests considerable individual differences in participants' psychological resilience levels. Interview data reveal that the strength of psychological resilience depends on the combination of proactive coping abilities and the quality of external support. Individuals with high resilience can flexibly employ coping strategies such as self-relaxation and reflective summarization, while also possessing stable support resources (e.g., family safety nets, teacher encouragement, peer understanding), enabling them to reframe setbacks as opportunities for growth (Interviews S3, S7, and S8). In contrast, those with low resilience rely on limited coping strategies (solely through self-suppression or avoidance) and lack effective support (e.g., difficulty contacting teachers, insufficient peer assistance), making them prone to negative self-assessment and causing their resilience to deteriorate from a "coil" to a "rusted coil" (S4, S6). Different support resources play distinct roles in fostering resilience: families serve as safety nets, providing unconditional emotional acceptance and acting as ultimate buffers against major setbacks (e.g., the paternal role mentioned by S4); teachers function as authoritative resources, whose encouragement and validation bolster students' confidence and self-assurance (S3, S7); peers operate as peer-level resources, offering empathetic understanding and skill-sharing (S5, S8), though their effectiveness is constrained by peers' own capabilities, often falling short of addressing deeper issues (S6 noted occasional perceptions of peers' lower competence).

In summary, the mean values of all variables fall within the range of 3.25 to 3.33 (with a scale midpoint of 3), indicating that the sample's perceptions or performances regarding "classroom environment" and its related dimensions (student cooperation, teacher support, task orientation, and equity) are generally at a moderate level. This reflects that the classroom settings from which the sample was drawn have achieved relatively favorable outcomes in these dimensions. Among these, the relatively highest mean score for "task orientation" may stem from the current educational emphasis on "task-driven learning," making it easier for students to perceive the goal-directed nature of tasks. The slightly lower mean scores for "psychological resilience" and "equity" suggest that these two dimensions could be focal points for subsequent educational interventions (such as optimizing classroom equity mechanisms and implementing psychological resilience training activities). The standard deviation for classroom environment is 0.69056, the smallest among all variables, indicating relatively consistent perceptions of the classroom environment across the sample with minimal individual differences. In contrast, the larger standard deviations for student cooperation (0.99207), teacher support (0.97711), equity (0.93256), and psychological resilience (0.98737) suggest more pronounced variations in individual experiences regarding "student cooperation" and "teacher support," which may be related to factors such as classroom atmosphere, teaching styles, and students' social attributes.

3.2 Correlation between Psychological Resilience and Classroom Environment and Its Dimensions

Table 2 Correlation between Psychological Resilience and Classroom Environment and Its Dimensions (N=318)

		Classroom Environment	Student Cooperation	Teacher Support	Task Orientation	Equity
Psychological Resilience	Correlation Coefficient	.434**	.345**	.358**	.340**	.324**
	Sig.(Two-Tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

*** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).*

As shown in Table 2, the significance values (Sig., two-tailed) for all dimensions are 0.000, which is less than 0.01, indicating statistically significant positive correlations between psychological resilience and both the overall classroom environment and its individual dimensions. Specifically, the correlation coefficients indicate a moderately strong positive correlation (r = 0.434) between psychological resilience and classroom environment. Meanwhile, psychological resilience demonstrates moderate positive correlations with student cooperation (r = 0.345), teacher support (r = 0.358), task orientation (r = 0.340), and equity (r = 0.324).

In this study, a moderately strong positive correlation (r=0.434) was observed between psychological resilience and classroom environment, indicating that a supportive and positive classroom environment (characterized by harmonious atmosphere, effective interaction, and adequate resources) can provide students with psychological safety and developmental resources, thereby fostering the development of psychological resilience. That is, when students consistently receive positive experiences in the classroom, they are more likely to form cognitive and emotional patterns centered around "manageable challenges and surmountable difficulties," which aligns closely with the core concept of psychological resilience—"adapting to adversity and recovering through growth."

The moderate positive correlations between psychological resilience and various classroom dimensions (student cooperation, teacher support, task orientation, and equity) reveal a "multi-path mechanism" through which the classroom influences psychological resilience. Peer cooperation serves as a crucial source of social support, where the processes of mutual assistance, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving help students accumulate experiences of "reliable interpersonal support," thereby enhancing their psychological resources when facing difficulties. Interview data indicate that student cooperation should focus on "effective collaboration" rather than "formal grouping." Specifically, significant efficacy differences exist in student cooperation, which can be categorized into three types: proactive collaborative, passive participatory, and resistant-dissenting.

Proactive Collaborative Type: Groups have clear divisions of labor, with members actively sharing ideas and mutually assisting in data gathering. For instance, S1, S3, S5, and S8 believe that collaboration reduces task load and broadens thinking, directly enhancing knowledge acquisition.

Passive Participatory Type: Students merely complete assigned tasks as required, lacking proactive communication and even relying on AI to handle core work. For example, S4 and S7 perceive collaboration as valueless, viewing it as merely "going through the motions."

Resistant-Dissenting Type: Students prefer independent learning. For instance, S2 and S6 believe that forced grouping easily leads to conflicts or that peers' abilities are inferior, making seeking help futile.

These phenomena demonstrate that the value of student cooperation depends not on the mere presence of collaboration but on the quality of collaboration. Only cooperation characterized by active communication, complementary abilities, and aligned goals can yield positive effects, whereas formalistic or forced collaboration may instead undermine learning initiative.

Teachers' emotional support (such as encouragement and care) and instrumental support (such as knowledge guidance and strategy suggestions) directly provide students with methods and psychological energy to cope with challenges, buffering the psychological impact of adversity.

Interview data also indicate that all interviewees emphasized the importance of teacher support, with targeted responsiveness being perceived as more valuable than generalized coverage. The effectiveness of teacher support is directly related to its specificity and accessibility. For instance, S1, S7, and S8 highlighted that high-efficacy support includes personalized guidance (such as line-by-line essay corrections and targeted explanations of semantic issues), proactive attention (such as checking in based on test performance or sharing key points before class), and emotional safety nets (such as not criticizing students for wrong answers). Such support directly enhances students' learning confidence. In contrast, low-efficacy support includes generalized feedback (as S3 mentioned, receiving only scores without error identification leads to self-doubt), poor accessibility (S6 noted difficulties in contacting teachers outside class), perfunctory routines (S4 reported help lacking specificity), and even counterproductive interference (S4 and S6 both mentioned teachers discussing irrelevant content in class). Such support not only fails to facilitate learning but may also diminish students' trust. This indicates that students' expectations of teacher support have evolved from mere availability to quality, with precise alignment to student needs, proactive intervention, and emotional warmth being the core elements for effective teacher support.

Clear task orientation enables students to understand their goals and pathways, thereby reducing the anxiety and frustration caused by task ambiguity. Interview data indicate that goal clarity and alignment with assessment are crucial in task orientation. The effectiveness of classroom tasks is reflected in their objective clarity and practical relevance. S2, S3, and S8 mentioned that clearly defined core objectives before class (via PowerPoint presentations or WeChat group announcements), appropriate matching of difficulty and workload (group tasks for heavy loads, individual work for lighter ones), and direct connections to examinations and evaluations (review materials covering test points) help students focus on key content and improve efficiency, directly reducing learning anxiety. This validates the direct role of task orientation in fostering psychological resilience. Conversely, vague objectives (teachers proceeding without clarifying key points), excessive formalism (group assignments merely to reduce grading workload), and disconnection from learning (classes filled with irrelevant content) lead to wasted time and distraction, even causing students to question the value of the classroom (as noted by S4 and S6). This demonstrates that students' core need for classroom tasks is utility. Task design must closely follow the logical chain of "what to learn, how to learn, and what will be assessed" to exert a positive guiding effect.

A fair classroom atmosphere (including equitable opportunities and impartial evaluation) enables students to perceive rules as predictable and efforts as rewarding. This sense of order and controllability mitigates negative emotions arising from perceived "unfairness," thereby fostering more proactive approaches to overcoming difficulties. Interview data reveal differences in students' perceptions of fairness, categorized as process-oriented versus outcome-oriented. S1, S2, S6, and S8 generally expressed approval for equal opportunity mechanisms such as raising hands to ask questions, lottery-based presentations, and openly announced competitions, viewing these as self-achievable opportunities. In contrast, S3 demonstrated heightened sensitivity to issues like unexplained grading variations and opaque evaluation criteria, indicating that even with procedural fairness, lack of transparency in outcomes can still trigger doubts about equity. This suggests that establishing classroom fairness requires balancing equal opportunities in processes with transparency in outcomes. Merely ensuring equal opportunities is insufficient; it must be reinforced by clarifying evaluation standards and publicly explaining grading discrepancies to strengthen perceptions of outcome fairness.

Conclusion

The study utilized descriptive statistics to determine that both classroom environment and psychological resilience among English major students are at moderate levels. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between classroom environment (including its dimensions) and psychological resilience, suggesting that the classroom serves as an important setting for cultivating students' psychological resilience. Optimizing multidimensional characteristics of the classroom can thereby foster the development of students' psychological resilience. These findings provide direct evidence for nurturing psychological resilience in classroom contexts. Educators can systematically enhance students' psychological resilience by improving multiple dimensions of the classroom environment, such as designing structured collaborative learning activities to enrich cooperative experiences; strengthening awareness and skills in "supportive interactions" through teacher training; clarifying objectives and breaking down steps in task design to enhance task orientation; and establishing transparent, equitable classroom rules and evaluation systems to ensure perceived fairness. Such classroom interventions not only directly improve instructional quality but

also reinforce the foundation for developing psychological resilience through the "environment-psychology" connection. While this study verifies the relationship and causal influence between classroom environment (including its dimensions) and psychological resilience, future research could employ longitudinal tracking (observing academic performance changes before and after classroom interventions), experimental designs (comparing high/low classroom environment groups), and incorporate variables like learning strategies and motivation to further elucidate the internal mechanisms through which classrooms influence psychological outcomes, thereby deepening the research.

Fund Projects

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