

## Effect of Childhood Emotional Neglect and Perceived Peer Support on Resilience Among Young Adults

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### ABSTRACT

“Childhood Emotional Neglect” is basically unintentional or intentional neglect by the caregivers of a child and the perception of peer support available to people are perceived peer support. Resilience is the ability to bounce back after a difficult experience. The main aim of this study was to assess the effect of childhood emotional neglect and perceived peer support on resilience in young adults. Accordingly, the study was conducted on two set of populations the Female and Male Young adults aged 18 to 25 years old, the sample size was 200 (100 males and 100 females). The main areas of judgment were the level of childhood emotional neglect and peer support and its relationship with Resilience. The data was collected from these two groups and was further analyzed with the help of SPSS tool. The methods or mode used for the analysis were Mean, Standard deviation (SD) and correlation to know about the comparison between the two genders and correlation to find the significant relation between the two variables. The finding suggests that there is a significant relationship between the two variables, that is Childhood emotional neglect and resilience and no significant relationship between peer support and resilience in young adults respectively. The results reveal that there is no significance difference among childhood emotional neglect, perceived peer support and resilience based on gender (Only a slight difference was found) and there was a significant negative correlation between CEN and Resilience.

**Keywords:** *Childhood Emotional Neglect, Perceived Peer Support, Resilience, Expression of Emotion, Family Dynamics*

Childhood Emotional Neglect is basically unintentional or intentional neglect by the caregivers of a child. It can be defined as the inability of the caregivers or parents to provide consistent emotional support to their child or children at the early stages of their life. It can happen in any form or means and can lead to a child dealing with emotions and handling situations alone without any support from an adult figure. Parents who generally lack proper regulation of their emotions tend to unknowingly present certain behaviors which can impact the emotionality of a child at deeper levels.

The neglect can be unintentional in ways where the parents themselves are suffering from any past traumas from the childhood experiences or are indulged in any situation in their

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personal or professional life which instigates such behavior or behaviors patterns (basically byproducts of their own stress or trauma).

This kind of neglect from the parents can leave a long-lasting impact on the person who has received it and can have an impact on his/ her personality formation as well as attachment styles too.

### ***Effects of Childhood emotional neglect***

CEN can affect a person on many levels emotionally. There can be a variety of byproducts which can lead to emergence of certain kind of emotions and generation of behaviors which can be unexplainable at times.

According to researchers' people who suffer from emotional neglect in their forming years can experience overwhelming emotions which can be assumed as unexplainable or unreasonable feelings. Here basically the lack of a parent being attuned to the emotional needs, which can make the child understand and help them cope with the uncomfortable or new feelings and emotions leads to them being totally overwhelmed.

Another thing is that the child, later in life, may experience the formation of a belief - that emotions are not valid, and the emotional needs are not necessary to be catered to i.e., they are not worthy of attention by self or others. This happens because of no one's showing up (specially the parental figure) at times when there was an utmost need of emotional support and attention specially in childhood which eventually forms difficult schemas or beliefs that emotions can be left uncatered and support is not needed at the first place or even if offered can be ignored.

A person who suffered emotional neglect can feel a need to please or obey others, especially authority figures because they may find it to get attention or a path from which they may receive the same love, support, and warmth. They can get into a habit of fulfilling other people's needs while being ignorant of their own emotional needs. This whole pattern can lead to them being in more unhealthy relationship patterns or a vicious cycle of pleasing others.

### ***Peer Support in Young adults***

Peer support is a notion where people who have similar life issues and experiences help one another socially, practically, and emotionally. People who have gone through comparable problems and can empathize with others' struggles frequently offer this kind of help.

Peer support is a potent idea that may offer people the social, emotional, and practical help they require to overcome obstacles and realize their objectives. According to the researchers a person always has the innate tendency to be understood and feel the horizons of love, warmth, and support. It has mostly shown positive changes in a person's life.

### ***Resilience in young adults***

Generally, Resilience is known as "the ability to bounce back". It has a lot of synonyms like flexibility, plasticity, elasticity etc. which somehow explains the process of it. Recovering from difficult situations is not a cake walk, it takes time to absorb things, people, situations and emotions and feelings related to it. Processing information is not always easy, especially when it involves something that a person didn't see coming.

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Resilience building amongst young adult in India is important and complex at the same time because of the complexities of family structures, family dynamics, situational complexities, generational attitude differences and cultural diversity. The concept of getting into a therapeutic process was not well known but now is evolving with passing time. The imprints of emotional neglect as a child can be healed with development of resilience through perceived peer support.

The motive of this paper is to explore these aspects and draw further implications for future studies as well. Also, topics like childhood emotional neglect are known but somehow missed or hidden in our society, it is important to throw a light upon these factors pertaining to mental health or overall wellbeing of an individual.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Chen, et.al (2022) examined the linkage between resilience and adverse experiences in childhood among college students. The collection of data was done through random sampling and sample size was of 1872. The analysis was linear regression. The findings ACEs exhibited a negative correlation with individuals' resilience, which was consistent with our hypothesis. Despite its limitations, this study discovered a negative relationship between ACEs and college students' resilience. To protect persons from ACEs, preventive services and treatments are required.

Dambacher, et.al (2022) As resilience has been proposed as a protective factor, this study investigated the impact of resilience on the relationship between adverse childhood events and aggressiveness. The sample size was of fifty-seven forensic inpatients who were male. The self-report assessments were used. The findings suggested that those who had experienced childhood abuse showed lower resilience ratings and increased reactive and appetitive aggressiveness; subsequent investigation found a link between the two. Resilience was found to be a complete mediator between adverse childhood events and reactive and appetitive aggressiveness in a mediation study. These data showed that resilience plays a role in the cycle of violence.

Paola, et.al (2022) studied how resilience can be increased by sensitivity of the environment among young adults who went through emotional neglect in childhood. The sample size was of 738 adults of a university and they aged in range of 18-30 years. Environmental sensitivity and contextual resilience moderated the influence of childhood emotional deprivation on relational well-being in young adulthood. Young people with high levels of environmental sensitivity were more vulnerable to the positive influence of supportive environments, displaying higher levels of well-being compared to those with low levels of sensitivity of environment.

Mbutita and Adeli (2020) examined the relationship between formation of resilience and childhood emotional neglect that is invisible at times. The data was qualitatively analysed with the help of unstructured interviews and the sample size used was of subjects falling under the category of 10-46 years. The results indicated that emotional neglect manifests itself as parental rejection, feeling unwanted, family violence, discrimination, emotionally unavailable parents, discovering the presence of a stepfamily, and separation/divorce. The EEM manifests itself in the individual's daily life, albeit unconsciously, as an outburst of anger, resentment/hatred, bitterness, poor relationships with peers and parents, low self-confidence, inability to handle criticism, loneliness, mistrust, fear, feelings of inadequacy,

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drug and substance abuse, and in extreme cases hopelessness, depression, and suicidal tendencies.

Muller, et.al (2019) studied the relationship between childhood experiences and how it can generate social dysfunction affecting the attachment style. The data was collected from adults ranging between 18 to 41 years. The sample size used here was of 121 adults. The method was by online recruiting. The result suggested that lower levels of plasma oxytocin levels indicated high levels of neglect emotionally and further represented attachment style which was insecure.

Hong, et.al (2018) aimed to study childhood mistreatment and its impact later in life in various areas like resilience, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation. The effect of habitual use of emotion regulation strategies on psychopathology has also been shown to be partially dependent on individuals' emotion regulation self-efficacy - that is, how effective individuals believe they can be in implementing emotion regulating strategies (Goldin, Manber-Ball, Werner, Heimberg, & Gross, 2009, 2012). Thus, evaluations of the possible interaction impact of emotion regulation self-efficacy and techniques on felt stress on the indirect effect of childhood maltreatment on perceived stress in young adults should be improved.

Lee, et.al (2018) analysed the linkage between symptoms of depression and emotional neglect and further mediation of its impact on resilience. The sample size was of four hundred and thirty-eight students from medical college. The questionnaires used were CTQ and BDI. Correlational analysis was done. Emotional neglect was found to be a significant predictor of low resilience and high depression symptoms in both gender groups. Furthermore, resilience was discovered to be a mediator between emotional neglect and depressed symptoms.

Olowokere and Okanlawon (2018) examined the relationship between improvement psychosocial health and vulnerable school environment through activities paying emphasis on resilience building and peer support. The sample size was of 340 students who were vulnerable and were studying in public schools. Method that was used was comparative prospective design. The study revealed that resilience training is more effective than peer support activities in improving self-esteem and lowering anxiety symptoms. Both treatments had comparable impacts on depression and social connectedness. Given the limited resources available to support school health services in the research context, resilience training may be more effective in relieving psychological distress among vulnerable in-school students.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Aim***

To assess the effect of childhood emotional neglect and perceived peer support on resilience in young adults.

#### ***Objectives***

The objectives of this study are listed below-

- To study the gender difference among childhood emotional neglect, perceived peer support and resilience.
- To study the relationship between childhood emotional neglect and resilience.

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- To study the relationship between perceived peer support and resilience.

### ***Hypothesis***

The hypothesis for this study has been discussed below-

- There will be a significant difference in childhood emotional neglect, perceived peer support and resilience among males and females.
- There will be a significant Negative correlation between emotional neglect and resilience.
- There will be a significant positive correlation between perceived peer support and resilience.

### ***Research Design***

The research design of this paper is a quantitative design. The correlation where the relationship between the three variables is assessed i.e., childhood emotional neglect, perceived peer support and resilience. The positive or negative relation between the two variables is assessed and comparison between the two genders with respect to the variables is seen.

### ***Sample selection***

The sample size used in this paper is of 200 people out of which 100 males and 100 are females. The selection was done through random selection method. The age group of young adults was from 18 to 25 years. Different scales for different sample population were used accordingly. The Childhood Emotional Neglect Questionnaire for measuring childhood emotional neglect, Brief Resilience Questionnaire for measuring resilience and Peer Support Questionnaire for measuring perceived peer support.

### ***Data Collection Procedure***

The data collected with respect to the variables of the topic and a variety of research papers were assessed. The research paper from the past 20 years was read and was understood in a manner to get a better understanding regarding the whole concept. The participants were selected randomly to get unbiased results and findings and ethical standards during the whole process was followed.

The participants were presented with both the scales on in person. Every participant was well introduced to the topic and the purpose of the research, and their due informed consent was taken. Once the data was collected, individual scale wise scoring was done. Moreover, the results were analyzed and interpreted using some of the statistical methods (by using the SPSS) for better calculations and evaluation.

### ***Psychological Measures***

A total of three tools were selected to imply in this study in accordance to the three variables. The first tool was Emotional Neglect Questionnaire used to measure the level of for emotional neglect in childhood, The second tool was Peer Support Questionnaire used for measuring perceived peer support and the third tool was Brief Resilience Questionnaire for measuring resilience in young adults (aged 18 to 25).

*Emotional Neglect Questionnaire (ENQ)* was developed by Dr. Jonice Web is a self-administrating scale. It measures the level of childhood emotional neglect present in an

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individual. It consists of 22 items. It is rated on a 2-point scale including options like Yes or No which are scored as 1 and 0 respectively.

*Peer Support Questionnaire (PSQ)* was developed by Mahnaz Mostafaei Alaei is a self-administrating questionnaire. It measures the level of perceived peer support in an individual. It consists of 22 items and is rated on a 5-point scale including options like 1=SD Strongly Disagree 2=D = Tend to Disagree 3=N = Neutral 4=A = Tend to Agree 5=SA = Strongly Agree.

*Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)* was developed Ohio State University and is a self-administrating questionnaire. It measures the level of resilience in an individual. It consists of 5 items and is rated on a 5-point scale which includes options like Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree Strongly and Agree which are scored as 1,2,3,4,5 (in statement no's 1,3,5) and 5,4,3,2,1 (in statement no's 2,4,6) respectively.

### RESULTS

*Table 1 Gender wise comparison between mean, SD, and t test scores in Childhood emotional Neglect*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>Emotional Neglect Scale</b>	Male	100	14.97	4.006	475	.636
	Female	100	14.69	4.233	475	.635

The above table shows the gender wise difference in the scores of the mean standard deviations and t test of the Emotional Neglect scale. Here the mean and standard deviation scores are higher in Male young adults.

*Table 2 Gender wise comparison between mean, SD, and t test scores in Perceived Peer Support*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>Peer Support Questionnaire</b>	Male	100	81.30	14.702	.507	.613
	Female	100	80.13	17.889	.508	.612

The above table shows the gender wise difference in the scores of the mean standard deviations and t test of the Peer Support Questionnaire. Here the mean and standard deviation scores are higher of male young adults.

*Table 3 Gender wise comparison between mean, SD, and t test scores in Resilience*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>Resilience</b>	Male	100	2.892256	.4828775	.690	.491
	Female	100	2.841584	.5529598	.691	.491

The above table shows the gender wise difference in the scores of the mean standard deviations and t test of the family pathology scale. Here the mean and standard deviation scores are higher of Male young adults.

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**Table 4 Correlation between Childhood emotional neglect and Resilience among young adults**

Correlations		Emotional Neglect Scale	Brief Resilience Scale
<b>Emotional Neglect Scale</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	-.305**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	200	.000
	N		200
<b>Brief Resilience Scale</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.305**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	200
	N	200	

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above depicts the correlation between Childhood Emotional neglect and Resilience among scores, thereby denoting a relationship between the two variables.

**Table 5 Correlation between Perceived Peer Support and Resilience among young adults**

		Peer Support Scale	Brief Resilience Scale
<b>Perceived Peer Support</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)	200	.713
	N		200
<b>Brief Resilience scale</b>	Pearson Correlation	.026	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.713	200
	N	200	

The table above depicts the correlation between Perceived peer support and Resilience among scores, thereby denoting a relationship between the two variables.

**DISCUSSION**

This paper is divided into different segments to get a better understanding. It includes the introductory part, the aim, the reviewed research papers and finally the discussion and concluding part. The aim of this study was to assess the effects of Childhood emotional neglect and perceived peer support on the level of resilience in young adults by reviewing different case studies and research paper in relation to this topic and by data collection and interpretation from a sample of 200 males and females in India.

According to Hypothesis 1 There will be a significant difference in childhood emotional neglect, perceived peer support and resilience among males and females. The sig two tailed value is greater than 0.05 for all the variables indicating no significant difference among levels of these three variables with respect to gender. This hypothesis can be partially accepted as the mean and S.D scores of males were slightly on a higher level as compared to the females, with respect to all the three variables i.e., for CEN Mean (14.97) scores were higher in male young adults as compared to female young adults (14.69). Peer support Mean (81.30) scores were higher in male young adults as compared to females Mean (80.13) and

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Resilience Mean (2.89) scores were higher in male young adults as compared to female young adults (2.84).

According to Hypothesis 2 There will be a significant Negative correlation between emotional neglect and resilience. This hypothesis was accepted as the higher level of CEN (childhood emotional neglect) and lower level of Resilience was seen in young adults, the value of  $r = -.305^{**}$  was less than the level of sig. i.e., 0.01.

According to Hypothesis 3 There will be a significant positive correlation between perceived peer support and resilience. This hypothesis was rejected as no correlation was found between the two variables perceived peer support and resilience and the value of  $r = .026$  was more than the level of sig. i.e., 0.01. This suggests that there is no significant impact of perceived peer support and resilience, it must be noted that it is not necessary that people at all ages would be willing to take peer support or have a positive perception of the same. Also the scores for perceived peer support fall in the low or medium category because of which further finding a relationship was not exactly possible.

Further regression analysis could not be done because there was no correlation between perceived peer support and resilience.

This suggested that Emotional Neglect in childhood does have a negative impact on the formation and level of resilience in adulthood and there is no significant difference in this based on gender. Further no impact could be found in Perceived peer support and resilience according to the sample population.

### CONCLUSION

To conclude we can say working on behavior and adapting to new family situations with a positive approach is important in order to create good examples in front of children. Children get really attached to their parents and idolize them from the very beginning and developing age is the most crucial stage for them as they are most sensitive at that time. Faulty behavior negatively impacts their personality and molds it in such a way that it gets difficult for them to adjust in future social situations. It is important to build the patterns of resilience within the forming stages, a balanced amount of understanding, adapting, accepting, and listening is something that can be inculcated in relations especially between a child and parent. It is important and necessary to fill the gaps between the relationship and allowing to evolve the empathetic sides.

#### *Limitations of the study*

1. The sample size was insufficient for statistical measurement because of which the accuracy of the results cannot be exactly justified. Increase in the size of the sample in respect to the research in future.
2. There was a lack of previous research studies in this area/topic particularly its in the shadow zone as people take these areas lightly and not much research is done on this topic in India at present.
3. The tools available can be improvised/enhanced or new tools can be created as they don't possibly provide deeper level of assessment exactly.



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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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