# Resilience Redefined: A Comparative Analysis of Physical Self – Efficacy in working and Nonworking Women

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**Abstract**

*This study examined differences in physical self-efficacy and resilience between working and non-working women aged 40-60 years, and explored the relationship between these constructs. A quantitative design was employed with 120 participants (75 working, 45 non-working) using the Physical Self-Efficacy Scale and Resilience Scale. Results revealed no significant difference in physical self-efficacy between working and non-working women ($t = -0.436$, $p = .664$). However, working women demonstrated significantly higher resilience ($M = 140.45$) compared to non-working women ($M = 132.07$; $t = 2.680$, $p = .009$). A weak positive correlation was observed between physical self-efficacy and resilience ($r = 0.251$, $p < .01$). The findings suggest that while employment status does not influence physical self-efficacy, it contributes to greater resilience, and confidence in physical abilities is associated with enhanced adaptive coping. These results have implications for women-centered mental health interventions and health promotion programs.*

***Keywords**: Resilience, Physical Self-efficacy, Working Women, Non-Working Women*

## Introduction

According Windle (2010), resilience is "the process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma." Contemporary perspectives conceptualize resilience as a dynamic developmental process shaped by continuous interactions between individuals and their socio-ecological environments (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Alternatively, resilience has also been viewed as an outcome characterized by

psychological well-being, successful adaptation, and the absence of psychopathology following adversity (Masten, 2001). Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive framework for understanding adaptive functioning.

A key psychological factor associated with adaptation is self-efficacy, derived from Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations." Self-efficacy exists across various domains, including academic, social, occupational, and physical self-efficacy. Physical self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in successfully performing and managing physical tasks involving strength, endurance, coordination, and motor skills (Bandura, 1977).

Research indicates that physical self-efficacy positively predicts physical activity participation and contributes to subjective well-being through increased motivation and perceived competence (Guo et al., 2024). Subjective perceptions of physical fitness have also been associated with reduced psychosomatic complaints and improved psychosocial functioning (Baceviciene et al., 2019). Furthermore, studies have reported gender differences in perceived physical ability and self-presentation confidence, often influenced by sociocultural expectations, body image standards, and gender norms (Godin & Shephard, 1985).

The relationship between resilience and physical self-efficacy is closely interconnected. Physical activity contributes to the development of self-efficacy while simultaneously strengthening resilience. Research suggests that psychological resilience partially mediates the relationship between physical activity and physical self-efficacy (Qiu et al., 2025). Consequently, individuals with higher resilience are more likely to maintain physical activity and develop stronger confidence in their physical capabilities.

Employment status plays a significant role in shaping women's daily experiences, opportunities, and coping mechanisms. At the same time, working women frequently face the challenge of balancing occupational responsibilities with traditional domestic expectations. Conversely, non-working women primarily engaged in unpaid domestic work may benefit from stronger family involvement and community support, while also encountering limitations related to autonomy and mobility. These differing life experiences may influence both resilience and physical self-efficacy.

Middle-aged women represent an important yet understudied population in resilience research, particularly regarding physical dimensions of resilience. Understanding physical self-efficacy among working and non-working women may contribute to a broader understanding of adaptive functioning and inform interventions aimed at promoting psychological well-being, healthy aging, and resilience.

## Background of the Study

Although considerable research has examined resilience and general self-efficacy, studies focusing specifically on physical self-efficacy among women remain limited. Furthermore, comparative investigations of physical self-efficacy between working and non-working women are scarce. Existing literature has largely concentrated on psychological resilience, occupational stress, or general well-being, leaving a gap in understanding the role of physical competence beliefs among these groups.

## Research Gap

While extensive research investigates the cognitive components of resilience and general self-efficacy, specialized inquiries into the physical self-efficacy of women remain scarce. Furthermore, comparative analyses focusing on physical self-efficacy differences between working and non-working women are distinctly lacking. Existing literature heavily prioritizes psychological resilience or workplace stress, leaving a critical gap regarding the significance of physical competence beliefs in these populations.

## Statement of the Problem

The objective of this study is to investigate whether a statistically significant difference exists in physical self-efficacy between working and non-working women. By executing this comparative analysis, the study seeks to expand and redefine the contemporary understanding of resilience through a holistic lens that bridges physical and psychological adaptation.

## Definition of Key Terms

- Resilience**:** The capacity of an individual to adapt positively and recover effectively when confronting stress, adversity, or disruptive life events (Masten, 2001).
- Physical Self-Efficacy**:** An individual's subjective belief in their capability to successfully execute physical tasks and effectively manage physical challenges (Ryckman, Robbins, Thornton, & Cantrell, 1982).

- Working Women: Women actively engaged in formal, paid employment outside of the domestic sphere during the period of investigation (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2016).
- Non-Working Women**:** Women not engaged in paid employment whose primary responsibilities center around unpaid domestic labor and household management (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2016).

## Review of Literature

Women's self-efficacy, particularly in the physical domain, has been examined in relation to employment status, resilience, stress, and well-being. Employment is often associated with greater autonomy and perceived competence, whereas non-working women may experience different psychosocial advantages. Understanding these differences is important for examining physical self-efficacy among working and non-working women.

Zaeb (2015) compared self-esteem among working and non-working women in Pakistan and found that non-working women reported significantly higher self-esteem. The findings suggested that while employment offers financial independence, work-related social and cultural stressors may negatively influence self-perception.

Cassidy (2015) highlighted the importance of self-efficacy in resilience building, demonstrating that individuals with higher self-efficacy showed greater resilience when facing adversity.

Research has also linked self-efficacy with motivation and performance. Tian, Wang, Zhang, and Wen (2019) reported a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy, work engagement, and job performance among employees in China, indicating that self-efficacy enhances persistence and achievement-related behaviors.

## Method

The study is entitled "Resilience Redefined: A comparative analysis of physical self-efficacy in working and non-working women"

## Research Design

This study employed a quantitative comparative correlational design to examine differences and relationships between working and non-working women. Data were collected

through standardized self-report questionnaires measuring physical self-efficacy and resilience. The design enabled comparison of mean scores between the two groups and assessment of the relationship between physical self-efficacy and resilience.

**Research Question**

- Is there any major difference in physical self-efficacy between working and non-working women?

**Objectives**

- To evaluate the extent of physical self-efficacy in working women.
- To measure the level of physical self-efficacy among non-working women.
- To compare the physical self-efficacy among working and non-working women.
- To conduct research on physical self-efficacy as a measure of female resilience.

**Hypotheses**

- **H1:** There will be a significant difference in physical self-efficacy between working and non-working women.
- **H2:** There will be a significant difference in PPA between working and non-working women.
- **H3:** There will be a significant difference in PSPC between working and non-working women.
- **H4:** There will be a significant difference in resilience between working and non-working women.
- **H5:** There will be a significant correlation between physical self-efficacy and resilience among women.

**Sample**

Purposive sampling was used to select 120 middle-aged women ($N = 120$) from the local community, consisting of 75 working and 45 non-working individuals aged 40 to 60 years. This age bracket represents a crucial developmental stage characterized by transitions in life responsibilities, health, and coping roles. All participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured prior to data collection.

### Variables

- **Independent Variable:** Employment Status (Working vs. Non-Working).
- **Dependent Variables:** Physical Self-Efficacy (including subscales PPA and PSPC) and Resilience.

### Significance of the Study

The present study is important in that it attempts to reconceptualize the construct of resilience through the inclusion of physical self-efficacy as a core correlate. Distinguishing between working and non-working environments offers direct insight into the role of occupational status on physical self-beliefs, providing applicable blueprints for targeted, women-centered counseling interventions and wellness programs.

### Assessment Tools

Three instruments were used in the study: a Socio-Demographic Data Sheet for participant information, the Resilience Scale (RS-25; Wagnild & Young) to assess resilience, and the Physical Self-Efficacy Scale (PSE) to measure physical self-belief through Perceived Physical Ability (PPA) and Physical Self-Presentation Confidence (PSPC). Both standardized scales possess strong reliability and validity and are appropriate for adult female populations.

### Procedure for Data Collection

Ethical procedures were maintained throughout the study. After providing informed consent, eligible participants completed the Socio-Demographic Data Sheet, Resilience Scale (RS-25), and Physical Self-Efficacy Scale (PSE) either in person or through secure Google Forms. The collected responses were screened, validated, and coded for statistical analysis.

### Statistical Analysis

Raw responses were computed through SPSS following official testing manuals. Descriptive baselines (means, standard deviations, frequencies) defined the socio-demographic features of the group. Hypothesized variances were calculated utilizing independent-samples t-tests across a 0.05 alpha threshold, while Pearson’s product-moment coefficients calculated direct associative trends linking physical self-efficacy parameters against resilience metrics.

## Result & Discussion

**Table 1:** ***Tests of Normality for Resilience and Physical Self-Efficacy***

| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| Physical self efficacy | .071 | 120 | .200* | .991 | 120 | .611 |
| Resilience | .060 | 120 | .200* | .985 | 120 | .216 |

**. Lower bound of the true significance.*

A test of normality was conducted to determine whether the variables followed a normal distribution. As shown in Table 1, the significance values for both variables are greater than 0.05 across the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk assessments. Specifically, resilience yielded a Shapiro-Wilk score of .985 ($p = .216$), and physical self-efficacy demonstrated a score of .991 ($p = .611$). Because these levels do not deviate significantly from standard normal distributions, parametric statistical options were safely approved.

**Table 2:** ***Difference in Physical Self Efficacy and Resilience among Working and Non-Working Women***

| Variables | Working status | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Df | T-Value | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Physical Self Efficacy** | Working | 75 | 82.23 | 7.329 | 118 | -.436 | .664 |
| | Non-Working | 45 | 82.84 | 7.628 | | | |
| **PPA** | Working | 75 | 35.53 | 4.157 | 118 | -1.331 | .186 |
| | Non-Working | 45 | 36.56 | 4.020 | | | |
| **PSPC** | Working | 75 | 46.69 | 5.984 | 118 | .345 | .731 |
| | Non-Working | 45 | 46.29 | 6.341 | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Resilience** | Working | 75 | 140.45 | 17.952 | 118 | 2.680 | .009* |
| | Non-Working | 45 | 132.07 | 15.731 | | | |

*p < .05*

Independent sample t-tests revealed no significant differences between working and non-working women in Physical Self-Efficacy (t = -0.436, p = .664), Perceived Physical Ability (t = -1.331, p = .186), or Physical Self-Presentation Confidence (t = .345, p = .731), leading to the rejection of H1, H2, and H3; these findings support Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, which posits that self-efficacy is shaped by mastery experiences, emotional states, and social influences rather than employment status alone. Working women (M = 140.45, SD = 17.952) demonstrated significantly higher resilience than non-working women (M = 132.07, SD = 15.731), with a statistically significant difference (t = 2.680, p = .009), thereby supporting H4. This finding aligns with Vemuri and Sahai (2020) who reported that workplace experiences enhance resilience through greater exposure to stress management, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and social interaction.

**Table 3:** ***Correlation between Physical Self-Efficacy and Resilience***

| | | **Resilience** | **Physical Self Efficacy** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Resilience** | Pearson Correlation | 1 | |
| **2. Physical Self Efficacy** | Pearson Correlation | .251** | 1 |

** *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Pearson correlation analysis verified the interactive links between both constructs (Table 3). A weak but highly significant positive correlation was established ($r = .251$, $p < .01$), supporting **H5**.

**Summary**

The study examined physical self-efficacy and resilience among 120 middle-aged women (75 working and 45 non-working). Results showed no significant differences between

working and non-working women in physical self-efficacy, PPA, or PSPC; however, working women reported significantly higher resilience. A weak but significant positive correlation was found between physical self-efficacy and resilience, suggesting that while employment status may enhance resilience, physical self-efficacy is influenced by factors beyond occupational role.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that employment status does not significantly influence physical self-efficacy, as working and non-working women reported similar levels of confidence in their physical abilities and appearance. However, working women demonstrated significantly higher resilience, indicating that workplace experiences may strengthen adaptive coping abilities. A significant positive relationship between physical self-efficacy and resilience was also observed, suggesting that greater confidence in physical capabilities is associated with stronger psychological adaptability.

## Limitations of the study

The study has certain limitations. The sample size was limited to 120 participants, and online data collection may have restricted participation from women without internet access, affecting generalizability. In addition, the use of self-report measures may have introduced response bias, and the study did not consider other factors such as age, socioeconomic status, physical health, and social support that may influence physical self-efficacy and resilience.

## Implications

The findings highlight the importance of promoting physical self-efficacy and resilience through holistic interventions, signaling a critical need for mental health professionals and policymakers as resilience was higher among working women and positively associated with physical self-efficacy.

## Recommendations

Methodologically, future research should utilize larger, probability-based samples and mixed-methods designs to enhance generalizability and control for confounding socio-economic variables over time. Practically and socially, community organizations must fund localized vocational workshops and resilience-building programs that offer non-working women alternative pathways to autonomy, structured engagement, and personal growth.

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