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Research Paper

Emotional Intelligence and Resilience in Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

An attempt has been made to find out the effect of emotional intelligence and gender on the resilience of adolescents. This study adopted a 2 (adolescents with high emotional intelligence versus adolescents with low emotional intelligence) x 2 (boys versus girls) factorial design. A total number of two hundred forty college students (120 boys and 120 girls) of 11th and 12th grades were purposively sampled from six different urban colleges of Odisha. The groups of 120 boys and 120 girls are further categorized into high emotionally intelligent adolescents and low emotionally intelligence. The participants of all four groups (boys with high emotional intelligence, and girls with low emotional intelligence) were compared with respect to their resilience. The result revealed that students with high emotional intelligence have higher scores in resilience than students with low emotional intelligence. Again, resilience scores in girls are higher than those in boys.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; Resilience; Adolescents; Gender

A dolescence is a transitional phase that fills the gap between childhood and adulthood; it revolutionizes one's physical, emotional, mental and social setting. It normally begins between the ages of 11 and 13 with the emergence of secondary sex characteristics and terminates at the age of 18 to 20 with the completion of adult development. Many researchers have identified the adolescence phase as the most stressful developmental stage (Clarke et. al., 1988; Harper et. al., 1991). Adolescents go through extensive physical, psychological, emotional changes. Due to this transition, most of them experience subjective discomfort, mood swings, ego defenses, confusion, and heightened somatic complaints (Kidwell et.al. 1995). Again, today's posh, educated, upwardly mobile society puts a huge emphasis on excellence in academics, and this pressure is so high on adolescents than ever before. Besides the academic burden, peer pressure for conformity to the peer group, craving for freedom, love relationships, faulty eating habits, and loneliness are equally stressful. During this age, most adolescents fail to adjust and feel overwhelmed by the demands made on them (Masten, 2006), which has an adverse effect on their mental health. Thus, it is important to improve resilience in adolescence as it is marked as the most challenging phase

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of life (Masten, 2011). Resilience helps an individual to successfully recover from negative experiences and fosters flexibility to adapt well to stressful life events (Tugade et al., 2004). Resilience is considered as a protective buffer that empowers people to bounce back and stand tall in the face of adversity. It is defined as a dynamic process that fosters positive adaptation to various stressful life events (Luther et al., 2000). People who show resilient adaptation to adversity become stronger by learning new skills, developing creative coping styles, and successfully meeting life challenges (Luther et al., 2003). According to researchers, the only difference between people who successfully adapt to various stressful situations and people who experience mal-adaptation is the presence of various protective factors, and resilience is one of them. Thus, developing both internal and external protective factors will help teenagers handle stressful situations easily (Lee et. al., 2012) and effectively. Resilient people often maintain their psychological well-being by buffering negative consequences from difficult times. A research study mentioned that students who are resilient can translate a stressful environment into a source of motivation by maintaining high aspiration and motivation, having good problem-solving skills, being goal-oriented and socially competent (Wang et al. 1994). A longitudinal study by Grotberg (1999) revealed that about half to two thirds of adolescents with resilience could successfully adapt to traumatic life events (Grotberg, 1999). Masten (2001) in his study referred to resilience as not a static attribute but rather a process that is influenced by our day-to-day decisions. Therefore, it can be evolved and improved through proper training and intervention programs.

Various researchers have adopted different approaches to define resilience in the best possible way, but debate is still on whether resilience is a trait or a process or an outcome. In this present study, resilience is considered as an attribute or personal trait. This trait-based approach defined resilience as a positive personality attribute that promotes successful adaptation in the face of adversities (Wagnild et al., 1993; Connor et al., 2003). Resilience involves a series of individual attributes that foster their ability to cope successfully with stressful life events (Hoge et al., 2007). Enhancing resilience is thus an important way to promote adolescents' psychological and social development. Being resilient, adolescents can become more competent and sturdier in the face of adversities.

The concept of emotional intelligence reflects the convergence and interaction of thoughts and emotions. Emotional intelligence is defined as a person's ability to monitor their own as well as other feelings and emotions, to distinguish between them, and to utilize that information to guide their thinking and actions (Salovey et al., 1990). Thus, the core elements of emotional intelligence are the basic insight into emotional states, a proper understanding of their nature, and the ability to regulate our own as well as others' emotions (Mayer et al., 1997). Nowadays, emotional intelligence is more accepted and acknowledged as a basic parameter for success and achievement among students. It has been shown that emotional awareness and the ability to regulate our feelings can influence our success more than IQ in every walk of life (Fernandes, 2016). From an academic standpoint, emotional intelligence has been found to be positively associated with overall psychological and emotional wellbeing, as well as self-efficacy and empathy among secondary school students (Kokkinos et al., 2012), and negatively associated with stress (Por et al., 2011), depression (Araddila et al., 2014), and negative emotions (Pekrun et al., 2014).

The concept of emotional intelligence is highlighted during the period of adolescence because the assessment of emotional intelligence offers a window to identify those at the greatest risk of problem behavior in youth (Petrides et al., 2004). In adolescence, extreme emotions are both expressed and experienced, and if not managed properly, they will impact negatively.

Hence, there is a dire need for children to have nurturing emotional skills to promote their intellectual and emotional growth. Again, a study revealed that people who have a higher level of emotional intelligence are safer, happier, and more productive in their work (Tischler et al., 2002). According to a similar research report, those with high emotional intelligence adapt effectively to stressful experiences, whereas those with low emotional intelligence adapt poorly, resulting in depression, hopelessness, and other negative behavior (Cirrochi et al., 2001). As supported by many theorists, for a fully functioning, satisfying life, it is always important to understand our own emotions as well as others. Therefore, those people who are self-aware and, at the same time, sensitive to others, can manage their conflicts with wisdom and grace. Therefore, in some ways, emotional intelligence promises to help us to solve many aspects of different human problems. Reversely, those who are "emotionally illiterate" have trouble finding their way through broken relationships, misunderstandings, confusion, and frustrations.

Emotional intelligence is the most demanding and prime facet that every youngster should possess, in order to develop a positive vision for their bright future. Along with emotional intelligence skills, resilience is equally important to create a protective buffer while dealing with negative and stressful life events. A substantial number of studies in the area of positive psychology have evidenced the importance of emotional intelligence in predicting resilience. Because most stressful events have emotional components, and people's ability to manage these emotions effectively is often considered as another positive factor while determining resilience (Troy et al. 2011). Another study on high school students confirmed the fact that emotional intelligence (Jowkar, 2007). Likewise, Armstrong et al. (2011) also indicate that emotionally intelligent behavior in a stressful circumstance is adaptive, therefore it is directly connected and antecedent to psychological resilience. Positive affectivity allows people to deal well with adversity and stress because it increases one's cognitive resilience levels (Gloria et al., 2013).

The gender socialization process has made boys and girls different with the amount of resilience they exhibit in response to diverse stressors. Hill et al. (1983) discovered in their study that during adolescence, behavioral and psychological differences are so amplified due to the augmented socialization process that puts heavy pressure on boys and girls to fulfil the culturally approved gender role. Various studies confirm the gender diversity in resilience capacity among adolescents. Similarly, a study by Werner (1985) reported that girls seem to be more resilient than boys due to their hormonal variation and different social factors. Evie (2014) conducted a study on the impact of bullying among teenagers. The results revealed that girls are more resilient than boys in expressing their resiliency, and they show less aggressive behavior than boys.

In the present study, an attempt has been made to find out the mediating role of emotional intelligence and gender on resilience in adolescents. It is hypothesized that females are expected to get higher scores on resilience than males. It is widely expected that adolescents with high emotional intelligence will show greater resilience than low-emotional-intelligence adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a series of events are carried out to find out the role of emotional intelligence and gender in the resilience of college students.

Participants

Two hundred forty adolescents within the age bracket of seventeen to nineteen years were purposively sampled from six different colleges of Odisha. All of them were intermediate (1st year) students. Out of two hundred forty adolescent participants, there were 120 boys and 120 girls.

Measures

In this present study, emotional intelligence (EIS) and resilience (RS-14) measures are applied. The emotional intelligence scale (EIS) was developed by Hyde et al. (2002). This scale has been designed around Goleman's model of emotional intelligence. Initially, Hyde et al. (2002) started with 106 items, but later left with 36 items, after applying certain statistical techniques. The final 36 statements are extremely significant to the scale. These items are to be responded to on a five-point likert scale. The reliability of the scale is 0.88, which has been achieved through a split-half reliability coefficient with a 200-sample size. Again, 0.93 is its content validity. There are 10 different factors on this scale (Suleman et al., 2020). The EIS scale is a 170-point self-report measure of emotional intelligence, with 4 items on the self-awareness scale, 5 items on the scale of empathy, 6 items of self-motivation, 4 items of emotional stability, 4 items of managing relationships, 3 items of integrity, and 2 points on the self-development, value orientation, commitment, and altruistic behavior scale. The total score reflects the overall emotional intelligence score.

The Rs-14 (resilience scale) is a modified version of the original resilience scale (RS-25) by Wagnild et al. (1993). Refinement studies aided in the development of a shorter version scale, RS-14 (Wagnild, 2009), which incorporated fourteen items from the original (RS-25). The Rs-14 employs a seven-point likert-type format. Responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). All the items are positively worded. The items' total score ranges from 15 to 98. A score above 82 indicates high resilience and below 60 is a low resilient group. According to the author of the tool, this scale only takes 5 minutes to complete and, at the same time, is most suitable for adolescents (Wagnild, 2009).

Procedure

The study involved a 2 (adolescents high emotional intelligence versus adolescents with low emotional intelligence) x 2 (adolescent boys versus adolescent girls) factorial design. Both boys and girls were given an emotional intelligence questionnaire and they were categorized as having high emotional intelligence and low emotional intelligence on the basis of the median split of their scores on emotional intelligence. The participants of these four groups were compared with respect to their resilience.

RESULTS

Two-way factorial ANOVA along with Tukey's HSD test for multiple comparisons among groups and partial eta² for estimation of the effect size of the F-statistics were computed. The results are reported in Table 1. The mean ratings and standard deviations on resilience are presented in table 2.

Table 1: Summary of ANOVA & Tukey's HSD Test Showing Difference in Resilience among Adolescent Boys and Girls of High and Low Emotional Intelligence.

Sources	df	Ms	F	η_p^2
Gender (A)	1	1210.54	33.85**	0.125
E.I. (B)	1	2364.04	66.11**	0.219

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A x B			1	107.75	3.01		
Within			236	35.76			
Tukey's HSD Test							
Compared Groups	1 vs.2 P<.01	1 vs.3 P<.01	1 vs.4 P<.01	2 vs.3 P<.01	2 vs.4 NS	3vs.4 P<.01	
Note:	<i>l=High E</i> * P < 0.0 ** P < 0.0)5	Low EI Boys	3= High E	I Girls 4= I	Low EI Girls	

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) performed on resilience reveals significant main effect for gender (F=33.85; df =1, 236, P < 0.01). The calculated partial eta² value is 0.125, which suggests a moderate effect size of gender on the resilience. As shown in the table 2, the combined means for boys and girls are 62.40 and 64.88 respectively. Hence, it may be concluded that independent of emotional intelligence, adolescent girls have a higher resilience than have boys.

Table 2: Mean, SD, Combined Mean of Boys and Girls of High and Low Emotional Intelligence Groups in Resilience

0	Boys		Girl	Girls	
Groups	Μ	SD	\mathbf{M}	SD	Μ
High EI	66.87	8.90	69.28	6.72	68.08
Low EI	57.92	5.92	60.48	6.19	59.20
Combined	62.40	7.13	64.88	6.37	

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) also pointed to the significant main effect for emotional intelligence (F=66.11; df =1, 236, P < 0.01). As shown in table-2, the calculated combined means of the high and low EI groups are respectively 68.08 and 59.2, which point to the fact that high emotional intelligence reported greater resilience than less emotionally intelligent adolescents. The effect size of emotional intelligence on the capacity of resilience reported by partial eta² is 0.219, which has a moderate effect size on resilience in adolescents. Further, compared to the effect size of gender role (0.125) and emotional intelligence (0.219) on resilience, emotional intelligence reports a greater effect size. Such findings point to the fact that the resilience of adolescents is more influenced by emotional intelligence than by gender. Finally, the interaction effect is not significant, thereby suggesting that gender and emotional intelligence are independent factors of influence on resilience.

In order to locate exact group differences, multiple comparisons by Tukey's HSD test were also carried out. The results pointed out that five of the six multiple comparisons are significant. Compared between high-EI boys and girls, girls are found to have significantly higher resilience than boys. However, no significant difference was found between low-EI boys and girls, implying that girls with higher EI benefit more from resilience than their male counterparts. Further, significant differences among high and low EI boys and high and low EI girls in favour of the high EI groups suggested the advantage of the high EI groups in resilience.

DISCUSSION

The present empirical evidence examines the role of emotional intelligence and gender on adolescents' resilience. One of the interesting features of the present findings is that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence indicate significantly greater resilience compared to the low emotional intelligence group. Thus, emotional intelligence appears to have a significant effect on resilience. A person with a higher level of emotional intelligence can better cope with stressful situations (Salovey, 1999) and defend the effects of adverse situations through proper emotional self-awareness, expression, and management (Choudhry, 2019), thus promoting one's resilience skills. Research findings confirmed the fact that psychologically resilient people are effectively described as emotionally intelligent (Salovey, 1999) because positive emotions often aid the process of resilience in people to deal with daily hassles (Tugade, 2004). People with high emotional intelligence have a greater tendency to experience positive emotions in times of stress and use these positive emotions to become more resilient during adverse situations (Barrett et. al., 2001). Again, these experiences of positive emotions like love and gratitude are thought to contribute to a resilient outcome in emotionally intelligent individuals (Fredrickson et al., 2005). According to research on secondary high school students, having a high level of emotional repair and clarity were linked to a high level of resilience (Vilant et. al., 2000).

The present findings also reveal adolescent girls are more resilient than adolescent boys. Thus, gender differences are found in resilience among adolescents. A study reveals that as females mature earlier than males in their adolescence, they show different personality traits (klimstra et. al., 2009; Weisberg et. al., 2011). Not only are these differences found in personality traits, but also variations in hormonal, anatomical, and social factors are seen (Heartherington et. al., 1986). Thus, due to all the above reasons, gender differences are found in resilience. In the same vein, some researchers claim that gender differences develop during childhood and continue into adolescence, which influences the manner in which people attain resilience (Blatt-Eisengrat et al. 2009; Bananno et al. 2007). Due to our unique socialization practice, girls are found to be more strong, sociable, resilient, and flexible than boys. Women seek more social support and express less anger as a coping strategy. Another study confirms the fact that high social support leads to high self-esteem and leads to fewer depressive symptoms in women (Galambos, 2006). Seeking social support is considered one of the important protective factors and a strong predictor of resilience. A research study has indicated that girls often face challenges throughout their lives in comparison to boys, and the accumulation of these hurdles has enhanced the capacity for resilience within women (Choudhury, 2019). A study by Sun et al., (2007) suggests that females are more likely to exhibit resilience. Since birth girls face more societal restrictions and challenges in life compared to boys. Although they get inequal treatment but they have been socialized to tolerate and bear with it. May be for this girls are more resilient compared to that of boys.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study will be useful in helping parents and educators develop more positive skills within today's youth. It also makes adolescents aware of their psychological health and helps them make better adjustments and have more flexibility in every situation.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflict of interests.

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