

Research Paper

## Relationship between Affective Forecasting and Resilience: A Study among College Students from Kottayam District of Central Kerala

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### ABSTRACT

Affective forecasting is the ability to foresee or predict one's future emotional states. Previous research suggests that affective forecasting is a highly complex and intricate process that is also very prone to cognitive biases. Affective forecasting is a good framework for understanding various aspects of human behaviour ranging from decision-making to various psychopathology conditions. The present study aims to examine the relationship between affective forecasting and resilience among college students in Kerala. The positive and negative affect schedule (PANAS) and brief resilience scale (BRS) were used to collect data and were analysed in a correlational research design. Contrary to previous research findings the study does not show any significant correlation between positive and negative affect forecasting with resilience. This finding provides the possibility for considering other factors such as personality and cultural aspects that may influence college students.

**Keywords:** *Positive Affect, Negative Affect, Affect Forecasting, College Students*

Affective forecasting can be defined as an individual's ability to foresee their future emotional states (Wilson & Gilbert, 2005). Individuals consider the ability to predict future states to be important, as events have a huge impact on their lives. People anticipate that certain events will make them more happy or sad, yet the accuracy of such a prediction is in question. Researchers have poured into the aspect of affective forecasting to identify how people envisage their future feelings. Various aspects, such as the valency of future feelings, the experience of specific feelings, the intensity of states, and their duration have been identified as part of affective forecasting by researchers. The valency of emotional states has been defined into two polar dimensions of positive and negative affect (Barrett & Russell, 1999). Previous experience does help individuals to determine which side of the effect they are more likely to fall into when a specific event occurs. Forecasting

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## **Relationship between Affective Forecasting and Resilience: A Study among College Students from Kottayam District of Central Kerala**

specific events may be a little more complex due to the number of emotional states contained in the two poles of the valence.

For example, in positive affect, we can find different states such as excitement, proud, inspired, etc., and in negative affect we can find different states such as distress, hostility, guilt, irritability, etc. Feelings states may also manifest as a melded form of different emotions, which makes the forecasting much more complex. The intensity and duration of the emotional states are a much more difficult process. Researchers have found that people exhibit durability bias which leads to overestimation of the duration of emotional states. This happens due to a lack of insight into the cognitive systems that mitigate the emotional states, especially negative emotions (Gilbert et al., 1998). Research has also shown the tendency to overestimate the impact that an event has their emotional reactions. This tendency known as the impact bias, leads to overestimation of intensity and duration of an emotional response (Gilbert et al., 1998). Another interesting aspect is the expectation effect, which shows that affective forecasting could change the actual emotional response (Klaaren et al., 1994). Studies indicate that affective forecasting is not only an integrate part of thinking about future, but also guides decision-making processes and behavior. The literature has shown that affective forecasting is a highly complex cognitive process. Affective forecasting is influential in various psychological aspects spanning from cognitive biases to decisions making (Karl et al., 2021) to psychopathology conditions (Rizeq, 2024). Individuals holding more positive affective forecasting about their future have been found to have greater psychological well-being (Colombo et al., 2020). This paves the possibility for further research into other aspects of well-being including resilience.

Resilience is considered as complex ability with many differences in its definition with differing constructs. Since the 1970s, psychologists have shown an increased interest in resilience. Masten (2001) defines resilience as the ability to adapt successfully to acute stress and trauma, or more chronic forms of adversity. It is the ability to bounce back from adversities and even prosper in difficult situations. The experience of a negative situation and adapting positively to that situation is at the heart of research on resilience (Masten, 2001). Psychological studies armed with the development of positive psychology have explored how resilience affects aspects ranging from stress to psychopathology (García-León et al., 2019). The construct of resilience is multidimensional and acts as a buffer from the negative situations of life and helps individuals to be successful. Despite extensive global research on resilience and affective states, there remains a noticeable gap in representation from the Indian population on this topic. This cultural and demographic disparity underscores the need for further research opportunities in this field. The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between affective forecasting, particularly focusing on the polar dimensions of positive and negative affect and resilience.

### ***Objectives***

The major objectives of the study are:

- To study the relationship between positive affect forecasting and resilience among college students in Kerala.
- To study the relationship between negative affect forecasting and resilience among college students in Kerala.

## Relationship between Affective Forecasting and Resilience: A Study among College Students from Kottayam District of Central Kerala

### *Hypotheses*

- There will be a significant relationship between positive affect forecasting and resilience among college students in Kerala.
- There will be a significant relationship between negative affect forecasting and resilience among college students in Kerala.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Participants*

The sample of the study consisted of 90 participants in the age group of 18 to 20, studying in Kottayam district of Kerala. The sample selection was done using the convenience sampling method. The data collection was conducted after obtaining the consent of the participants in their free time. The participant was assured that the data collected would be kept strictly confidential and it would be used only for research purposes. The participants were acknowledged for their participation after completing the data collection process. The data were analysed using SPSS (v.25), and the relationship between the two variables was assessed using Spearman bivariate correlation.

### *Affect Forecast*

To measure the affect forecast the participants were administered the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson et al., 1988). The PANAS has 10 items to measure both positive and negative affect. The reliability and validity of the measure have been established by previous research (Crawford & Henry, 2004). The original instructions of PANAS were “Indicate the extent you have felt this way over the past week” The present study has adopted the instructions from the research of Colombo et al. (2020). The participants were instructed to, “Indicate the extent you think you will feel over the next two weeks” to measure the forecasted affect.

### *Resilience*

The brief resilience scale (Smith et al., 2008) was used to measure the participants' resilience in this study. The BRS has six items where the participants are instructed to select one number for each statement to indicate how much they disagree or agree with each statement. The scale is developed in a 5-point Likert format, with options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher scores would indicate higher resilience of the participants. The reliability and validity of the scale have been established (Smith et al., 2008).

### *Research Design*

A correlational research design was employed to study the relationship between affective forecasting and resilience among college students.

## **RESULTS**

The results of the data analysis are shown in the table 1.

*Table 1 Spearman bivariate correlation between affective forecasting and resilience among college students.*

	<b>Resilience</b>	<b>Sig.(2-tailed)</b>
<b>Positive Affect Forecasting</b>	.192	.070
<b>Negative Affect Forecasting</b>	-.003	.978

*N = 90*

## Relationship between Affective Forecasting and Resilience: A Study among College Students from Kottayam District of Central Kerala

The data analysis results show a positive correlation between positive affect forecasting and resilience ( $r = .192$ ,  $p = .070$ ). The correlational analysis between negative affect forecasting and resilience shows a negative correlation between the two variables ( $r = -.003$ ,  $p = .978$ ).

### DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to explore the relationships between affective forecasting—specifically focusing on positive and negative affect forecasts—and resilience among college students in Kerala, India. The findings revealed some interesting insights, albeit with nuances that warrant further investigation.

#### *Resilience and Negative Affect Forecast*

The analysis found no significant correlation between resilience and negative affect forecasting ( $r = -0.003$ ,  $p = 0.978$ ). This suggests that, according to the data collected in this study, negative affect forecasting does not directly influence resilience among college students in Kerala. Hence, we reject the hypothesis “there will be a significant relationship between negative affect forecasting and resilience among college students in Kerala.” This result contrasts with previous research findings (Colombo et al., 2020), which have indicated a negative association between resilience and negative affect forecasting. This discrepancy might be attributed to various factors, including cultural or demographic differences specific to the Kerala context, such as differing coping mechanisms or social support structures. Additionally, it is possible that the measures used for affective forecasting and resilience could have interacted differently within this population, influencing the observed results. Therefore, while the current findings are inconclusive, they underscore the need for more nuanced exploration in future studies.

#### *Resilience and Positive Affect Forecast*

A weak positive correlation was observed between resilience and positive affect forecasting ( $r = 0.192$ ,  $p = 0.070$ ), although it did not reach statistical significance at conventional levels. Hence, we reject the hypothesis “there will be a significant relationship between positive affect forecasting and resilience among college students in Kerala.” This finding suggests a potential trend where higher levels of positive affect forecasting may be associated with slightly higher resilience among college students in Kerala. This aligns with previous research suggesting a positive relationship between positive affect forecasting and resilience (Colombo et al., 2020). However, like the negative affect findings, the small effect size and lack of statistical significance indicate that other factors not measured in this study may play a more significant role in shaping resilience outcomes among this population.

#### *Implications and Future Directions*

The results highlight the complexity of resilience as influenced by affective forecasting within the cultural context of Kerala. The lack of significant correlations found in this study prompts further exploration into the specific cultural and demographic factors that may moderate these relationships. Future research could benefit from larger sample sizes and inclusion of other variables such as personality traits and specific stressors relevant to college students in Kerala. Such investigations would provide a more comprehensive understanding of resilience and its predictors, offering valuable insights for psychological interventions and support systems tailored to this population.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while this study did not find strong evidence for direct relationships between affective forecasting—both positive and negative—and resilience among college students in Kerala, the findings suggest intriguing avenues for future research. The nuanced nature of these relationships underscores the importance of context-specific investigations in understanding psychological processes like resilience within diverse cultural settings. By addressing these gaps, researchers can contribute to more targeted interventions aimed at promoting resilience and well-being among college students in Kerala and similar contexts globally.

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**Relationship between Affective Forecasting and Resilience: A Study among College Students from Kottayam District of Central Kerala**

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***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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