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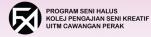
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# FROM DIGITAL LITERACY TO DIGITAL RESILIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

a chapter by

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#### Introduction

The term "digital literacy skills" is defined as the set of abilities related to utilizing technology for tasks such as finding, evaluating, organizing, creating, and communicating information. It also involves the development of digital citizenship and the responsible use of technology. This definition has been embraced by many educational, workforce, and digital inclusion initiatives. However, what's notably absent from this definition is the capacity to navigate digital transformation and the continuous acquisition of new technological proficiencies. This aspect has become a pressing concern for adult learners, educators, and program leaders, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the evolving nature of work. Learners have emphasized the necessity for specific digital skills to effectively use the platforms required for both formal and informal work, including opportunities in entrepreneurship and the gig economy. Hence, the concept of "digital resilience" has emerged, which can be defined as the possession of awareness, skills, adaptability, and confidence necessary to empower individuals as users of emerging technologies and to adjust to the evolving demands of digital skills. Digital resilience enhances the ability to tackle challenges, learn new skills, navigate digital transformations, and engage actively in both society and the economy.

# **Digital Resilience**

In today's information-driven society, digital technologies are pervasive in various aspects of life, including the field of school education. Students often encounter risks or threats when engaging in online experiences. Digital

resilience is a crucial skill that enables individuals to identify and effectively manage these risks and threats they may encounter while socializing, exploring, or working online. It plays a significant role in addressing the challenges posed by digital technology. Nevertheless, thus far, the concept of digital resilience among individuals in the educational sector has not been thoroughly analysed (Sun H et al., 2022). This concept of digital resilience has been significantly developed and delved into, particularly in the realm of human psychobehavioural aspects. In a study by Eri et al. in 2021, the theory of social-ecological resilience was extended to the context of digital technology. They defined digital resilience as capacity of learners to overcome technological challenges and persevere in their online learning endeavours while adapting to the evolving trends in higher education. It's worth noting that digital resilience initially gained prominence in higher education settings, largely due to the emergence of massive open online courses and open-access publishing.

While the advantages of utilizing online learning and technology to uphold daily routines are evident, an increased online presence also raises the likelihood of encountering challenges. This situation prompts consideration of how aware students are of their digital resilience. The potential risks, including problematic digital behaviour leading to burnout, mental health distress due to digital failures, and unhealthy interactions on social media such as cyberbullying and cybercrime, exert significant pressure on individuals. Consequently, there is a necessity to empower individuals to cultivate digital resilience and comprehend ways to address psychological concerns, thereby enhancing their digital resilience (Sharma et al., 2021).



Nonetheless, there is often a general overlap between the concepts of "digital literacy" and "digital resilience" (Reynolds et al., 2018). Tran et al. (2020) demonstrated a positive correlation between digital resilience and digital literacy, highlighting the importance of digital literacy as a crucial skill for future digital citizens and its association with higher levels of resilience. Budak et al. (2021) discovered that the digital literacy required for attaining digital resilience is not universally applicable and varies based on the context of the stressful event. However, it was identified as a factor influencing individual resilience in the online realm. In essence, digital literacy focuses on the effective and ethical comprehension and utilization of digital technologies, while digital resilience pertains to the abilities to access, use, comprehend, and disseminate effective digital resources and counter common manipulative techniques, particularly those related to behavioural and attitudinal changes. Hence, digital resilience entails recognizing when an individual might be at risk online, understanding how to seek help, acquiring knowledge and skills experiences, having the ability to recover with appropriate support, and moving forward through self-efficacy in the face of challenges.

# **Comprehending Online Threats**

Individuals can identify and understand the risks or threats online, allowing them to make informed decisions about the digital space they navigate. Various students perceive different risks or threats in digital learning environments, such as problematic online cyberbullying, behaviours, and webinar failures. For instance, webinar fatigue creates a sense of pressure for students to excessively attend online meetings and sessions due to peer pressure, perceived stress to upskill, and anxiety stemming from the "fear of missing out" (Sharma et al., 2021). Moreover, the prolonged duration spent on digital platforms poses a substantial risk, capable of inducing significant mental health distress among students. This, in consequence, can affect an individual's lifestyle, influencing factors like their sleep schedule and appetite. In addition, studies have indicated comprehending unhealthy online threats is a

crucial initial step in constructing digital resilience (Sharma et al., 2021).

# **Self-Efficacy with Technology**

Moreover, in the process of enhancing students' digital skills and literacy, fostering a sense of self-efficacy emerges as a crucial element in preparing them to confront digital challenges. Self-efficacy is frequently explored in the realms of educational and developmental research due to its significant predictive role in key outcomes, including student motivation, achievement, and overall well-being. Described as a robust stress-resistance resource, selfefficacy becomes particularly valuable after navigating challenges or when individuals have the confidence to navigate the digital world securely. In addition to cultivating a broad sense of self-efficacy, it's equally crucial for students to feel confident in their capacity to navigate their experiences with new technologies (Angela et al., 2023). This domain-specific selfefficacy in technology has been extensively examined in various contexts, encompassing individuals' perceptions of their proficiency with computers and social media (Angela et al., 2023). While often linked with general selfefficacy, students can significantly differ in their perceived ability to tackle challenges related to computers and technology, such as managing privacy and self-presentation online. Indeed, students with a heightened sense of selfefficacy in technology are more inclined to view the Internet as a functional tool to achieve their goals as a set of beliefs correlated with improved personal and social outcomes (Angela et al., 2023).

# The Impact of Individual Internal Factors

It's crucial to recognize that individual internal factors also play a significant role in facing challenges and activating resiliency attributes. These internal factors, encompassing digital literacy, primarily involve basic technical knowledge and skills, as well as psychological traits of coping. These factors assist individuals in building resilience and addressing the impact of adversity or disruptive events. Digital literacy, in this context, can be utilized to assess information. reflecting an individual's capabilities to manage their life

work/learning tasks using digital technologies (Reynolds et al., 2018).

Moreover, individuals require psychological resources to develop resilience in the face of threats from the online and offline world. These resources include self-control (Bluteau et al., 2020), self-reflection (Al-Abdulghani et al., 2021), self-confidence (Eri et al., 2021), selfefficacy (Al-Abdulghani et al., 2021), and selfesteem (Kaewseenual et al., 2021) as positive psychological traits. From an individual perspective, digital resilience is comprehended as a proactively interactive concept that deals with the amalgamation of individuals' severe risk experiences with different relatively favourable psychological resources.

To sum up, under the influence of digital resilience, students' behavioural patterns evolve towards positive performance, elucidating the impact of digital resilience on sustained and constructive long-term learning behaviour. Primarily, digital resilience fosters a sense of safety, constituting a vital aspect of healthy behaviour. Students perceive it as essential to navigate the web or utilize online platforms because they possess the skills and confidence to engage safely in the online realm. Moreover, students who actively and responsibly engage in the online environment can use social media effectively, safely, and constructively. Additionally, digital resilience motivates students to achieve better and embrace new online challenges within the learning process. Digitally resilient students maintain motivation, achievement, and performance in their studies while effectively navigating and overcoming stressful events. Those students who cultivate a habit of controlling online behaviours are better protected against internet addiction, allocate more time to individual studies' development, ultimately enhancing learning and work, and improving academic achievement.

Consequently, in the presence of digital resilience, students undergo a gradual and positive long-term behavioural change, particularly in the realm of lifelong learning.

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