

Research Paper

## Correlation Between Resilience and Hope and Hope and Post-Traumatic Growth After a Romantic Relationship

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### ABSTRACT

Romantic breakups, while emotionally distressing, can also lead to psychological transformation. This study explores the correlation between resilience and hope, and between hope and post-traumatic growth (PTG), in individuals who have experienced romantic relationship dissolution. A sample of 100 participants aged 20–30 years completed the Brief Resilience Scale, the Adult Hope Scale, and the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory. Results revealed a weak negative correlation between resilience and hope ( $r = -0.0519$ ,  $p = .608$ ), indicating no significant association between the two variables in the context of a breakup. In contrast, a strong positive correlation was found between hope and PTG ( $r = 0.955$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of hope are significantly more likely to experience post-traumatic growth. These findings underscore hope as a key factor in emotional recovery and growth following relationship dissolution, while also challenging traditional assumptions about resilience. The study offers implications for designing therapeutic interventions that prioritize fostering hope in individuals navigating breakup-related distress.

**Keywords:** *Romantic Breakup, Resilience, Hope, Post-Traumatic Growth, Emotional Healing, Psychological Recovery, Coping, Positive Psychology*

Romantic relationships play a crucial role in an individual's emotional well-being, providing a sense of security, intimacy, and shared purpose (Simpson & Rholes, 2017).

However, the dissolution of a romantic relationship can be a distressing life event, often leading to emotional turmoil, psychological distress, and identity reconstruction (Rhoades et al., 2011). While breakups are commonly associated with negative emotional consequences such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness, research suggests that individuals also have the capacity to experience positive psychological changes following adversity—a phenomenon known as **post-traumatic growth (PTG)** (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). The extent to which individuals navigate this transition effectively is influenced by their **resilience**, which serves as a protective factor against prolonged distress and fosters adaptive coping mechanisms (Masten, 2001). Additionally, **hope** plays a crucial role in emotional recovery, helping

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individuals envision a positive future and sustain motivation during difficult times (Snyder, 2002).

This study aims to explore the correlation between **Resilience and Hope** and **Hope and Post-traumatic Growth** following a breakup. Understanding these relationships is essential in developing psychological interventions that promote emotional healing and well-being in individuals experiencing relationship dissolution.

### *Operational Definitions of Variables*

- **Resilience:** Resilience is defined as an individual's ability to adapt positively and recover from significant adversity, stress, or trauma (Connor & Davidson, 2003). In context of this study, resilience refers to the psychological strength that enables individuals to cope with the emotional distress of a breakup and rebuild their well-being. It will be measured using the **Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)**.
- **Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG):** PTG refers to the positive psychological changes that occur as a result of struggling with highly challenging life circumstances (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). In this study, PTG will be conceptualized as the extent to which individuals experience personal growth, new perspectives, and an increased sense of strength following a breakup. It will be assessed using the **Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI)**.
- **Hope:** Hope is defined as a cognitive-motivational process characterized by goal-directed thinking and the perception that one has the pathways and agency to achieve desired outcomes (Snyder, 2002). In the context of this study, hope refers to an individual's belief in the possibility of positive future experiences and emotional fulfillment post-breakup. It will be measured using the **Adult Hope Scale (AHS)**.

By examining the interplay between these variables, this study seeks to provide insights into the mechanisms that facilitate psychological growth and emotional well-being after a breakup. The findings may contribute to the development of psychological interventions aimed at fostering resilience and hope in individuals navigating romantic relationship dissolution.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Calhoun and Tedeschi (2006) present a comprehensive theoretical foundation for understanding posttraumatic growth (PTG), offering an expanded framework that situates growth as a transformative process following psychological struggle. PTG is conceptualized not merely as resilience or a return to baseline functioning, but as positive psychological change that emerges from the cognitive and emotional challenges that traumatic experiences provoke. This chapter serves as a cornerstone in trauma research by framing PTG as a multidimensional construct that includes enhanced personal strength, improved relationships, a greater appreciation for life, spiritual development, and new possibilities. Calhoun and Tedeschi (2006)

Frazier, Tashiro, Berman, Steger, and Long (2004) conducted a seminal study examining the correlates of positive life changes—commonly referred to as posttraumatic growth—following experiences of sexual assault. Their research aimed to move beyond the predominant focus on negative outcomes of trauma by identifying both the extent and nature

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of positive changes survivors might report, as well as the psychological and situational factors that contribute to these changes. Frazier, Tashiro, Berman, Steger, and Long (2004)

Frazier, Tashiro, Berman, Steger, and Long (2004) examined the predictors and correlates of positive life changes following sexual assault, contributing significantly to the literature on posttraumatic growth (PTG) in the context of severe interpersonal trauma. The study focused on identifying which psychological and situational variables were associated with varying levels and patterns of PTG in female survivors of sexual assault. Frazier, Tashiro, Berman, Steger, and Long (2004)

Bonanno (2004) offers a paradigm-shifting perspective on human responses to loss and trauma, challenging traditional models that emphasize prolonged grief and psychopathology. In his seminal article "*Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events?*", Bonanno critically examines prevailing assumptions about psychological distress following major adversities such as bereavement, trauma, or disaster. He argues that resilience—defined as the ability to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of functioning—is a far more common outcome than previously acknowledged. Bonanno (2004)

Davis, Nolen-Hoeksema, and Larson (1998) explore the dual processes of meaning-making in the aftermath of loss, focusing on two distinct yet interrelated dimensions: making sense of the loss and perceiving benefits from the experience. Their research provides empirical evidence for the psychological importance of constructing meaning after bereavement and distinguishes between cognitive understanding and perceived growth as separate mechanisms that influence adjustment. Davis, Nolen-Hoeksema, and Larson (1998)

Kashdan and Kane (2011) explored the complex interplay between post-traumatic distress, post-traumatic growth (PTG), and the perceived meaning in life, with a particular focus on the moderating role of experiential avoidance. Their study sought to investigate why some individuals manage to extract positive psychological growth from traumatic events, while others remain entrenched in distress. Kashdan and Kane (2011)

Meyerson, Grant, Carter, and Kilmer (2011) conducted a comprehensive systematic review of the existing literature on posttraumatic growth (PTG) among children and adolescents. Recognizing that most PTG research had previously focused on adults, the authors aimed to synthesize findings related to younger populations to better understand the developmental nuances of growth after trauma.

Analyzing over 25 studies, the review found that children and adolescents are indeed capable of experiencing PTG, typically across domains such as increased personal strength, improved relationships, greater appreciation for life, and spiritual development. The authors noted, however, that the prevalence and nature of PTG in youth can be influenced by several factors, including age, gender, type of trauma, coping strategies, and social support. Meyerson, Grant, Carter, and Kilmer (2011)

Levine and Scotch (2013) conducted a longitudinal study examining the relationship between posttraumatic growth (PTG) and dispositional hope among adolescents. The research aimed to explore how stable personality traits, particularly hope, influence the

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development of PTG following adverse life experiences during a critical developmental stage.

Dispositional hope, conceptualized by Snyder's Hope Theory, encompasses two key components: **agency** (goal-directed determination) and **pathways** (planning to meet goals). The study hypothesized that adolescents with higher levels of dispositional hope would be more likely to experience PTG over time, due to their greater capacity for psychological adaptation and meaning-making. Levine and Scotch (2013)

Marshall, Bejanyan, and Ferenczi (2013) investigated the relationship between adult attachment styles and personal growth following romantic breakups, focusing on the mediating roles of emotional distress, rumination, and the tendency to enter rebound relationships. This study extended the framework of posttraumatic growth (PTG) into the domain of interpersonal loss, offering a nuanced view of how individual differences in attachment influence psychological adaptation after the end of a romantic relationship.

The researchers found that insecure attachment styles, particularly anxious attachment, were associated with higher levels of distress and rumination, which in turn predicted greater self-reported personal growth. Interestingly, avoidant individuals, while experiencing less emotional distress, also reported lower levels of personal growth, possibly due to their tendency to suppress or avoid emotional processing. The study also identified rebound relationships as a behavioral coping mechanism, although its role in facilitating or hindering growth was more complex and varied by attachment style. Marshall, Bejanyan, and Ferenczi (2013)

Long, Kim-Spoon, and Long (2020) explored the distinct and combined roles of **hope and resilience** in promoting mental health and well-being following a large-scale natural disaster—Hurricane Harvey. The study contributes to trauma literature by emphasizing the **protective function of positive psychological traits** in the aftermath of collective trauma. Long, Kim-Spoon, and Long (2020)

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

This study employs a **quantitative research design**, utilizing **survey-based data collection** to examine the correlation between **Resilience and Hope and Hope and Post-traumatic Growth** after a breakup. Standardized self-report measures were used to assess these psychological variables, and data were analyzed using statistical methods to explore associations between them.

### *Participants*

A total of **100 participants** were recruited for the study. The sample characteristics were as follows:

- **Age Range:** 20–30 years
- **Breakup Duration:** 3 months to 1 year post-breakup

### *Inclusion Criteria*

1. Participants must have experienced the **termination of a romantic relationship** within the past **6 to 12 months**.
2. Participants must be **aged 18 years or older**.

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3. Participants must have been in a **significant romantic relationship lasting at least 6 months**.
4. Participants must be **willing to reflect** on their breakup experiences and complete self-report surveys.

### *Exclusion Criteria*

1. Individuals currently undergoing **psychiatric treatment for severe mental health issues** (e.g., clinical depression, PTSD unrelated to the breakup) were excluded to avoid confounding variables.
2. Participants who have **reconciled with their ex-partner** were excluded, as the impact of the breakup may differ significantly in such cases.
3. Individuals **unwilling or unable to provide informed consent** for participation in the study were excluded.

By adhering to these parameters, the sample design ensures a **robust and representative dataset**, aligning with the study's aim of examining **resilience, post-traumatic growth, and hope** following a breakup.

### *Assessment Tools*

The following standardized psychological scales were used to measure the study variables:

1. **Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) – Tedeschi & Calhoun (1996)**
  - Assesses **positive psychological changes** following adversity, including new possibilities, improved relationships, and increased personal strength.
2. **Adult Hope Scale (Snyder et al.)**
  - Measures **hope**, including goal-directed energy (**agency**) and perceived ability to find strategies to achieve goals (**pathways**).
3. **Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) – The Ohio State University**
  - Evaluates **resilience**, or an individual's ability to **recover and adapt** in response to stress.

### *Procedure*

1. Data was collected **online via Google Forms**, ensuring accessibility and ease of participation.
2. Participants were provided with an **informed consent form**, detailing the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation.
3. The survey, integrating the **PTGI, Adult Hope Scale, and BRS**, took approximately **15–20 minutes** to complete.
4. Participants' responses were recorded anonymously to maintain **confidentiality**.
5. After data collection, responses were analyzed to explore **correlations between resilience, PTG, and hope** post-breakup.

## **RESULTS**

The present study aimed to examine the correlation between **Resilience and Hope and Hope and Post-traumatic Growth** after a breakup. A **correlational analysis** was conducted to assess the strength and direction of associations between the three variables: Brief Resilience

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Scale (BRS), Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI), and Adult Hope Scale. The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient analysis are presented below.

### Correlation Between Resilience (BRS) and Hope Scale

The correlation analysis revealed a weak and negative correlation between **BRS and Hope Scale** ( $r = -0.05185$ ). This suggests that resilience, as measured by the Brief Resilience Scale, does not have a significant direct relationship with hope levels in individuals who have experienced a breakup. The near-zero correlation value indicates that as resilience increases or decreases, there is no meaningful change in hope levels. This finding is noteworthy, as resilience is typically associated with positive emotional adaptation and psychological well-being. However, in the specific context of post-breakup experiences, the mechanisms linking resilience to hope may be more complex and influenced by external mediators.

Parameter	Value
Pearson correlation coefficient (r)	<b>-0.05185</b>
$r^2$	0.002689
P-value	0.6084
Covariance	-0.3149
Sample size (n)	100
Statistic	-0.514

Results of the pearson correlation indicated that there is a non significant very small negative relationship between X and Y, ( $r(98) = .0519, p = .608$ ).  
 $r=-0.05185$

### Correlation Between Hope and Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) Scale

A **strong and positive correlation** was found between **Hope Scale and PTGI** ( $r = 0.95504$ ). This indicates that individuals with higher levels of hope tend to experience greater post-traumatic growth after a breakup. The strength of this correlation suggests that hope plays a crucial role in facilitating personal development and positive change following emotional distress. Hopeful individuals may be more likely to adopt adaptive coping strategies, such as cognitive restructuring and goal-setting, which contribute to growth in the aftermath of a breakup. These findings align with previous research indicating that hope is a powerful predictor of resilience, emotional adjustment, and the ability to derive meaning from adversity.

Parameter	Value
Pearson correlation coefficient (r)	<b>0.955</b>
$r^2$	0.9121
P-value	0
Covariance	108.997
Sample size (n)	100
Statistic	31.8902

Results of the pearson correlation indicated that there is a significant large positive relationship between X and Y, ( $r(98) = .955, p < .001$ ).  
 $r=0.055$

## **DISCUSSION**

The present study aimed to explore the correlation between two key psychological relationships in the context of emotional healing after a breakup: the relationship between resilience and hope, and the relationship between hope and post-traumatic growth (PTG). By investigating these two correlations, the study sought to understand whether the nature of one (resilience and hope) had any influence or connection with the other (hope and PTG), ultimately highlighting the central role hope may play in mediating psychological outcomes. The results of the correlation analysis revealed some intriguing insights, particularly in the unexpected direction of certain findings. Specifically, the correlation between resilience, as measured by the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), and hope was slightly negative ( $r = -0.05185$ ), which was contrary to the initial hypothesis. In contrast, the correlation between hope and PTG was strongly positive ( $r = 0.95504$ ), suggesting a significant link between a hopeful outlook and the capacity for post-traumatic growth. This study also attempts to analyze whether a correlation exists between these two correlation trends themselves, potentially offering a more nuanced understanding of the psychological processes underlying recovery from emotional loss.

At first glance, the negative correlation between resilience and hope may appear puzzling. Traditionally, resilience is understood as the ability to bounce back from adversity, and it would be intuitive to expect that more resilient individuals also hold more hope for the future. However, the data suggest otherwise in this sample. One possible interpretation is that individuals with high resilience may possess more practical or stoic coping mechanisms that do not necessarily rely on hopeful or forward-looking perspectives. These individuals might approach challenges with emotional regulation and self-containment, thus limiting the emotional disruption that could give rise to hope-driven transformation. In other words, their recovery might be more about stability and containment than about growth and vision for the future.

This idea becomes clearer when we consider the concept of post-traumatic growth itself. PTG is not merely the absence of distress or a return to baseline functioning—it refers to a profound psychological transformation that occurs as a result of enduring significant psychological struggle. Individuals who are highly resilient may be less likely to experience the depth of emotional disturbance that often serves as a precursor to such transformation. In contrast, those who are less resilient may be forced to grapple more intensely with their pain, thereby creating more room for existential re-evaluation, identity reconstruction, and the development of a richer, more nuanced understanding of themselves and the world.

In this context, hope emerges as a key psychological mechanism that drives this transformation. The strong correlation between hope and PTG ( $r = 0.95504$ ) underscores the power of maintaining a future-oriented mindset even amidst emotional turmoil. Hope is not just a passive feeling but an active, motivational state that enables individuals to envision and strive toward better outcomes. It provides a cognitive and emotional framework through which people can find meaning in their suffering and develop new goals and pathways. This aligns with theories that conceptualize hope as a dynamic process involving agency (the belief in one's capacity to initiate and sustain action) and pathways (the perceived ability to generate routes toward desired goals).

Following a breakup, many individuals experience a sense of disorientation, loss of identity, and emotional disintegration. In such a vulnerable state, hope can serve as a psychological

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anchor. When individuals are able to cultivate hope—whether through self-reflection, support from others, therapy, or spiritual practices—they are more likely to reinterpret their pain in ways that foster growth. They may begin to view the breakup not merely as an end, but as an opening toward rediscovery and personal evolution.

From a therapeutic standpoint, these findings point to the importance of incorporating hope-centered interventions into post-breakup counseling. For instance, cognitive-behavioral strategies that focus on goal setting, strength identification, and positive reappraisal can help individuals reframe their narratives and reinforce their sense of agency. Narrative therapy approaches that invite clients to reconstruct their life stories with themes of resilience and renewal may also help foster hope. Additionally, mindfulness and compassion-based interventions can assist individuals in accepting their pain while remaining open to new possibilities.

### CONCLUSION

The journey of this research has sought to explore the complex interplay between resilience, hope, and post-traumatic growth (PTG), particularly in the context of personal adversity. By examining how individuals navigate the aftermath of emotional trauma, especially romantic breakups, this study contributes to the growing field of positive psychology that shifts the narrative from merely surviving hardship to transforming through it. This concluding section synthesizes key findings, reflects on their implications, explores the theoretical and practical relevance of the constructs studied, and outlines future directions, ultimately highlighting the value of internal psychological strengths in the aftermath of emotional rupture.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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