

Effect of parent's emotional availability on self-esteem and resilience of an individual

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ABSTRACT

Self-esteem and resilience are important indicators of a psychologically healthy individual. The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between the emotional availability of parent's and how it influences the development of a child's resilience and self-esteem. Hundred and seventy participants were included in the study consisting of 77 females and 93 males who were randomly selected and were asked to complete a scale on – Resilience, Self-esteem and Emotional Availability of Parents. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between Self-esteem and Resilience of an Individual. The study also showed a significant positive correlation between the Emotional Availability of parents and the development of an individual's self-esteem and resilience.

Keywords: Resilience, Emotional Availability, Self-Esteem

This world has always been fundamentally unpredictable; where things happen suddenly and unexpectedly. We rarely are in control of our existence and in such conditions the skill of resilience comes a long way. Acknowledging the situation, adapting to the environment, learning from our mistakes, moving forward and not dwelling over our past are important areas to have gained expertise in when things don't go as planned. Individuals who develop resilience are better able to face disappointment and so are individuals with high self-esteem. Healthy self-esteem is a strong protective factor and predictor of resilience. Developing self-esteem is highly important because it heavily influences our choices and decisions. It serves as a motivational factor for people to explore their full potential. Self-esteem boosts our confidence and helps our relationships with others, helps us acquire new skills and makes us believe in our abilities. Self-esteem and resilience are skills that develop at an early age of life where parents play a crucial role in shaping and developing them. Parents, who are accessible and yet emotionally unavailable to their children, often rear individuals with low self-esteem and resilience. Such individuals often face difficulty in emotional regulation and have poor interpersonal relationships.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-esteem is one simplistic term for complex mental states that explains how one views oneself. It can be defined as the estimate one individual passes on himself/herself by way of

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Effect of parent's emotional availability on self-esteem and resilience of an individual

a value judgement. (Braden, 1950). Seligman (1999) referred to self-esteem as “Your overall evaluation of your worth as a person, high or low, based on all positive and negative self-perceptions that make up your self-concept. Self-esteem is the summary of judgement a person has about himself/herself. Subsequently, “high” and “low” self-esteem came to imply that either one means a great deal to him/herself and has high self-confidence or thinks like a “small” inferior person. It talks about the extent to which one feels worthy of respect and is competent in facing challenges that lie ahead. (Mruk, 1999). Self-respect talks about the complete feelings of self-value, self-confidence and self-acceptance. (Loery, 1996). It is an evaluation of the concept of self, in which people believe that they are talented, worthy, important and successful (Salami, 2010). It helps in a person accepting, appreciating and trusting himself entirely as an individual. (Salmivalli et al., 1999).

In addition, it is observed that empathy, inner control, self-image and perceived sense of sufficiency play a very important role in developing self-esteem. (Magnus, Cowen, Wyman, Fagen & Work, 1999; Masten, Hubbard, Gest, Tellegen, Garmezy & Ramirez, 1999).

Self-esteem develops self-respect and self-confidence and a positive attitude in an individual, whereas low self-esteem decreases self-confidence. (Heinonen, 2003).

According to Krovetz (1999), resilient children have certain common characteristics as stated below:

1. Social activity- ability to form positive relationships with others
2. Problem solving skills- To plan and strategically solve situations under their own control and to also ask for help when needed.
3. Self-rule- behaving independently and possessing their own identity.
4. Having an objective- having targets and hope for a bright future.

It was found that individuals who possess high self-esteem show more happiness and are healthier, more productive and successful. They put more effort in solving problems, have better sleep, show less compliance and don't get influenced by peers. On the other hand individuals with low self-esteem are generally worried, pessimistic and tend to fail (Coleman & Hendry, 1990).

Kassin (1998) stated that individuals with low self-esteem expect failure, stay nervous, make less effort and ignore important life situations. Whereas the individuals with high self-esteem prefer to do difficult activities and put much more effort resulting in success. Such individuals are also less sensitive to emotional situations and analyze situations critically.

Resilience is concerned with how individuals cope with stress and how they recover from trauma. It is a positive development inclined towards the future, filled with hope and positive coping, compliance and competence (Murphy, 1987). In a general sense it can be described as a successful adaptation capacity that puts in great effort and thus succeeds despite compelling conditions. Thus, resilience can be described in three ways. Firstly, as the ability of individuals to overcome difficulties while exhibiting a better development. Secondly, an individual's ability to adjust with stressful living conditions. Lastly, the phenomenon of resilience is to recover from any traumatic event.

Henderson & Milstein (1996) define resilience as a feature that changes from person to person and increases or decreases in time.

Effect of parent's emotional availability on self-esteem and resilience of an individual

According to Hynes (2005) the main features of resilience are: (a) social features, (b) emotional features and (c) cognitive features. Social features include the ability to develop and maintain friendships, establishing positive relations and effective communication. Emotional features include a strong sense of confidence, efficacy, esteem, controlling emotions and the skill of self-awareness. Cognitive features include the ability to plan the future, rationalize thinking. In brief, resilience encompasses personal qualifications that ensure achievement and is represented as a multi-dimensional feature depending on conditions. (Garmezy, 1985; Garmezy & Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1992; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Fergus & Zimmerman (2005) talk about the theory of resilience as an approach that understands risk factors encountered among adults and their healthy development despite having problems.

According to Windle (1999) the definition of resilience can be commonly stated in three main points. (a) A risk or difficulty (b) positive adaptation (c) protective factors. Protective factors are situations which lessens or removes any risk, helping in developing healthy adaptation. (Masten, 1994). Self-positivity, optimism, social sufficiency, problem-solving skills and assertiveness are individual characteristics included among protective factors related to resilience. (Terzi, 2006; Friesen, 2007; Ungar et.al., 2007).

In Western societies where autonomy, independence and decision making is valued and encouraged, studies show that parents' support for their children helps them even in their adulthood.

Attachment theory explains the basis for emotional availability and the importance of the interaction between a parent and a child. According to the theory lack of emotional availability from parents, especially from the maternal side, jeopardizes a healthy emotional and behavioural organization of a child (Cicchetti 1993; Cicchetti and Toth 2009). Studies show that parental characteristics and emotional availability are associated with delinquent behaviours, aggression, anxiety and poor impulse control. (Bosco et al., 2003) Emotional availability focuses on issues such as family responses, sensitivity and emotional participation. (Biringen 2000). Parent child interactions with a lower level of emotional interaction and availability are characterized by negativity and inadequacy which leads to psychopathology. Easterbrooks et al. 2000; Lee and Gotlib 1991; Stein-berg and Davila 2008).

Families where parental emotional availability is low pertaining to marital conflicts, divorce, presence of mental illness in parents, can intervene in healthy psychological development of a child. Parents remain influential in a child's life so prevention and training programs that are aimed at increasing parental availability is effective in reducing pathology for adolescents and adulthood. As a concept, emotional availability is often related to a child's mother as she is the prime caregiver during childhood.

Statement of problem

In today's world developing the skills of resilience and self-esteem are extremely important considering the adversity of situations. Parents' role in the development of an individual is very important, research findings suggest that children who continue to receive emotional support feel attached to them and care about their contributions whereas individuals that don't receive such support not only turn impulsive, anxious but also show less development psychologically and individually. The aim of the study is to understand the relationship

Effect of parent's emotional availability on self-esteem and resilience of an individual

between an individual's self-esteem and resilience and to find the effect of parent's emotional availability on them.

Objective of Study

To determine the relationship between an individual self-esteem and resilience and to understand the effect of parents' emotional availability on them.

Significance of the study

The research will provide a framework in understanding the relationship between resilience and self-esteem of an individual. It will help in understanding the effect of parents' emotional availability on the development of their child, it will also be helpful in developing training programs to help parents be emotionally available to develop their child's self-esteem, self-respect, self-confidence and rear a psychologically healthy and physically active child. The results are assumed to be of importance for both research and treatment purposes.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H_0)₁- There is no significant relationship between an individual's self-esteem and resilience.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_a)₁- There is a significant relationship between an individual's self-esteem and resilience.

Null Hypothesis (H_0)₂- There is no significant relationship between Parents' emotional availability and the development of an individual's self-esteem and resilience.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_a)₂- There is a significant relationship between Parents' emotional availability and the development of an individual's self-esteem and resilience.

METHODOLOGY

Participants of the study

The research consisted a total of 170 participants with 77 females and 93 males. For selection of the samples, random sampling method was used and the research was conducted by using the instruments on volunteered individuals.

Data Collection Instruments

The data of this study was obtained by-

The RSES, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) which is a 10-item test.

The BRS, Brief Resilience Scale (Smith et al. 2008) which is a 6-item test.

The LEAP, Lum Emotional Availability of Parents (Lum and Phares, 2005) which is a 15-item test.

Data Collection procedure

To collect the data, participants were asked to mark their responses after topics of the study, the purpose of the study, confidentiality and contact information of the researcher was explained to them. Following which the questionnaire sets of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) and Lum Emotional Availability of Parents (LEAP) were distributed with the demographic information and consent form. The administration of the instruments took approximately 6-7 minutes.

Data Analysis Procedure

Before analysing the raw data, missing data analysis was done and as a response the participants that had even one missing response among the 31 items (10 items of Rosenberg

Effect of parent’s emotional availability on self-esteem and resilience of an individual

Self-Esteem Scale, 6 items of Brief Resilience Scale and 15 items of Lum Emotional Availability of Parents) were not included in the analysis.

Afterwards the scores of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Brief Resilience Scale and Lum Emotional Availability of Parents were calculated.

For Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale with 10 statements, scoring was done using a three-point Likert scale (from 0 = “Strongly disagree”, to 3 = “Strongly agree”), with the total score ranging between 10 and 30. Item numbers 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored.

For Brief Resilience Scale with 6 items, scoring was done by adding the responses varying from 1-5 for all six items giving (from 5 = “Strongly agree”, to 1 = “Strongly disagree”), item 2, 4 and 6 was reverse scored. Scores ranged from 6 to 30. The average score was found by dividing the total sum by the total number of questions answered.

For Lum Emotional Availability of Parents with 15 items, it consists of two forms (maternal and paternal). Each form has 15 items, rated according to a six-point Likert Scale (from 6 = “Always” to 1 = “Never”) with the total score ranging between 15 and 90

Subsequently, means, standard deviation were computed for the scores necessary, and this was followed by a ANOVA.

RESULTS

The study was done on 170 participants out of which 45.3% were females (77 of 170 participants) and 54.7% were males (93 of 170 participants). The participants were given Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Brief Resilience Scale to solve, after which descriptive and inferential analysis was used to find the results. Resilience and self-esteem scores of 170 participants showed the following trend as given below in Table 1.1

Table 1.1 Descriptive Analysis of Self-esteem and Resilience Scores

Self Esteem		Resilience	
Mean	17.42941	Mean	3.138235
Median	18	Median	3.166667
Mode	18	Mode	3.166667
N	170	Count	170

Table 1.2 ANOVA of participant’s Self-esteem and Resilience scores

Source of Variation	ANOVA					
	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F critical
Between Groups	17360.21	1	17360.21	1236.085	6.0042E-115	3.869118
Within Groups	4747.043	338	14.04451			
Total	22107.25	339				

Effect of parent's emotional availability on self-esteem and resilience of an individual

Table 1.3 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of participant's Self-esteem and Resilience scores

	Self esteem	Resilience
Self esteem	1	
Resilience	0.475616	1

The ANOVA computed indicated statistical significance between participants' Self-esteem and Resilience scores where, $F(3.869118)$, $P < 0.01$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The Pearson's Correlation coefficient indicates a positive correlation between the variables and the data is statistically significant.

The participants were given Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Brief Resilience Scale and Lum Emotional Availability of Parents (LEAP) to solve, after which descriptive and inferential analysis was used to find the results. Resilience and scores about Emotional Availability of parents of 170 participants showed the following trend as given below in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 Descriptive Analysis of scores of Resilience and Emotional availability of parents

	Resilience	Father	Mother
Mean	3.138235	59.50588	64.29412
Median	3.166667	57.5	62
Mode	3.166667	90	90
N	170	170	170

Table 2.2 ANOVA of scores of Resilience and Emotional availability of Father

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F Critical
Between groups	270071.5	1	270071.5	1167.946	1.0694E-111	3.869118
Within groups	78157.88	338	231.2363			
Total	348229.4	339				

Table 2.3 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of participant's Resilience scores and Emotional Availability of Parent (Father).

	Individual's resilience	Emotional Availability (Father)
Individual's resilience	1	
Emotional Availability (Father)	0.327957	1

Table 2.4 ANOVA of scores of Resilience and Emotional availability of Mother

	Self-esteem	Father	Mother
Mean	17.42941	59.5058	64.29412
Median	18	57.5	62
Mode	18	90	90
N	170	170	170

Effect of parent's emotional availability on self-esteem and resilience of an individual

Table 2.5 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of participant's Resilience scores and Emotional Availability of Parent (Mother).

	Individual's resilience	Emotional Availability (Mother)
Individual's resilience	1	
Emotional Availability(Mother)	0.33196	1

The ANOVA computed indicated statistical significance between participants' Resilience scores and scores of emotional availability of parents where, F (3.869118), P< 0.01. (Father) and F (3.869118), P< 0.01. (Mother) Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The Pearson's Correlation coefficient indicates a positive correlation between the variables and the data is statistically significant.

Self-esteem and scores of Emotional Availability of parents of 170 participants showed the following trend as given below in Table 2.6

Table 2.6 Descriptive Analysis of scores of Self-esteem and Emotional availability of parents

	Self-esteem	Father	Mother
Mean	17.42941	59.5058	64.29412
Median	18	57.5	62
Mode	18	90	90
N	170	170	170

Table 2.7 ANOVA of scores of Self-esteem and Emotional availability of Father

ANOVA						
Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F critical
Between Groups	150486.5	1	150486.5	614.7937	4.6527E-78	3.869118
Within Groups	82734.15	338	244.7756			
Total	233220.6	339				

Table 2.8 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of participant's Self-Esteem scores and Emotional Availability of Parent (Father).

	Individual's self esteem	Emotional Availability (Father)
Individual's self esteem	1	
Emotional Availability (Father)	0.27567	1

Table 2.9 ANOVA of scores of Self-esteem and Emotional availability of Mother

ANOVA						
Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	F critical
Between Groups	186685.6	1	186685.6	862.6668	4.70945E-95	3.869118
Within Groups	73144.95	338	216.4052			
Total	259830.5	339				

Effect of parent's emotional availability on self-esteem and resilience of an individual

Table 2.10 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of participant's Self-Esteem scores and Emotional Availability of Parent (Mother).

	Emotional Availability (Mother)	Individual's self esteem
Emotional Availability (Mother)	1	
Individual's self esteem	0.360182	1

The ANOVA computed indicated statistical significance between participants' Self-esteem scores and scores of emotional availability of parents where, $F(3.869118)$, $P < 0.01$. (Father) and $F(3.869118)$, $P < 0.01$. (Mother) Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The Pearson's Correlation coefficient indicates a positive correlation between the variables and the data is statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

Seligman referred to Self-esteem as overall evaluation of a person's worth as an individual whereas resilience is concerned about how people cope with stress and their ability to bounce back after experiencing a stressful event. The study was conducted on 170 participants to find out how the emotional availability of parents affects the child's self-esteem and resilience. The study was also meant to find the relationship between an individual's self-esteem and resilience. The study suggests a significant positive correlation between Self-esteem and resilience of an individual. This result could be interpreted in which, as the self-esteem of an individual increases resilience also increases. Besides, increase in self-esteem also increases a person's power to struggle and the individual becomes indomitable. Self-esteem has always been an important and protective factor of indomitableness and individuals with high self-esteem often have feelings of hope and optimism (Martinek & Hellison, 1997; Kumpfer, 1999; Tusaie-Mumford, 2001; Benard, 2004; Black & Ford-Gilboe, 2004); Resilience is believed to protect people from depression, loneliness and psychological problems (Smith, 2009).

An assessment of the results of the study, the variable of Emotional availability of parents, is seen to contribute significantly in the development of an individual's resilience and self-esteem. These findings can be interpreted to explain that parents have a significant role in developing skills of their children. It can be seen that emotional availability of mothers is slightly more important in developing an individual's self-esteem and resilience, this can be understood by the fact that children often have a better connection with their primary caregiver, which in most cases is the mother, than their relationship with the less involved parent and therefore this can be better understood by maternal involvement with the child rather than comparing it with paternal versus maternal involvement. It is also suggested by the findings of the research that regardless of which parent is concerned, the child's functioning and development of essential skills is significantly dependent on the emotional availability of parent's. Given that parent's emotional availability is central to parental divorce, intrapersonal conflicts and parental psychopathology, children that are prone to such risk factors will be highly affected in their day to day lives and daily functioning and since parent's remain influential in a child's life, during adolescence and even adulthood in shaping their personality, measuring emotional availability of parents is of utmost importance for development of such crucial skills.

CONCLUSION

As the study has demonstrated, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between an individual's self-esteem and resilience. It can also be concluded from

Effect of parent's emotional availability on self-esteem and resilience of an individual

the result that there is a significant positive correlation between the emotional availability of parents and the development of that individual's self-esteem and resilience.

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Conflict of Interest

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