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Self-Efficacy in Life Skills and Psychological Correlates in Sicilian Adolescents: A Brief Report

Maria Luisa Indiana * and Elisabetta Sagone 

Department of Educational Sciences, University of Catania, Via Casa Nutrizione, 95100 Catania, Italy; esagone@unict.it

* Correspondence: mluisa.indiana@gmail.com

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to discuss the findings derived from the associations between self-efficacy in life skills and its major psychological correlates (psychological well-being, resilience, and coping strategies) in various convenience samples of Sicilian adolescents. We include a summary of the main results and statistical outcomes obtained from previous studies performed in the Sicilian context, focusing on several psychological topics associated with self-efficacy in life skills. Comparing the outcomes from different studies revealed positive correlations between self-efficacy in life skills and higher levels of psychological well-being, resilience, and functional coping strategies to manage critical situations. Future research will focus on the development of life skills programs to improve the quality of life of adolescents and promote their functional and optimal development.

Keywords: life skills; psychological well-being; coping; resilience; adolescence

1. Introduction

Life skills are competencies used to relate to others and deal with the problems, external pressures, and stressors encountered in everyday life, in both academic and professional settings. According to the guidelines proposed for the first time by the WHO [1] to aid in the development and implementation of life skills programs in the school setting, life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviors that enable individuals to deal successfully with the difficulties and challenges of life. The analysis of life skills suggests that there is a core set of skills that is at “the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of the health and well-being of children and adolescents” [1].

In the light of these definitions, ten main life skills have been identified to promote health and well-being in children and adolescents [2]: (1) decision making that helps individuals to constructively address decisions in life; (2) problem solving that enables individuals to deal adequately with problems encountered in life; (3) creative thinking that allows individuals to explore the available alternatives and various consequences of actions and respond adaptively and flexibly to the situations encountered in daily life; (4) critical thinking that supports health by helping individuals to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behavior, such as values, peer pressure, and the media; (5) effective communication that involves the ability to express opinions, desires, needs, and fears and includes the ability to ask for advice and help in a time of need; (6) interpersonal relationship skills that help individuals to relate in positive ways with the people they interact with; (7) self-awareness that involves recognizing one’s strengths, weaknesses, desires, and dislikes; (8) empathy, which is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person, even in a situation that is unfamiliar; (9) coping with (positive and



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negative) emotions, which involves recognizing emotional states in ourselves and others, being aware of how emotions influence behavior, and being able to respond to emotional states appropriately; and (10) coping with stress, which helps individuals to recognize the sources of stress in our life and to act in ways that help to control stress levels.

On the basis of these life skills, it is necessary to take into consideration another construct that supports the application of the ten main competencies for each individual. This is perceived self-efficacy, which is defined by Bandura [3,4] as the belief in what one can do with whatever resources one can muster. In this context, individuals are asked to rate the strength of the confidence they can execute given activities under specific demands. These beliefs are included among the personal factors mentioned as part of the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which is the main background of reference for this study. According to SCT, which is applied to life skills and divided into three main factors, including personal, behavioral, and environmental (as also reported by Miri et al. [5]), individuals' judgments about their abilities in several fields are used to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. Additionally, perceived self-efficacy tends to affect an individual's choice of activities, effort, and persistence. In a recent qualitative study by Miri and colleagues [5] using focus groups and interviews, the results revealed that the theme of "environmental factors", extracted from content analysis, included interpersonal relationships, influential role models, and access to resources and facilities. In addition, the theme of "behavioral factors" included the categories of life skills, and the theme of "personal factors" integrated the categories of personality traits, attitudes, perceived self-efficacy, knowledge, and outcome expectations. The authors confirmed that the use of life skills is influenced by personal, behavioral, and environmental factors.

Consistent with this theory, individuals who report low levels of self-efficacy for accomplishing a specific task may avoid it and believe that difficult tasks and situations are beyond their abilities, focusing on personal weakness and negative outcomes. In contrast, those who believe they are highly able to cope with this task are more likely to participate and be engaged in its performance, developing a stronger sense of commitment to their interests. Likewise, using efficient coping strategies to overcome everyday stressful situations is a strong predictor of mental health and high self-efficacy in adolescence [6]. Moreover, individuals who feel that they are highly efficient in everyday life spend more effort, resources, and persist longer in the face of difficulties than those who are unsure of their abilities [3]. Some researchers distinguished the dimensions of generalized self-efficacy and specific self-efficacy. The former refers to the belief in one's competence to cope with a broad range of stressful situations or challenging demands [7,8], while the latter is the belief in one's ability to handle specific tasks [9,10]. High self-efficacy in one domain does not necessarily indicate high efficacy in another. Thus, the measures for evaluating the sense of perceived self-efficacy are domain-specific in various contexts and age-related (e.g., the version for children is different from that for adolescents and adults). Efficacy beliefs influence the type of activity people choose to engage in, the levels of effort they spend, and their perseverance in the face of adversities. This assumption emphasizes domain specificity, suggesting that there are strong relations between beliefs concerning personal abilities in a specific task and the concrete realization of this task.

For the first time in the Italian context, Caprara [10], Pastorelli et al. [11], and, more recently, the authors of this paper in their previous publication [12] have deepened the investigation of perceived self-efficacy in relation to certain life skills described above by focusing on the following: (1) the ability to efficiently regulate the expression of positive emotional states, (2) the ability to manage negative emotional states, (3) the ability to recognize the emotions and feelings of others, (4) the ability to communicate effectively in interpersonal and social relations, and, lastly, (5) the ability to engage in problem-solving sit-

uations in an efficient manner. The first three abilities are strongly linked to the “emotional regulation skill” [13–15]. The fourth ability is connected with the possibility of creating a personal “relational style” that is useful for the construction of social identity [16,17], and the last ability is associated with the creation of new ideas, processes, and solutions that have never existed before based on a deep understanding of the problem and all its aspects, regardless of the problem [18]. Specifically, Pastorelli et al. [11] analyzed self-efficacy in problem-solving and self-efficacy in social and interpersonal communication skills, highlighting the significant correlations of these two skills with school attachment, satisfaction, and engagement in school activities.

In line with the application of the SCT to life skills [5,19], the aim of this paper is to offer a summary of the main findings derived from the associations between self-efficacy in life skills and its major psychological correlates (such as psychological well-being, resilience, and coping strategies) in various samples of Sicilian adolescents. In detail, this paper presents and integrates results from six studies examining the relations among self-efficacy in life skills, resilience, and positive affectivity (study 1); the relations between psychological well-being and self-efficacy in life skills (study 2); the relations between resilience and perceived self-efficacy in life skills from early to late adolescence (study 3); the relations among self-efficacy in life skills, resilience, and coping strategies in adolescents (study 4); the role of self-efficacy in life skills on the relations between dispositional resilience and coping strategies (study 5); and the impact of coping strategies on the relation among life skills, resilience, and life satisfaction in adolescents (study 6). The findings reported here demonstrated the decisive role of self-efficacy in life skills in the promotion of a better quality of life in terms of higher levels of well-being and resilience and the use of functional coping strategies during adolescence [20,21].

The rationale of this study is given by the analysis of the perception of self-efficacy in these life skills rather than in the direct subjective evaluation of the exercise of the mentioned skills. That is, the authors’ purpose was to ask adolescents to assess how much they feel that they are able to decide, communicate, manage emotions, and solve problems and not to directly assess these competencies in specific situations. Except for Pedditz, Nonnis, and Fadda in Italy [22] and Wong et al. in China, who assessed career self-efficacy together with self-efficacy in life skills [23], no researcher has developed an interpretation of life skills in this way.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Hypotheses

In each study, we hypothesized the role of self-efficacy in life skills in relation to the following main topics:

- Adolescents with high self-efficacy in life skills will report higher levels of positive affect and resilience than those with low self-efficacy in life skills (study 1);
- Pre-adolescents with high self-efficacy in life skills will report higher levels of psychological well-being and will express higher body esteem than those with low self-efficacy in life skills (study 2);
- Adolescents with high self-efficacy in problem-solving and managing positive and negative emotional states will obtain high levels of resilience (study 3);
- Pre-adolescents with high self-efficacy in life skills will report higher levels of psychological well-being, resilience, and use of functional coping strategies than those with low self-efficacy in life skills (study 4);
- Adolescents with high self-efficacy in life skills will show high levels of dispositional resilience and use more functional coping strategies than those with low self-efficacy in life skills (study 5);

- Adolescents with high self-efficacy in life skills will obtain high levels of life satisfaction and resilience and tend to use functional coping strategies than those with low self-efficacy in life skills (study 6).

2.2. Participants

As shown in Table 1, we chose different samples of Sicilian adolescents recruited from State Junior and High Schools in Eastern Sicily (Italy). Parental consent for the underage adolescents' participation in these studies was requested and obtained in accordance with the requirements of privacy and anonymity as outlined by Italian Law DL. 196/2003.

Table 1. Distribution of participants for each study.

Title of Study	N	Age Range	Participants	Gender
Study 1—The Relationship of Positive Affect with Resilience and Self-Efficacy in Life Skills in Italian Adolescents [24]	147	15–19	Middle and late adolescents in High School	60 males 87 females
Study 2—Psychological Well-Being and Self-Efficacy in Life Skills among Italian Preadolescents with Positive Body Esteem: Preliminary Results of an Intervention Project [25]	49	12–14	Pre-adolescents in Junior High School	26 males 23 females
Study 3—Resilience and Perceived Self-Efficacy in Life Skills from Early to Late Adolescence [26]	302	11–19	Early, middle, and late adolescents in Junior and High Schools in Eastern Sicily	128 males 174 females
Study 4—Self-Efficacy in Life Skills, Resilience, and Coping Strategies in Adolescents: What Relationships? [12]	550	11–15	Pre-adolescents in Junior High School	264 males 286 females
Study 5—Relations between the Dimensions of Dispositional Resilience and Coping Strategies in High School Students: The Role of Life Skills [12]	609	14–19	Middle and late adolescents in High School	371 males 238 females
Study 6—Life Skills, Life Satisfaction, and Resilience: The Impact of Coping Strategies in High School Students [12]	89	16–19	Late adolescents in High School	36 males 53 females

2.3. Measures

All scales used in the abovementioned studies are reported and explained in the following section. For additional details, the authors suggest directly consulting each published study, as reported in the references.

2.3.1. Self-Efficacy in Life Skills

The Perceived Self-Efficacy Scales in Life Skills [10–12] are composed of 50 items divided into four subscales (PSES_PE; PSES_NE; PSES_PS; PSES_IC/SC). These scales are used to analyze the ability to efficiently regulate and manage the expression of positive (PSES_PE) and negative emotions (PSES_NE); the ability to efficiently communicate in interpersonal and social relations (PSES_IC/SC); and the ability to respond in problem-solving situations in an efficient manner (PSES_PS). Each item is scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 points, where 1 corresponds to “fully disagree” and 5 corresponds to “strongly agree”. Recently, Sagone and Indiana [12] developed a short version of these scales (with 32 items) and identified the presence of an additional dimension (or skill) regarding the ability to recognize the emotions and feelings of others (PSES_AE).

2.3.2. Psychological and Subjective Well-Being

For the measurement of psychological well-being, we used the Italian adaptation of the Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving (CIT-Child) [27,28], which consists of 36 items useful to measure the factors of support, respect, loneliness, belonging, engagement, general skill, learning, self-worth, optimism, life satisfaction, and positive and negative feelings. Each CIT-Child item is scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 points, where 1 corresponds to “fully disagree” and 5 to “strongly agree”.

The following scales are used for the measurement of subjective well-being:

- The Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) [29,30] assesses the affective components of subjective well-being by requiring participants to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale to what extent (1 = very slightly, 5 = extremely) they “generally” experienced 20 adjectives describing affective states (10 for positive affect and 10 for negative affect). The positive affect scale includes adjectives such as “strong, proud, and interested”; the negative affect scale includes adjectives such as “afraid, ashamed, and nervous”.
- The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) [31], a short 5-item scale, is used to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one’s life. Respondents indicate the extent to which they agree with each item using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

2.3.3. Resilience

To assess the resilience, we adopted the following scales:

- The Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS) [32,33] consists of 17 items grouped in three factors: positive attitudes, helplessness/alienation, and rigidity. Each item is rated according to a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (corresponding to “strongly disagree”) to 5 (corresponding to “strongly agree”).
- The Resiliency Attitudes and Skills Profile (RASP) [34,35] is a self-report questionnaire with 30 statements. The statements are judged on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (corresponding to “strongly disagree”) to 6 intervals (corresponding to “strongly agree”) and grouped into five dimensions typically associated with resilient people, including a sense of humor, competence, adaptability, engagement, and control.
- The Resilience Scale (RS) [36,37] is used to measure resilience based on 10 statements evaluated on an agreement/disagreement scale.
- The Resilience Scale for Adolescents (READ) [38,39] consists of a 28-item scale organized into five subscales: personal competence, social competence, structured style, family cohesion, and social resources. All items are positively formulated and are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from totally disagree (score of 1) to totally agree (score of 5).

2.3.4. Coping Strategies

To examine the coping strategies, we adopted three different measures according to the age of the participants. For the preadolescents’ sample, we used the Italian version of the Children’s Coping Strategies Checklist-Revision 1 (CCSC-R1) [40,41], which includes 54 statements. Here, children must indicate how frequently they usually adopt the coping strategies described in the item using a 4-point Likert scale (from 1 = never to 4 = always). The CCSC-R1 is composed of 13 subscales and 5 dimensions: problem-focused coping, positive cognitive restructuring, distraction coping strategies, avoidance coping strategies, and support-seeking strategies. Additionally, we adopted other two scales to analyze coping strategies among a sample of middle and late adolescents: the Coping Orientation to

Problem Experienced NV-25 (COPE-NV-25) and the short version of the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situation (CISS-SV).

- The COPE-NV-25 [42] consists of 25 items evaluating how often the subject uses that coping process in difficult or stressful situations. The individuals should not refer to a specific stress but rather think about how they usually behave in stressful situations. Response choices range from 1 (“I usually don’t do this at all”) to 6 (“I usually do this a lot”). This scale is based on five independent dimensions: social support, avoidance strategies, positive attitude, problem-solving, and turning to religion.
- The CISS-SV [43] comprises 21 items that are assessed using a 5-point Likert response scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). This scale is used to measure task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidance-oriented coping strategies.

2.3.5. Body Esteem

To examine body esteem, we adopted the Body Esteem Scale (BES) [44]. This scale includes 14 items divided into three subscales that are useful to measure the self-perception of one’s own body (appearance: “I wish I looked better”, “There are lots of things I’d change about my looks”—reverse item); the satisfaction for one’s own weight (weight satisfaction: “I am satisfied with my weight”, “Weighing myself depresses me”—reverse item); and the evaluation of the perception of others about one’s own body and appearance (external attribution: “Other people consider me good looking”, “My looks help me to get dates”). Participants completed this measure using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (corresponding to “never”) to 4 intervals (corresponding to “always”).

3. Results

We offer a summary of the results obtained in previous studies in reference to several psychological topics linked to perceived self-efficacy in life skills among Sicilian adolescents.

Study 1 [24]—We investigated the relationship of positive affect with resilience and perceived self-efficacy in life skills in a sample of 147 Sicilian adolescents recruited from two State High Schools in Catania. The results indicated that adolescents with high positive affect report higher levels of perceived self-efficacy in life skills than those with low positive affect. Specifically, the linear regression analysis demonstrated that positive affect influences PSES_PS, PSES_IC/SC, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE. In addition, positive affect has a significant impact on almost all the dimensions of resilience (RASP-adaptability, RASP-engagement, RASP-control, and RASP-sense of humor). These interesting results confirmed that adolescents with high positive affect reported higher levels of perceived self-efficacy in life skills and higher levels of resilience than others.

Study 2 [25]—We reported the preliminary results of an intervention project on the increase of psychological well-being, perceived self-efficacy in life skills, and levels of body esteem in relation to life skills training provided in a school setting in a sample of 49 Sicilian preadolescents recruited from three classes of State Junior School in Catania (Sicily). The results showed positive relations between perceived self-efficacy in life skills and almost all factors of psychological well-being, specifically, CIT-engagement, CIT—earning, CIT-self-worth, and CIT-optimism. In addition, positive correlations were noted between self-efficacy in life skills and body esteem. In detail, weight satisfaction is mainly related to self-efficacy in managing negative emotions and is poorly correlated with self-efficacy in interpersonal communication. Finally, the external evaluation of own body image is positively correlated with self-efficacy in managing positive emotions.

Study 3 [26]—We verified the relationship between resilience and perceived self-efficacy in life skills in 302 Sicilian early, middle, and late adolescents recruited from State Junior and High Schools of Eastern Sicily (Italy). The results indicate that self-

efficacy in problem-solving (PSES_PS) positively but minimally predicts the dimension of RASP-control; self-efficacy in problem-solving (PSES_PS) as well as communication and interpersonal and social relations (PSES_IC/SC) positively predicts RASP-adaptability, RASP-engagement, RASP-sense of humor and partially, and RASP-competence. Consequently, adolescents who perceive themselves as highly efficient in interpersonal and social relations and problem-solving are more resilient than those lowly efficient in the same domains.

Study 4 [12]—We analyzed the impact of perceived self-efficacy in life skills on resilience, dimensions of psychological well-being, and the use of coping strategies in a sample of 550 preadolescents recruited from two State Junior High Schools in Catania (Sicily). Linear regression models showed that perceived self-efficacy in problem-solving (PSES_PS) and the ability to manage and express positive and negative emotions (PSES_PE, PSES_NE) have direct and significant effects on some of the dimensions of psychological well-being (engagement, relationships, and mastery). Moreover, the ability to express and manage emotions (positive and negative) affects the dimension of well-being in terms of optimism and subjective well-being. In addition, all dimensions of perceived self-efficacy in life skills (except the PSES_IC/SC) are positively related to high levels of resilience. Regarding the association between self-efficacy in life skills and coping strategies, these results indicated that high levels of perceived self-efficacy in life skills have a direct and significant effect on the use of problem-focused coping, positive cognitive restructuring, and support-seeking strategies.

Study 5 [12]—We replicated the same analysis of the previous study using a large sample of 609 Sicilian adolescents. In this study, high levels of perceived self-efficacy in life skills (PSES_IC/SC, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE) also predicted low levels of DRS-helplessness/alienation. In addition, high levels of self-efficacy in life skills (PSES_PS, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE) predicted high levels of resilience in terms of DRS-positive attitude. Regarding the association between self-efficacy in life skills and coping strategies, we found that all dimensions of perceived self-efficacy in life skills were predictors of the use of functional coping strategies, such as problem-solving strategies, social support, and positive attitude.

Study 6 [12]—More recently, we analyzed the relations among perceived self-efficacy in life skills, life satisfaction, resilience, and coping strategies in 89 late Sicilian adolescents recruited from State High Schools in Syracuse (Sicily, Italy). In this study, the results also confirm that the dimensions of perceived self-efficacy in life skills (except the PSES_IC/SC) correlate positively with life satisfaction. This finding indicates that the higher adolescents' levels of self-efficacy in the expression of positive emotions, problem-solving, and the management of negative emotions, the more likely they are to express higher levels of life satisfaction in the school context. Further, positive relations emerge between self-efficacy in life skills and the dimensions of resilience. The higher the levels of PSES_PE reported by adolescents are, the more likely they are to show higher levels of resilience in terms of READ-social competence, READ-social resources, READ-personal competence, READ-family cohesion, and READ-structured style. The higher the levels of PSES_PS and PSES_IC/SC reported by adolescents are, the more likely they are to have higher levels of resilience in terms of READ-structured style, READ-personal competence, and READ-social competence. The higher the levels of PSES_NE obtained by adolescents, the more likely they are to report higher levels of resilience in READ-personal competence, READ-structured style, and READ-family cohesion. In conclusion, regarding the association between perceived self-efficacy in life skills and coping strategies, all dimensions of self-efficacy in life skills positively correlate with the use of task-oriented coping. In addition, the ability to effectively manage negative emotions negatively correlates with the use of

emotion-oriented coping, and perceived self-efficacy in the expression of positive emotions positively correlates with the use of task-oriented coping and avoidance coping strategies.

Table 2 summarizes the findings of the abovementioned studies and highlights similarities/differences among them. The similarities between the studies conducted by the authors are marked in **bold** in Table 2 and discussed below.

Table 2. Comparison of results for each study.

Study	Results
Study 1 [24]	PANAS+ → PSES_PS, PSES_IC/SC, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE PANAS+ → RASP-adaptability, RASP-control, RASP-engagement, and RASP-sense of humor
Study 2 [25]	PSES_PS, PSES_IC/SC, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE → CIT-engagement, CIT-learning, CIT-self-worth, and CIT-optimism PSES_PS, PSES_IC/SC, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE → body esteem
Study 3 [26]	PSES_PS → RASP-control PSES_PS and PSES_IC/SC → RASP-adaptability, RASP-engagement, RASP-sense of humor, and RASP-competence
Study 4 [12]	PSES_PS, PSES_PE, and PSES_NE → CIT-engagement, CIT-relationships, and CIT-mastery PSES_PE and PSES_NE → CIT-optimism and CIT-subjective well-being PSES_PS, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE → high resilience PSES_PS, PSES_IC/SC, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE → problem-focused coping, positive cognitive restructuring, and support-seeking strategies
Study 5 [12]	PSES_IC/SC, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE → low levels of DRS-helplessness/alienation PSES_PS, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE → high levels of resilience in DRS-positive attitude PSES_PS, PSES_IC/SC, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE → problem solving strategy, social support, and positive attitude
Study 6 [12]	PSES_PS, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE → life satisfaction PSES_PS, PSES_IC/SC, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE → READ-social competence, READ-social resources, READ-personal competence, READ-family cohesion, and READ-structured style PSES_PS and PSES_IC/SC → READ-structured style, READ-personal competence, and READ-social competence PSES_PS, PSES_IC/SC, PSES_NE, and PSES_PE → task-oriented coping ; PSES-NE → emotion-oriented coping; PSES_PE → task-oriented coping and avoidance coping

Considering the difference among measures or types of scales used in relation to the dimensions investigated in each study (consistently with the age of participants), it is possible to highlight the relevance of three out of four dimensions of self-efficacy in life skills. The major impact is documented by self-efficacy in problem-solving (PSES_PS), self-efficacy in the management of negative emotional states (PSES_NE), and self-efficacy in the expression of positive emotions (PSES_PE). Briefly, except for study 1 focused on positive affect, the effects of these dimensions on different factors were assessed in different studies:

- Well-being (in terms of engagement and optimism) was the focus of studies 2 and 4;
- Coping strategies (in terms of task-oriented coping or problem-solving strategies and social support or support-seeking strategies) were the focus of studies 4, 5, and 6;
- Resilience (mainly in terms of adaptability, engagement, social and personal competence, and positive attitude) was the focus of studies 3, 5, and 6.

4. Conclusions

The main strength of this study lies in its ability to explore the psychological correlates associated with perceived self-efficacy in life skills, providing a unique source for planning future interventions aimed at improving the quality of life of adolescents by promoting their protective factors for optimal development.

The current paper provides an example of the data triangulation method applied to quantitative research across time, place, and type of sample, enhancing the validity and reliability of these results while reducing potential biases in the research [45]. The comparison between the data from different samples of a defined age range (namely, adolescence) replicated in the same context (namely, Sicilian schools) with similar measures assessing the chosen constructs (namely, self-report questionnaire) demonstrated the common trajectory of the analyzed phenomena. Specifically, the perceived self-efficacy in life skills plays a relevant role in guaranteeing psychological well-being, increasing resilience, and adopting strategies to positively cope with stressful situations, as predominantly demonstrated in a school setting by adolescents. The proposed empirical evidence demonstrates the strong relationship between a strong sense of self-efficacy in life skills and the most important psychological constructs of the approach of Positive Psychology. Early, middle, and late adolescents who perceived themselves as being able to manage and express positive and negative emotions, to efficiently communicate in interpersonal and social relationships, and to respond in problem-solving situations in an efficient manner tend to use more task-oriented coping strategies than avoidance and emotion-oriented coping strategies. In addition, our adolescents tend to cope with critical situations through cognitive restructuring of the problem and seeking the support of others to gather advice on how friends/family have reacted in similar stressful situations [12,24–26].

Regarding the relationship between self-efficacy in life skills and resilience, the results indicate that adolescents who perceived themselves as highly efficient in social communication and problem-solving were more resilient in terms of adaptability, engagement, and competence than those who perceived themselves as lowly efficient in the same domains [26]. Considering resilience as a dispositional trait based on the definitions of Wagnild and Young [36], Richardson [46], and Smith and Carlson [47] (i.e., personal qualities that allow individuals to overcome and thrive in the face of adversity and personality characteristics that promote adaptation, the ability to restore or maintain internal or external equilibrium under significant threats through human connection, and the ability to obtain positive outcomes in the face of troubles), empirical research shows the positive relationship among all dimensions of perceived self-efficacy in life skills and resilience in terms of positive attitude. Adolescents who report higher levels of self-efficacy in life skills are more likely to express higher levels of resilience in terms of personal and social competence, adaptability, engagement, and structured style. These results are consistent with the findings proposed by Erozkán [48] and Jaeh and Madihie [49]. The last authors demonstrated the relationships between self-efficacy and resilience based on the dimensions of meaningfulness, perseverance, self-reliance, equanimity, and existential aloneness in Malaysian adolescents.

Considering the influence of self-efficacy in life skills on psychological and subjective well-being, our findings demonstrated that all dimensions of self-efficacy affect psychological well-being in terms of increased engagement, learning, self-worth, optimism, and mastery [12]. In addition, perceived self-efficacy in the management of and expression of positive and negative emotional states and the ability to efficiently find solutions to problems mainly affect subjective well-being (especially in terms of life satisfaction in a school setting). These findings are consistent with those offered in some studies performed in other regions of Italy. For example, Caprara et al. [50,51] reported that adolescents' perceived ability in regulating their positive and negative emotions positively influenced both cognitive and affective well-being. All these results show how self-efficacy in life skills is one of the most important protective factors for individual well-being and personal growth during adolescence [51] to promote a good quality of life. As adolescents increase their agency, their self-efficacy beliefs in managing negative emotional states become central to

handling situations and empower them to cope with the demands of everyday life [52–54]. Thus, self-efficacy may be a relevant individual factor promoting adolescent psychological functioning and well-being [54–56]. As reported by Mesurado and colleagues [57], the perception of self-efficacy in expressing positive affect is related to prosociality and aggressiveness (indicators of interpersonal and psychological functioning). The lack of empirical studies analyzing the role of self-efficacy in life skills in a socio-educational context different from Italy is highlighted. Thus, future cross-cultural investigations could further assess the role of protective factors actively involved in navigating the transition from childhood/adolescence to adulthood, in line with the Positive Psychology approach, to support the promotion of adolescents' quality of life. In addition, future educational training programs could be beneficial for enhancing life skills to increase psychological well-being, resilience, and the use of functional coping strategies throughout the life cycle. Specifically, it is essential to focus on the promotion of positive rather than negative behaviors, because young people who do not have positive expectations of their future seem to be more susceptible to risk situations [58–60]. To effectively cope with life, adolescents need to develop the essential skills for studying and other general utility skills, such as problem-solving skills, emotional management, and the ability to make decisions that allow them to adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle.

One main limitation of this summary is that the samples were obtained from a specific area of Italy. These samples were not obtained from other parts of the country, so it is not possible to explore differences between northern and southern Italy. Future research will include comparisons between participants from the northern and southern regions of Italy.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed active consent was obtained from participants' parents, and assent was also obtained from the participants themselves in previous studies cited in this paper.

Data Availability Statement: The data that support the findings of these studies are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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