

## The Impact of Resilience among Orphans: A Review

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this review study was to explore the impact of resilience among orphans. “According to American Psychological Association (2018), Resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors”. A combination of re-analysis of research studies was done in the field of resilience among orphans using many computerized databases to search published research studies like Research Gate, PsycINFO, EBSCO, Crossref, Medline, PubMed and Scopus database. The findings of these studies revealed that children who are orphan had significantly a high degree of resilience than non-orphan children. Overall, the review of research studies revealed that older orphan children had higher level of resilience than younger orphan children, whereas girls had higher level of resilience when compared to boys. The keywords used to look through the databases were significant to resilience including self-esteem, personality traits, adjustment level, cultural silence, safeguarding inheritance, emotional well-being, self-efficacy, perceived social support, peer support, guardian care, religious identity, self-concept, personality, community resilience, psychological well-being, psychological resilience and delinquent tendencies.

**Keywords:** *Resilience, Psychological well-being, Orphans and Non-orphans*

Children and adolescents who have lost either of his/her parents or permanently abandoned by them are termed as orphans. “According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF, 2017) and global partners, define an orphan as a child under 18 years of age who has lost one or both parents to any cause of death.” A child who has absence of father is a paternal orphan and a child who has absence of mother is a maternal orphan. Social orphans are classified as children who struggle to meet their parental duties with at least one parent alive. Most of orphans, either run away from their home or abandoned by their families and reared in institutional homes.

Orphan children and adolescents experienced mental health problems are associated with symptoms of low self-esteem, lack of peer support, social isolation, depression, anxiety,

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## The Impact of Resilience among Orphans: A Review

stress, withdrawal, aggression, conduct problems, externalizing and internalizing behaviors and other psychological problems. To overcome these problems, promoting resilience helps them to cope and make them strong to bounce back effectively. “According to American Psychological Association (2018), Resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors”. Promoting resilience to an orphan is an important key factor to “bouncing back” from negative experiences within short period of time. Parental loss is a traumatic life-span stressors faced by an orphans, it affects their one’s own mental health. Adolescents who living in orphanages experiences various risk and challenges such as feelings of insecurity, emotional needs, lack of love, neglect, abuse, nutrition, education, care of parents and poor. Resilience is related with positive self-concept, emotional intelligence, communication skills and problem-solving. Resilience should be built in orphans based on self-awareness, mindfulness, self-care, positive relationships with others, enhancing self-esteem and purpose of their life. Here, some studies have focused on resilience, a study done by Kenneth *et al.* (2020) found that orphan adolescents had a major relation between self-esteem and resilience. The study concluded that to enhance self-esteem and resilience among orphan adolescents by developing customized intervention model helps them to cope and make them strong to bounce back effectively.

### **METHODS**

Many different computerized databases were searched as Research Gate, PsycINFO, EBSCO, Crossref, PubMed, Medline, Scopus database and published research papers like dissertation and abstracts. The keywords used to look through the databases were significant to resilience including self-esteem, personality traits, adjustment level, cultural silence, safeguarding inheritance, emotional well-being, self-efficacy, perceived social support, peer support, guardian care, religious identity, self-concept, personality, community resilience, psychological well-being, psychological resilience and delinquent tendencies.

#### *Analysis*

The studies have taken from the published research papers were reviewed. During, all the stage of the research and conclusion of the previous research articles in the field of resilience was drawn considering the negative and positive results. Also, the researcher’s view of such work was included with comprehensive discussion.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In a sample of 120 orphan adolescents (60 males, 60 females), (Kenneth & Golda, 2020) conducted a comparative study on self-esteem and resilience among orphaned adolescents. These findings showed that there were major gender differences in self-esteem and resilience. They also found that orphan adolescents had a significant relation between self-esteem and resilience. The study concluded that to enhance self-esteem and resilience among orphan adolescents by developing customized intervention model helps them to cope and make them strong to bounce back effectively. In addition, most of the studies related to self-esteem and resilience revealed that orphan adolescents had high level of self-esteem and resilience. The analysis of study also indicated that orphan adolescents had a significant positive association between self-esteem and resilience (Kurniawan, Neviyarni & Solfema, 2017). Another research study revealed that the correlation between self-esteem and delinquent tendencies was significantly negative; the correlation between self-esteem and resilience was significantly positive. The analysis of the t-test indicated that orphans had significantly high level of resilience than non-orphan adolescents. They also found that non-

## The Impact of Resilience among Orphans: A Review

orphan adolescents had more delinquent tendencies than orphan adolescents (Malik & Yasin, 2012). Hence, the study concluded that academicians and psychologist sort out their problems and take preventive measures regarding higher on delinquent tendencies as well as lower on resilience among orphan and non-orphan adolescents.

Moreover, a comparative study on personality traits, resilience and adjustment level among male and female orphans showed that there were major gender differences in personality traits, resilience and adjustment levels of male and female orphans. It was found that there was positive association between personality traits (agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness) and resilience; negative relationship between personality trait (neuroticism) and resilience. The analysis of study also revealed that there was positive relationship between adjustment (social and emotional) and resilience; positive association between personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience) and adjustment (social and emotional) (Kaur & Sharma, 2020). In addition, most of the studies related to personality traits such as extroversion, introversion and neuroticism and the level of resilience among institutionalized adolescents revealed that there was a no significant association between age, nativity, educational qualification, siblings, duration of institutionalization with personality and resilience. They also found that there was a significant association between parent alive status, moderate level of resilience and likely with introvert personality (Melya, 2018).

As the research study conducted in Malaysia by Kamsani (2014) indicated that correlation between religious identity, self-concept, and resilience was significantly positive. They also found that there was a major impact on the score of the treatment groups of religious identity, self-concept, and resilience by psycho-educational group intervention.

A study was conducted by Mishra & Sondhi, (2018) among orphan adolescents on improving resilience in India through institutional care. These adolescents were asked to do an introspection and note if any changes have taken place within themselves after being placed in institutional cares. The results indicated there was decrease in their anxiety about their future. On the other hand, it helped them to focus on higher-order goals improving their growth-fostering resources. Institutional care enhanced these adolescents to gain positive changes in their lives. In India, Katyal et al., (2015) examined a study on resilience among the orphan and non-orphan children. These findings showed that there was a major difference in resilience among orphan and non-orphan. They also found that children of orphans had higher resilience than children of non-orphans.

Sobana (2018) in her study found out the differences in resilience based on gender and age among institutional and non-institutional children. The analysis of the study revealed that 65% of older orphan children had a higher level of resilience than 7% of younger orphan children. They found that girls had a higher level of resilience when compared to boys who had a lower level of resilience. They also found that there was a major difference in resilience of elder children and girls than youngsters and boys. In Kashmir, A research sample of 250 orphans conducted a study to evaluate resilience and psychological distress among orphans (Hamid & Shah, 2017). These findings showed that there was a major negative relation between resilience and psychological distress. Comparative analysis revealed that resilience and psychological distress differed significantly with respect to gender.

## The Impact of Resilience among Orphans: A Review

Further, Mutepfa et al., (2014) conducted a study to investigate among grandparents fostering orphans on effect of health well-being, protective factors on their resilience. These findings showed that resilience-related protective factors were personal assets (problem solving abilities, high self-esteem and mastery) and social assets (social networks and spirituality). Grandparents with higher level of coping capacity, younger age and high socioeconomic status were also found to have superior personal resilience skills than friends with lower self-rated personal attributes. The study concluded that the resilience of grandparents with good physical and mental health was greater. Grandparents are protective factors to decrease adversity of an individual and helped them to cope well with caregiving. In a sample of 124 orphans with age ranging between 6-18 years, (Onkari & Itagi, 2019) conducted a study on resilience among rural orphans indicated that 55.6% were females, 49% were paternal orphans, 43.5% were 10-15 years of age, 49.2% were living with mother and 59.7% had less than four years of orphanage experience. It was found that 61.3% of orphan children were in low level of resilience. Whereas, 12.9% of children were in below average as well as average level of resilience. They also found that 55.6% of orphan children were in high category of vulnerability. Whereas, 16.9% of children were in average category of vulnerability. The analysis of the study also revealed that there was negative and significant relation between resilience and vulnerability.

Another study conducted to assess the resilience level and psychological well-being among adolescents of institutional and non-institutional; and examined the impact of resilience on psychological well-being of institutional and non-institutional adolescents (Dey & Daliya, 2019). These results showed that there was no major difference in the resilience level among adolescents of institutional and non-institutional. It was found that there was major difference in the level of psychological well-being among orphan and non-orphan in the positive relations with others. The analysis of study also exposed that there was no major effect of resilience on psychological well-being of orphan adolescents. They also found that there was significant impact of resilience on psychological well-being of non-orphan adolescents. In addition, another comparative study on children psychosocial wellbeing regarding HIV/AIDS and poverty between orphans and non-orphans (Govender, Reardon, Quinlan & George, 2014). Results exposed that there was no major difference in the resilience level among orphans and non-orphans.

In a sample of 200 children (100 orphans, 100 non-orphans), (Yendork & Somhlaba, 2015) conducted a study to investigate the impact of perceived social support, self-efficacy and resilience on the stress had symptoms like depression and anxiety among orphans and non-orphans found that orphan children had a much stronger perception of peer social support than non-orphan children, while non-orphan children had a slightly stronger perception of family support than orphan children. These research study showed that there were higher levels of self-efficacy and resilience for both orphans and non-orphans.

In Ethiopia, researchers undertook a study among adolescents who have been orphaned to identify guardianship contributions and peer support for psychological resilience indicated that majority of the orphan adolescents are resilient. It was found that older teens are more resilient than younger teenagers and girls had additional social support from their friends than boys. The analysis of study exposed that there was a major positive association between age, guardianship and peer support and resilience (Sewasew, Lewensohn & Kassa, 2017).

A review study on the mental health situation and resilience in Sub-Saharan Africa among orphans and vulnerable children found that mental health issues such as depression, anxiety,

## The Impact of Resilience among Orphans: A Review

isolation, personality disorders and other psychological problems have been encountered by children and teenagers. In order to overcome these stressful and traumatic experiences show a tendency to demonstrate resilience due to support from family, friends, school and community factors. From the study, it was concluded that social cash transfer programs and Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy have shown that children and adolescents develop their social capital and build their resilience in the midst and after adversity (Hapunda, 2015). Another systematic research review study among orphans on resilience and perceived social support proceed to gather many reviews of literatures based on orphans, resilience and perceived social support among orphans (Jameel, Shah & Ganaie, 2015).

Moreover, a cross-sectional comparative study to examine the psychosocial problems, coping strategies and resilience among orphan and non-orphan vulnerable children indicated that orphaned vulnerable children had excessive level of psychosocial challenges than non-orphaned vulnerable children. Among the sample group, gender had an effect on the psychological problem than social problem. Female orphaned vulnerable children had more psychological problems. It was found that there was a significant difference in age and grade among psychosocial problem, coping mechanism and resilience. If age and grade level increased, orphaned vulnerable children developed better coping mechanism and resilience. The analysis of study also revealed that gender, current live place and family survival status had a significant positive relation with depression, anxiety, stress, coping strategies and resilience while age and grade had a significant negative relation with depression, anxiety, stress, coping and resilience (Amare, 2018).

In Uganda, a study investigated on the cultural silence's impact on resilience of children orphaned by AIDS (Daniel, Apila & Lie, 2009). These results revealed that the paradigm of resilience, the theories of closeness and competence concepts are used as a coping strategy among orphaned children. They also found that cultural silence has been shown to increase the vulnerability of children through closeness and competence as a risk factor, whereas disclosure and openness are suggested as protective factors for improving resilience among children. A study conducted by Fotso et al., (2009) revealed that vulnerability was related more to the features of poverty and neighbourhood characteristics than to the orphan hood.

A study was conducted by Lijo & Annalakshmi (2017) suggested that the probabilistic orientation, gratitude and forgiveness of the institutionalized adolescents had been enhanced through positive intervention. They also found that the intervention resulted in improving the respondents' resilience, academic performance and overall well-being. In Ethiopia, a study conducted by Tefera & Mulatie, (2014) showed that most orphans and vulnerable children faced risk factors associated with family, school and community factors, and both orphans and vulnerable children were found to be less resilient. In addition, a study to examine the association between resilience and family, peer, and community factors in orphaned adolescents found that greater emotional resilience was significantly associated with family regulation, individuality, peer and community connection (Wild, Flisher & Robertson, 2011).

## CONCLUSION

The studies raise the question of resilience and its correlation with orphan children and adolescents in a serious way showing positive significant relationship between them. Many studies found that there was a significantly high degree of resilience among orphan children than non-orphan children. Overall, the review of research studies revealed that older orphan children had higher level of resilience than younger orphan children, whereas girls had

## The Impact of Resilience among Orphans: A Review

higher level of resilience when compared to boys. Mostly, orphan children and adolescents experienced mental health problems are associated with symptoms of low self-esteem, lack of peer support, social isolation, depression, anxiety, stress, withdrawal, aggression, conduct problems, externalizing and internalizing behaviors and other psychological problems. Resilience is a protective factor and coping strategy, it gives greater importance for the protection of orphan children such as positive self-esteem, self-awareness, self-care, mindfulness and positive relationships with others. In order to overcome these stressful and traumatic experiences show a tendency to demonstrate resilience due to support from family, friends, school and community factors. Overall, these studies concluded that continuous psychological interventions given in terms of individual and group counseling, communication skill improvement programs and moral support from caretakers, teachers and volunteers helped in enhancing the level of resilience among orphans.

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## The Impact of Resilience among Orphans: A Review

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

## The Impact of Resilience among Orphans: A Review

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