

A Study on the Mechanisms and Implementation Strategies for Building Resilience among Undergraduate Students at Local Universities

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of increasingly fierce social competition, the “lying flat” mindset has quietly taken hold among undergraduates at local universities, reflecting their lack of resilience in the face of adversity. Based on the actual manifestations of the “lying flat” phenomenon among undergraduates at local universities, this paper systematically analyzes the mechanisms underlying resilience. It proposes strategies and supporting measures for fostering resilience across five key areas: government management, family environment, school education, online media regulation, and personal capacity building. The aim is to provide practical guidance and reference for addressing the “lying flat” challenge among undergraduates at local universities and enhancing the quality of talent cultivation in these institutions.

Keywords: Local universities; Undergraduates; Resilience; Mechanisms of action; Implementation strategies

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1. Introduction

As the backbone of the higher education system, local universities bear the important mission of cultivating applied and multidisciplinary talent to support regional economic and social development. The quality of their talent cultivation directly impacts the regional talent supply and the vitality of social development. In recent years, the “lying flat” phenomenon has been spreading among undergraduate students at local universities, manifesting as a perfunctory attitude toward academics and a lack of motivation to excel; passivity and apathy in daily life, coupled with an avoidance of competition; and confusion regarding career planning, along with a reluctance to strive for success ^[1,2]. “Lying flat” ideology not only undermines the ideals and convictions of undergraduates at local universities, weakens their spirit of striving, and harms their physical and mental health, but also exacerbates disparities between the capable and the less capable, becoming a prominent issue that constrains the improvement of talent cultivation quality at local universities.

The emergence of the “lying flat” phenomenon among undergraduates at local universities is not a coincidence, but rather the result of the combined influence of various factors, including the individual, the family, the school, and society. From an individual perspective, the core issue lies in undergraduates’ lack of resilience—when faced with academic pressures, job competition, and interpersonal conflicts, they lack effective psychological coping mechanisms, a positive mindset, and a resilient character. Consequently, they struggle to recover quickly from setbacks and opt to “lie flat” as a way to escape reality and avoid risks. Compared to students at top-tier universities, undergraduates at local universities face more intense academic competition and greater employment pressure. Coupled with insufficient family support for some students and the corrosive influence of negative online content, these factors have further fueled the spread of the “lying flat” mindset. Conducting in-depth research on the mechanisms and cultivation strategies for resilience among undergraduates at local universities and finding solutions to the “lying flat” dilemma has become a practical necessity for promoting the physical and mental well-being of undergraduates and serving the high-quality economic and social development of the region.

2. Literature review

Resilience refers to an individual’s ability to actively adapt to and cope with stress, trauma, and adversity^[3]. Research on resilience began in the early 1970s, initially focusing primarily on children and adolescents to explore the mechanisms underlying their development in adverse environments. As research progressed, the study of resilience gradually expanded into the field of higher education, with research primarily focusing on the following areas.

2.1. Factors influencing the development of resilience

Richardson pointed out that when external risk factors act upon an individual, the individual’s own protective factors are activated, adjusted, and reorganized, leading to three possible outcomes: first, excessive stress may damage psychological mechanisms, resulting in behavioral imbalance; second, the individual may withstand the stress, restoring physical and mental balance; third, the individual’s potential is unleashed, enabling them not only to overcome adversity but also to achieve personal growth^[4]. Thus, resilience is the result of stimulation and conscious choice during the interaction between the individual and the environment^[5]. Scholars have found that the development of resilience among undergraduate students at local universities is influenced by multiple factors, including individual factors (such as personality, self-confidence, and self-efficacy), family factors (such as family support and parenting styles), school factors (such as faculty quality, campus culture, and academic support), social factors (such as social support and the employment environment), student quality, and online information^[6–8]. Among these, excessive academic pressure, intense competition in the job market, insufficient family support, and the corrosive effects of negative online information are the primary causes of their insufficient resilience and the emergence of the “lying flat” phenomenon^[9].

2.2. Strategies for cultivating resilience

In the study of resilience, scholars have moved away from the “crisis-focused” and “therapeutic” approaches traditionally used to address psychological issues, instead adopting a positive perspective aimed at unlocking young people’s potential. Currently, resilience interventions are widely applied in youth education and have

yielded significant results. Most scholars believe that the cultivation of resilience among undergraduates should be approached from the perspective of cultural diversity. The strategies employed primarily include: First, shifting the conceptual framework. Traditional mental health education often adopts a problem-oriented perspective, focusing on individuals' weaknesses and negative influences. Tan, however, argued that resilience development should focus on the positive aspects of the individual, offering constructive feedback on undergraduates' efforts and transforming problems and crises into opportunities to unlock their potential^[5]. Second, establishing a crisis buffer system. Tong contended that when faced with crises and stress, undergraduates require a buffering process to adjust their expectations and goals in order to adapt to an ever-changing environment^[10]. Third, a system should be established to stimulate and cultivate resilience among college students, thereby enhancing their psychological well-being. This includes offering courses on resilience, establishing psychological counseling and support systems, and guiding parents to adopt appropriate educational perspectives^[11,12].

Although scholars have conducted extensive research on fostering resilience among college students, when viewed in the context of the "lying flat" phenomenon among undergraduates at local universities, existing research still has some shortcomings: First, the research lacks specificity regarding its target population. Most studies focus on college students as a whole, paying insufficient attention to the specific group of undergraduates at local universities. This overlooks the distinctive characteristics of these institutions and the demographic traits of their undergraduates, resulting in cultivation strategies that lack targeted approaches. Second, there is insufficient coordination among the entities responsible for fostering resilience. Most existing studies emphasize the institutional education level, paying insufficient attention to the roles of stakeholders such as the government, families, and online media, and thus failing to establish a multi-stakeholder collaborative cultivation system. This paper takes the "lying flat" phenomenon among undergraduates at local universities as its starting point, focuses on the core issue of resilience cultivation, reveals the mechanisms through which resilience can resolve the "lying flat" dilemma, and constructs a five-pronged resilience cultivation system comprising "government-family-school-online media-individual."

3. Mechanisms underlying resilience among undergraduate students at local universities

As a core competency that enables individuals to cope with setbacks and resist negative mindsets, resilience plays a role in helping undergraduates overcome the "lying flat" dilemma and fostering their growth through a logical chain that operates across three dimensions—cognitive, emotional, and behavioral—involving the activation of resilience resources, the cultivation of resilience traits, and the translation of these into resilient behaviors.

3.1. Correcting negative thoughts at the cognitive level and cultivating a positive mindset

When faced with challenges such as academic pressure, intense competition in the job market, and unmet family expectations, some undergraduates at local universities are prone to developing negative perceptions—such as "effort is futile," "the future is uncertain," and "self-doubt"—which can lead them to escape reality and adopt a perfunctory attitude. At the cognitive level, resilience primarily functions by activating an individual's internal resources of resilience, thereby helping them overcome the cognitive dilemma of "lying flat." On the one hand, resilience helps students view setbacks and adversity in a positive light, seeing them

as opportunities for growth rather than insurmountable obstacles. Undergraduates with strong resilience can objectively assess their own shortcomings and the challenges they face, proactively analyze the causes of their difficulties, and seek solutions to their problems. On the other hand, resilience helps undergraduates establish meaningful life goals and values, freeing them from the burden of feeling that life is meaningless. Resilience can activate an individual's psychological resources, helping undergraduates clarify their life goals and the value of their efforts, shake off "lying flat" mentality, and actively pursue self-growth. At the same time, resilience helps students engage in rational attribution, attributing setbacks to factors they can control (such as poor methods or insufficient effort) rather than factors beyond their control (such as a lack of talent or unfair fate), thereby boosting their confidence and motivation to change their circumstances.

3.2. Regulating negative emotions on an emotional level and building psychological resilience

The "lying flat" behavior among undergraduate students at local universities is often accompanied by negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and confusion. When these negative emotions accumulate over time, they further erode students' resilience, creating a vicious cycle of "negative emotions—declining resilience—lying flat." On an emotional level, resilience primarily functions by fostering an individual's tenacity, helping undergraduates regulate negative emotions, and providing emotional support to overcome the "lying flat" dilemma. First, resilience can help undergraduates improve their emotional regulation skills and promptly alleviate negative emotions. Undergraduates with strong resilience are able to keenly perceive changes in their own emotions and master effective emotional regulation methods, such as healthy emotional release and positive self-talk, thereby preventing the accumulation of negative emotions. Second, resilience can help students boost their self-confidence and sense of self-worth, alleviating feelings of inferiority. Due to disparities in student quality and academic performance, some undergraduates at local universities are prone to feelings of inferiority, believing themselves to be inferior to students at key universities, which can lead to a loss of motivation and a tendency to "lie flat." Resilience can help undergraduates at local universities discover their own strengths and talents, enhance their sense of self-identity, and thereby overcome the distress of inferiority. Furthermore, resilience can help undergraduates cultivate an optimistic and positive mindset and strengthen their courage to face adversity. Undergraduates with strong resilience can see hope in adversity, believe in their ability to overcome difficulties, and thus resist the influence of negative trends such as "lying flat."

3.3. Fostering positive behavior at the behavioral level to achieve personal breakthroughs

The core function of resilience is to help undergraduate students at local universities overcome the behavioral dilemma of "lying flat" by stimulating resilient behaviors. This function is primarily manifested in three aspects: proactive coping, seeking support, and continuous self-improvement. First, actively addressing challenges and solving problems. Undergraduates with strong resilience do not choose to avoid academic, career, or interpersonal difficulties; instead, they take proactive steps to find solutions, such as actively improving their skills or communicating to resolve conflicts. This proactive approach helps students gradually overcome obstacles, enhance their capabilities, and ultimately break free from the behavioral inertia of "lying flat." Second, they proactively seek support and mobilize resilience resources. Undergraduates with strong resilience are able to actively seek support from their families, schools, and peers, integrating various resilience resources to provide a safety net for coping with adversity. This proactive approach to seeking

support helps undergraduates quickly resolve difficulties and prevents them from choosing to “lie flat” due to isolation and lack of assistance. Third, continuously improve and pursue higher goals. Undergraduates with strong resilience are able to constantly reflect on their shortcomings while coping with adversity, proactively enhance their abilities and qualities, and pursue higher life goals, thereby breaking free from the passive state of “lying flat.” At the same time, the act of continuous self-improvement can further strengthen resilience, creating a virtuous cycle of “resilience enhancement–positive behavior–self-growth–further resilience enhancement.”

4. Strategies for cultivating resilience among undergraduate students at local universities

Based on the mechanisms underlying resilience among undergraduate students at local universities and taking into account the characteristics of the “lying flat” phenomenon, this paper constructs a multi-level resilience-building system across five dimensions: government management, family environment, school education, online media regulation, and personal capacity building. The aim is to enhance the resilience resources and qualities of undergraduate students at local universities and promote their all-round development.

4.1. Strengthening policy support and optimizing the environment for fostering resilience

As the primary agent of macroeconomic regulation, the government should play a role in top-level design and resource allocation, providing policy support, resource guarantees, and an optimized environment for fostering resilience among undergraduates at local universities, thereby addressing the challenges posed by limited resources and insufficient motivation for resilience development at these institutions. In terms of policy support, efforts should be made to refine and strengthen policy measures for fostering resilience at local universities. For example, resilience development should be incorporated into the quality assessment system for talent cultivation at local universities, thereby compelling these institutions to prioritize resilience-building initiatives; employment support policies should be improved to alleviate employment pressures and reduce the prevalence of “lying flat” behavior caused by job-related anxiety. In terms of resource allocation, the government should consolidate social resources and establish a diversified support system for fostering resilience. The government should guide enterprises and social organizations to participate in fostering resilience among undergraduate students at local universities, providing them with resources such as practical training platforms, employment opportunities, and psychological support. Regarding environmental optimization, efforts should be made to strengthen public awareness campaigns to foster a social atmosphere that respects hard work and embraces setbacks. Society should be guided to view the developmental challenges faced by undergraduate students at local universities in a positive light, moving away from the “credentialism” and “grade-centric” mindsets, and creating a supportive social environment for student growth.

4.2. Strengthening emotional support and fostering positive family values

The family is the primary environment for personal growth. It should serve as a source of emotional support and a guide to values, providing local college undergraduates with a solid foundation of resilience to help them overcome the “lying flat” dilemma. First, parents should strengthen communication with their college-age children, pay attention to their mental state and developmental needs, promptly identify negative

emotions and tendencies toward “lying flat,” and offer guidance and support. Parents should communicate with their children in an equal and respectful manner, understand their struggles, avoid excessive blame and criticism, and help alleviate their psychological stress. Second, parents should abandon overprotective and overbearing parenting styles and instead focus on cultivating their children’s independence and sense of responsibility. Undergraduates at local universities are adults. Parents should learn to let go, allowing students to independently face the difficulties and setbacks in life and study, and to forge a resilient character through practical experience. Third, parents should focus on fostering a positive family ethos, instilling values of optimism, hard work, and a spirit of perseverance, and guiding students to develop sound values. At the same time, parents should emphasize cultivating a sense of gratitude and responsibility in their children, helping them learn to be grateful and take on responsibilities, thereby enhancing their resilience.

4.3. Strengthening the primary responsibility of higher education institutions and innovating talent development pathways

Universities are the primary venues for fostering resilience. Local universities should integrate resilience development into the entire talent cultivation process, taking into account their unique educational characteristics and the specific traits of their student populations. First, resilience development should be incorporated into the talent cultivation objectives, with the addition of relevant courses to cultivate students’ resilience resources, qualities, and behaviors, thereby achieving an organic integration of “knowledge transfer, skill development, and character enhancement” with “resilience development.” Second, improve the psychological counseling and guidance system to provide personalized psychological support to students. Local universities should establish psychological counseling centers and launch services such as counseling hotlines and online platforms to offer convenient psychological counseling services. For students exhibiting pronounced “lying flat” tendencies, personalized psychological counseling should be provided to help them correct negative cognitions and regulate negative emotions. Third, conduct simulated adversity training to specifically enhance students’ resilience. Local universities can organize simulated adversity training tailored to students’ actual needs, such as scenarios involving failed job interviews, failing courses, or interpersonal conflicts. This allows students to learn how to cope with setbacks in simulated settings, thereby improving their psychological regulation and coping skills.

4.4. Strengthening oversight and guidance of online media to foster a healthy environment

With the widespread adoption of the internet, online media has become the primary channel through which undergraduates at local universities access information and communicate with one another. Online information exerts a significant influence on their cognition, mindset, and behavior. Creating a healthy online environment is a crucial component of fostering resilience among undergraduates at local universities. First, relevant government departments should strengthen internet regulation and intensify efforts to combat negative online information and harmful content, thereby curbing the spread of harmful ideas such as the “lying flat” mentality and negative values. Second, local universities should also utilize campus online platforms to conduct promotional activities related to resilience development. Through campus WeChat official accounts, campus radio, and online forums, they can disseminate knowledge about resilience, share experiences in coping with setbacks, and highlight exemplary stories of perseverance on campus, thereby fostering a positive online atmosphere. Furthermore, universities should establish interactive online platforms to provide undergraduate students with channels for emotional communication and exchange, enabling them

to share their concerns and feelings online while receiving support and encouragement from others.

4.5. Strengthening a sense of ownership and proactively building resilience

Individuals are the central agents in the cultivation of resilience. Ultimately, the enhancement of resilience among undergraduates at local universities depends on their own efforts. Therefore, guiding undergraduates to strengthen their sense of agency, actively participate in the process of resilience development, and enhance their resilience resources and qualities is the key to overcoming the “lying flat” dilemma. First, students should be guided to correctly recognize the harms of the “lying flat” phenomenon, making it clear that “lying flat” not only affects their academic development and personal growth but also impacts their future career development and the realization of their life’s value, thereby fostering a life attitude that rejects “lying flat.” Second, students should proactively learn professional knowledge and skills to improve their academic performance and career competitiveness, thereby strengthening their confidence in coping with employment pressures and academic setbacks and reducing “lying flat” behavior caused by a lack of ability. Third, undergraduates at local universities should improve their self-regulation skills and learn to manage their emotions and stress. They should proactively study relevant knowledge on emotional and stress management, master effective coping strategies, and promptly regulate their emotions and stress when facing challenges such as academic pressure, employment pressure, and interpersonal relationship stress, thereby preventing the accumulation of negative emotions.

5. Conclusion

Taking the phenomenon of “lying flat” among undergraduates at local universities as its starting point, this paper systematically analyzes the mechanisms underlying resilience from the perspective of resilience cultivation. It proposes strategies and supporting measures for fostering resilience across five key areas: government management, family environment, school education, online media regulation, and personal capacity building. The following conclusions are drawn:

First, the “lying flat” observed among undergraduate students at local universities is largely a passive response, closely linked to factors such as insufficient resilience, a lack of external support, and the corrosive influence of negative online content. This provides a clear starting point for fostering resilience.

Second, the mechanisms underlying resilience among undergraduate students at local universities are primarily manifested at three levels: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. Through a logical sequence of “activating resilience resources—shaping resilience traits—transforming resilience behaviors,” this approach helps students correct negative cognitions, regulate negative emotions, and stimulate positive behaviors, thereby overcoming the “lying flat” dilemma.

Third, establishing a five-pronged system for fostering resilience—comprising the government, family, schools, online media, and individuals—is the key to enhancing the resilience of undergraduate students at local universities and overcoming the “lying flat” dilemma. In this system, the government plays a role in macro-regulation and resource allocation, families provide emotional support and value guidance, schools serve as the primary agents of cultivation, and online media exercise oversight and guidance.

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