

The Relationship Between Self-Esteem, Resilience, and Emotional Intelligence in Young Adult Females

Riya Khosla^{1*}, Dr. Rajat Kanti Mitra²

ABSTRACT

Self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence are essential for supporting young adults as they navigate life transitions and evolving personal and social dynamics. The present study examined the relationship between self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence among 120 young adult females using standardized measures: the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Brief Resilience Scale, and Emotional Intelligence Scale (HPD). Correlational analysis using SPSS revealed moderate positive associations between self-esteem and resilience ($r = .475$), resilience and emotional intelligence ($r = .495$), and self-esteem and emotional intelligence ($r = .499$). These findings suggest that higher levels in one variable may be linked to increases in the others. Limitations include a relatively small sample size with a specific focus on a single gender and the absence of in-depth qualitative and longitudinal analysis. Results, despite limitations, lead the way for advocating for gender specific research in psychological resilience and emotional functioning. Future research should involve larger, more diverse samples and advanced statistical methods to enhance the understanding and intervention strategies tailored for adult populations.

Keywords: *Self-Esteem, Resilience, Emotional Intelligence, Young Adulthood*

Self-esteem is a key aspect of self-concept that influences behavior, emotional regulation, and social-cognitive development. Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as an attitude toward the self, which can be either positive or negative, emphasizing it as a reflective evaluation of one's worth. In line with Rosenberg's perspective, Feldman (2015) elaborates self-esteem involves both positive and negative evaluations, encompassing emotional responses toward oneself.

Self-esteem also has a significant emotional and behavioural impact. Umar et.al. (2021) found that individuals with elevated self-esteem tend to experience greater happiness, increased confidence, and higher self-worth, while those with low self-esteem are more likely to experience anxiety, self-criticism, and lack of confidence.

Mruk (2006) further refined the concept by offering four definitions of self-esteem: (1) an attitude involving thoughts, feelings, behaviors; (2) a gap between real and ideal self;

¹MA Counselling Psychology, Amity University Noida

²Professor, Amity University Noida

*Corresponding Author

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(3) a psychological response, including feelings of acceptance or rejection; and (4) part of personality (structure of self), connected to motivation and self-regulation. These definitions underscore the complexity of self-esteem, intertwined with both evaluation and emotion.

Self-esteem is a multifaceted construct shaped by both cognitive evaluations and emotional experiences, influenced by internal beliefs and social contexts. It encompasses self-assessment, social comparisons, feedback, personal goals, and environment we work in such as home, work, and social settings. Understanding its complexity reveals how it develops and relates to other psychological traits, such as resilience. Authors found resilience help boost self-esteem, and having high self-esteem can protect one's resilience (Liu, Y. et.al., 2014; Bin, W., & Wei, L., 2007). While lower self-esteem levels weaken resilience (Li et al., 2020); these findings illustrate the interrelatedness of self-esteem with resilience.

Resilience, as defined by the American Psychological Association (2018) is the process and outcome of efficient adaptiveness in dealing with stressful or difficult circumstances in life, particularly through behavioral and affective flexibility, as well as adjusting to both external and internal stressors.

Building on this definition, resilience involves the capacity to restore psychological, physical, and interpersonal balance following demanding stressful circumstances, ultimately leading to healthier outcomes (Zautra et al., 2008). Following a challenging experience, resilience allows an individual to return to their previous levels of affective, psychological, and intellectual functioning (Borji et al., 2020).

Research has also highlighted several factors that can significantly strengthen resilience. Adaptability, hopefulness, the ability to manage emotions, healthy attachment, a supportive environment and early childhood connections, well-functioning motivation system, self-knowledge, and access to resources all enhance resilience, enabling individuals to thrive despite challenging conditions (Southwick.et.al. 2014).

People's resilience is also affected by emotional intelligence. Schneider.et.al., (2013) found individuals with higher emotional intelligence have greater resilience; they tend to view stress as a challenge than threat, enabling adaptive responses in stressful situations. Emotional Intelligence defined as the ability to understand, express, and respond to emotions, supports social functioning, decision- making, and coping with challenges.

The Earliest contributions towards defining the concept comes from Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer (1990) works, they defined emotional intelligence as social intelligence aspect that allows individuals to understand and distinguish their emotions from that of others while using this insight to guide their cognitive processes and behaviors. Goleman (1995) building on foundational definition popularized and expanded the concept, defining emotional intelligence as a set of abilities that allow individuals to motivate themselves, persist through frustration, control impulses (including delaying gratification), regulate their moods, prevent distress from impairing cognitive function, empathize with others, and maintain hope.

Several theorists have proposed models to explain the structure and function of emotional intelligence (EI). Mayer and Salovey's (1997) Ability Model defines EI as a set of cognitive skills for processing emotional information, such as emotion recognition, comprehension, emotion control, and usage of emotion for logic and reason. Goleman's (1998) Mixed Model

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integrates EI with personality traits, highlighting the role of motivation, empathy, self-awareness, and social skills in achieving goals and effective leadership. Bar-On (2006) described emotional intelligence as emotional and social competencies that influence one's ability to manage environmental demands, comprising intrapersonal skills, interpersonal relationships, stress management, general mood, and adaptability.

In summary, self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence are interconnected traits shaping human self-perception, how individuals respond to challenges, and social interaction. Understanding complexity of these dynamics is particularly relevant in young adulthood, a phase marked by significant psychological, emotional, and social changes.

Individuals face crucial decisions related to career, identity, and relationships. During this stage, traits like self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence are essential for navigating challenges, enhancing emotional regulation, and achieving goals, leading to a more fulfilling life.

Corroborating findings from previous research have demonstrated a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and resilience (Balgiu, 2017; Fernández-Castillo et al., 2022). Usán Supervía et al. (2022) extended this work by reporting that resilience also relates positively, though more weakly, to life satisfaction; gender differences were identified: with males showing higher resilience and females reporting greater life satisfaction.

Studies show a positive link between resilience and emotional intelligence (Lee et al., 2017; Sarrionandia et al. 2018). Kashif et al. (2024) found that components of emotional intelligence, such as managing one's own & others emotions and using them effectively, positively influenced resilience. While no gender differences were found, significant differences emerged between students from public and private universities. Mouatsou and Koutra (2023) reported that cognitive reappraisal positively correlated with resilience, while emotional suppression had a negative effect. Self-esteem mediated both relationships.

Several studies (Saleh, 2020; Lewerissa, E. C., et al., 2024; Jindal & Tayal, 2022; Mubashir, A.S. et al., 2013; Nabirye, 2023) consistently find a significant correlation between self-esteem and emotional intelligence. Mubashir et al.(2013) further highlighted a negative correlation between self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and anger. Hossain et al. (2024) examined the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between anxiety and self-esteem; findings support Saleh's results, extend them, revealing a significant negative correlation between anxiety and both emotional intelligence and self-esteem, with emotional intelligence influencing this relationship.

Corroborating evidence from multiple studies highlights significant positive correlations between self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence. Vidisha and Baruah (2023) examined students with and without specific learning disabilities, while Yaghoubi et al. (2019) focused on children with hearing impairments. Similarly, Díaz and García (2017) found that individuals with physical disabilities scored higher on emotional intelligence and resilience than those without disabilities. In the self-esteem aspect, individuals without disabilities reported higher mean scores. Both men and women with physical disabilities exhibited lower self-esteem than their non-disabled counterparts.

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Rationale

Self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence are vital aspects of young adults' lives. Previous studies have examined these variables in pairs or alongside broader variables across various populations, research focusing solely on their direct interrelation remains limited, and centres on the differently abled population especially school-age children. This highlights a gap in understanding how these three traits interact in the general young adult population.

The present study aims to explore their relationship in this broader context, with a particular focus on the female population, offering increased insights and contribute to gender-specific research.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

Studies the connection between Self Esteem, Resilience, and Emotional Intelligence related to young adult females

Objectives

Assess relationship in Self-Esteem, Resilience, and Emotional Intelligence

Hypotheses

- **H1:** There will be a positive Correlation between self-esteem and resilience
- **H2:** There will be a positive Correlation between resilience and emotional intelligence
- **H3:** There will be a positive Correlation between self-esteem and emotional intelligence

Sample

The research consists of 120 individuals aged between 18 -25 years. The sample consists of female participants chosen for the study from the Delhi NCR region. A purposive sampling technique was used.

Description of tools utilised

- **Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale:** RES is a 10-item scale developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, it measures global self-worth by positive and negative feelings. Participants tell indicate the extent of their yes or no on a 4 point likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Reliability: RES demonstrate a coefficient of .92 indicating strong internal consistency. Test retest reliability reveal correlation of .85 and .88 indicate great test-retest stability. Measures of depression and anxiety are associated of RES
- **Brief Resilience Scale (BRS):** BRS is developed by Smith, R. W. et. al., in 2006. It includes 6 statements. Uses 5-point Likert scale “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5). Has a good internal consistency with Cronbach alpha ranging from .80 to .91. Convergent validity BRS positively correlated with other resilience measures, optimism, purpose of life, active coping etc.
- **Emotional Intelligence Scale:** It comprises 34 statements, developed by Hyde, Dethe, and Dhar in 2002. It uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree; reliability coefficient = 0.88, high content validity. To find out the

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validity of the coefficient of reliability (Garrett, 1981), reliability index was calculated, which indicated high validity being 0.93.

Procedure

After receiving authorisation from appropriate authorities and considering ethical concerns, participants were told of the study's goal and they gave informed consent. Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, Brief Resilience Scale and Emotional Intelligence Scale HPD were conducted in person. Participants were asked to answer honestly, and their responses were kept private and anonymous. After completion data was collated, coded and ready for statistical analysis

Value assessed

- SPSS software was used
- descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) Inferential statistics (correlation)

RESULT

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation

Descriptive Statistics

VARIABLES	N	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
SELF ESTEEM	120	26.67	4.934
RESILIENCE	120	17.75	3.719695
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	120	128.43	16.00406

Table 2. Correlation between Self-esteem, Resilience, and Emotional Intelligence

Correlation

VARIABLES	SELF ESTEEM	RESILIENCE	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
SELF ESTEEM	1	.475	.499
RESILIENCE	.475	1	.495
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	0.499	.495	1

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

DISCUSSION

The interrelationships of self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence were studied among young adult females. Utilising standardised instruments—including the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg), the Brief Resilience Scale (Smith, R. W. et. al) Emotional Intelligence Scale by Hyde, Pethe and Dhar (HPD).

Data was evaluated using statistical techniques, including mean and standard deviation. Self-esteem had a mean of 26.67 and a standard deviation = 4.93; Resilience showed a lower mean of 17.75 and a Standard deviation = 3.72, and Emotional intelligence had the highest mean (128.43, SD = 16.00). When comparing the variables, emotional intelligence exhibited highest mean and variability, while resilience showed lowest mean and least dispersion.

Responses provide an overview of the distribution and variability of responses across the sample.

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The study employed correlational analysis (Pearson correlation) to test proposed hypotheses. Moderate positive correlation of self-esteem and resilience ($r = .475$, $p < 0.01$), show greater resilience of people with high levels of self-esteem. Results are consistent with prior research: Vidisha and Baruah 2024; Fernández-Castillo et.al., 2022; Usán Supervía et.al., 2022 reported a positive association between self-esteem and resilience, reinforcing the current study's results.

The present study also revealed a moderate positive correlation in resilience, emotional intelligence ($r = .495$, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that people with greater emotional intelligence are equipped to recover from adversity, potentially due to their enhanced emotional regulation and coping skills. This is consistent with the findings of Vidisha and Baruah (2023), thereby providing further empirical support for the observed association.

Additionally, a moderate positive correlation was observed in self-esteem, emotional intelligence ($r = .499$, $p < 0.01$). Results suggest those with higher emotional intelligence have more favourable self-concept, potentially through greater self-awareness and emotional understanding. This association is well-documented in previous research, including studies by Vidisha and Baruah (2023), and Nabirye (2023), each of which found significant positive correlations between self-esteem and emotional intelligence among young adult populations. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted and proved.

The observed relationships align with theoretical frameworks suggest that individuals with higher one's worth, emotional skills, and adaptive coping skills are better positioned to navigate developmental challenges during young adulthood. These results not only contribute further but also emphasize fostering self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence to promote goodness among young adult females.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the associations among self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence in 120 young adult females (ages 18–25) using standardized measures. Descriptive and correlational analyses revealed moderate positive relationships among self-esteem, resilience and emotional intelligence, highlighting their interrelated nature. These results highlight the important role that emotional intelligence, self-evaluation, and resilience play in fostering adaptation to adversity, enhancing self-worth, and interpersonal functioning among young adult females.

Study limitations include a relatively small, all-female sample, a correlational design, and lack of control for confounding variables such as socioeconomic status and mental health. These factors restrict generalizability and causal interpretation, with a limiting insight into the developmental and longitudinal interplay of these variables. Future research should employ larger, more diverse samples, control for key psychosocial variables, and utilize advanced statistical methods to deepen understanding of emotional and psychological development in young adults

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Conflict of Interest

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