

The Role of Self-Efficacy and Mindfulness in Promoting Youth Resilience

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Abstract

The concept of resilience has brought about a significant change in research. Instead of focusing on the negative aspects through the “at-risk” model, researchers now adopt a more comprehensive “strength-based” approach that recognizes and highlights individual strengths. This research article aims to study the role of self-efficacy and mindfulness in promoting resilience among youth. Resilience is the ability to adapt and recover from adversity, which is crucial for positive youth development. The present study sample consists of 240 high school students (120 males and 120 females) belonging to the age group of 15 to 18 years. In order to collect data to measure the variables under study Resilience Scale, The General Self-Efficacy Scale, and Mindful Attention Awareness Scale were used. Analysis was carried out in two steps. In the first step, Descriptive statistics and Pearson’s Product correlations between the various variables were calculated. Multiple Linear Regression analysis was conducted to estimate the relative contributions of self-efficacy and mindfulness as predictor variables to the variance in resilience. The finding suggests that self-efficacy and mindfulness significantly contribute to prediction of resilience and accounted for a 30% variance. We can say that instead of solely targeting deficits or vulnerabilities, researchers can develop programs and policies that build upon individuals’ strengths and capacities, which will help them become more resilient in future.

Key-words: Resilience, self-efficacy, mindfulness, youth

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INTRODUCTION

People are faced with various challenging situations throughout their lives. Some individuals possess effective coping mechanisms and have traits like resilience which enables them to navigate through these experiences without significant disruptions in their daily functioning. When faced with a stressful situation, these people have enough in built resources that helps them fight their problems and bounce back with strength. Factors such as personal strengths, self-efficacy, support systems, mindfulness and previous experiences determine how individuals handle their lives. Research on resilience has made significant strides in recent years, revealing a fresh perspective in the field of resilience and the outcomes that are seen in the youth. The complex interplay between personal traits, social environments, and developmental processes has made researchers belonging to various fields, including Sociology, Psychology,

Education, and Health care, adopt an interdisciplinary approach. Extensive research on psychological resilience aims to shed light on why certain people are better adjusted in stressful situations than others and therefore, the variables that have an impact on resilience can provide valuable insights so that effective strategies can be developed for overcoming adversity.

The construct of resilience has gained paramount attention in the area of Developmental Psychology. The ground-breaking work of Garmezy, Rutter and Werner has launched the conceptual formulations of resilience (Garmezy et al., 1993). According to Darwin (1898), resilience is “the capacity for successful adaptation to the environment” and according to Garmezy (1991), “it is the ability to recover from negative events”. Resilience “is the ability to sustain psychological stability in the face of stress” (Combes-Malcome, 2007). It is crucial for preventing the development of

psychopathology, maintaining optimal functioning, Studies have discussed the correlations between and psychological and physical health despite mindfulness, self - efficacy and resilience (Greason stressful life circumstances (Ryff and Singer, and Cashwell, 2009; Thompson et al.,2011). A meta-2003).In the past, researchers often used the "at- analysis observed that factors related to resilience, risk" model to study vulnerable populations, which such as positive affect, self-efficacy, social support, tended to focus on identifying negative factors or optimism, self-esteem, and life satisfaction, had a deficits. However, with the popularity of resilience more significant relationship with resilience than risk and extensive research work conducted in this area, factors and socio-demographic variables(Lee et al., resilience is now a key factor and furthermore, 2013).Therefore, the authors suggested that for the there is a change with a bent toward a more holistic development of resilience, enhancing the resilience- and positive approach. This new perspective related factors might be more effective than reducing promotes the ideathat individuals have inherent the risk factors.However, there is not much work assets and resources. Resilience theory supports a done on the resilience-predicting capacities of strengths-based approach for developing preventive mindfulness and self-efficacy, thus making it measures byenhancing promotive traits. important tounderstand the association between self-efficacy, mindfulness and resilience.

There are two perspectives currently popular in the field of resilience: The Trait-oriented perspective and the Process-oriented perspective.The former viewpoint defines resilience as a personal trait that helps some at-risk youth overcome adversity and subsequently achieve optimal or even exceptional adjustment. This perspective states that it is something one is born with and places responsibility on the individual for failing to overcome adversity.The process-oriented perspective regards resilience as an interaction of individuals and their environment for overcoming the negative effects of risk exposure. It also enables people to cope successfully with traumatic experiences and alsohelps them to avoid the negative trajectories that are related or influences risk factors (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

Adolescent resilience can be elaborated either by discussing psychosocial outcomes or by investigating protective mechanisms which can enable adaptation. The outcomes are good health, well-being and good functional capacities. The processmeans that there is a need to understand how the adolescents modify and ameliorate their responses to their adversity. Resilience in youth must be studied at three levels: individual level, family level processes and community level interventions and processes. In this particular research work, a focus is on individual level factors i.e. self-efficacy and mindfulness.

During adolescence, the youth is in an exploratory stage and they want to know who they are, what their psychological traits are and how they can be part of the physical world they are living in. Bandura (1981), a pioneer in the field of self-efficacy research has conceptualized self-efficacy as“an individuals' belief system to deploy the motivation, cognitive resources, and agency to exert control over a given event”. In order to face their situations, adolescents need to be strong in their mind and in their cognitive capacities and this is the role of self-efficacy. Self-efficacious people are more positive and have a good attitude about them. They may have a control over their negative and self-magnified thoughts as compared to those who are personally inefficacious (Ozer and Bandura, 1990).Presumably, self-efficacy is essential in developing competence when facing adversity. Maclean (2004) identified several qualities associated with resilience, including initiative and insight, intellectual ability, optimism, placidity, identity, trust, and self-efficacy. Pooley and Cohen (2010) reported that general self-efficacy is a sound and a good predictor of resilience,belongingness and social support. According to Svence and Greaves (2013), high general self-efficacy helps a person to have more internal resources and thus more is the resilience and wisdom. Also, in the Italian school context,

Sagone and De Caroli (2013) concluded that the adolescents having more resilience perceive themselves as more efficient in scholastic areas. They also added early adolescents who were highly self-efficient in problem-solving, scholastic performances and empathy had more resilience.

Furthermore, another significant variable that can contribute to resilience is Mindfulness. Langer and colleagues (1989, 2000) have defined mindfulness as an open, assimilative "wakefulness" to cognitive tasks. It is defined as a sustained and a receptive attention to current events and experiences (Brown and Ryan, 2003). Bishop et al. (2004) explained that mindful individuals do not feel the need to forcibly control their thoughts. According to Keng et al. (2011), "mindfulness makes individuals become more aware of the fleeting nature of their unpleasant thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations, encouraging them to respond more flexibly and objectively rather than react to situations". Greenberg and Harris (2012), found that mindfulness and academic self-efficacy significantly impact resilience. Keye and Pidgeon (2013) conducted research on the association between academic self-efficacy, resilience and mindfulness among university students, and findings indicated that mindfulness and academic self-efficacy significantly impact resilience. Akin and Akin (2015) explored that mindfulness affects coping competence and resilience. People who score high on mindfulness are likelier to have high competence in resilience, coping and efficacy. Mindfulness and coping competence are crucial in supporting psychological well-being and it also increases the resilient capacity in teenagers. Mathad et al. (2017) studied correlates and determinants of resilience among 194 nursing students of B.Sc. Nursing and NIMHANS College in Bangalore and found significant correlations between resilience and mindfulness in nursing students. Younes and Alzahrani (2018) noted a positive relationship

between mindfulness, resilience, and flourishing life satisfaction.

Objectives of the study

Mental health problems are on the rise among adolescents and young adults. "The World Health Organization (WHO) states that 10% to 20% percent of adolescents worldwide are struggling with mental health issues". Mental health issues are higher if adolescents experience risk factors. We know that adolescence is a period when youth struggle to fit in socially and emotionally. Hence, how can we make them stronger and better adjusted? It is pertinent to curb mental health problems early, so promoting wellness in the youth in the initial stages becomes essential. Resilient or hardy individuals can utilize the adolescent period for limitless growth and development. Therefore, instead of always viewing the adolescent period as a time of psychological perils, it should be viewed as a period of positive adaptation outcomes. In light of pertinent literature, the following objectives and hypotheses have been undertaken:

1. To study the relationship of self-efficacy, mindfulness and resilience in youth.
2. To study self-efficacy and mindfulness as variables predicting resilience in youth.

Hypotheses

H1: There will be a positive correlation between self-efficacy and resilience among youth.

H2: There will be a positive correlation between mindfulness and resilience among youth.

H3: Self-efficacy will significantly and positively predict resilience.

H4: Mindfulness will significantly and positively predict resilience.

METHOD

Sample and procedure

The present study was conducted on 240 adolescents (120 males and 120 females) aged 15-18 years. The mean age of the group is 16.53.

The sample belonged to different English medium schools in India. Incidental sampling technique was employed. Data was collected from participants using various self-report measures. Informed consent form was filled out by parents and school authorities before collecting the data from participants.

Psychological Tools

Resilience Scale (RS) - Wagnild and Young (1993): This is a self-report questionnaire with twenty-five items that measure personality characteristics or coping resources that enhance an individual's adaptation. It is used to identify the degree of individual resilience. The overall resilience score for the 25-item inventory ranges from 25 to 175 and answers are obtained on a 7 points Likert-type scale. The scores were calculated by summing up the responses of all 25 items of the scale. This test has no reverse scoring. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.72 to 0.94 (Neill & Dias, 2001).

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)- Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995)

It is a self-report scale which has ten items. It is a 4 points Likert-type scale. The total score is obtained by summing up the responses to each item, ranging from 10 to 40. The Cronbach's alpha ranged from point 0.76 to 0.90. This scale has sufficient criterion-related validity. Numerous correlation

studies have obtained significant positive correlations with pleasant emotions, dispositional optimism, and work satisfaction, indicating that criterion-related validity exists. "Negative coefficients were reported with depression, anxiety, stress, burnout, and health concerns (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 2009)".

Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) - Brown and Ryan (2003)

This is a 6-point scale comprising 15 statements. 1 to 6 score is assigned against the responses. To compute the composite score, the mean of the 15 items is calculated. Reliability was computed as 0.80- 0.90 (Cronbach) by the test maker. Higher scores revealed higher levels of dispositional mindfulness.

Statistical Analyses

Statistical analysis was carried out through the IBM SPSS 22, using Pearson's correlations and Multiple Linear Regression to measure the associations between self-efficacy, mindfulness and resilience.

Results

The mean and standard deviations for each variable is reported in Table 1.

Table No 1: Descriptive statistics and Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation between Resilience, Self-efficacy and Mindfulness among Youth (N=240)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
1 Resilience	125.78	22.19	—		
2 Self-efficacy	29.28	4.64	.495**	—	
3 Mindfulness	3.7114	.78	.356**	.234**	—

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 1 shows the correlations between the predictor and criterion variables. The association between youth resilience and self-efficacy was computed using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.

The table showed a substantial, positive association between self-efficacy and resilience, with $r = 0.495$, $p < 0.01$. Mindfulness and resilience are also positively correlated $r = 0.356$, $p < 0.01$. Hence H1 and H2 are accepted.

Table No.2: Regression Coefficients of Self-efficacy and Mindfulness on Resilience

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Constant	38.04	8.67	4.39	.000	[20.97,55.11]
Self-efficacy	2.09	.27	7.84	.000	[1.56,2.61]
Mindfulness	7.18	1.58	4.56	.000	[4.07,10.28]

Note CI = Confidence interval.

Table No.2 shows the influence of self-efficacy and mindfulness on youth resilience. The R^2 value of .306 revealed that the predictors explained 30.6% Variance in the outcome variable with $F(2,237) = 52.29$, $p < .001$. The findings revealed that self-efficacy positively predicted youth resilience ($\beta = .43$, $p < .001$); furthermore, mindfulness also positively predicted youth resilience ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$). Consequently, both H3 (the positive prediction of self-efficacy on youth resilience) and H4 (the positive prediction of mindfulness on youth resilience) are accepted.

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between self-efficacy, mindfulness and resilience in the youth. The adequate positive correlations have been observed between the two predictor variables and resilience. It was hypothesized that self-efficacy and mindfulness will positively predict youth resilience. Results show that self-efficacy and mindfulness account for 30% variance in youth resilience showing that both self-efficacy and mindfulness are important variables in fostering youthful resilience. By enhancing these qualities, individuals are equipped to navigate challenges and bounce back from adversity effectively.

Adolescence is the most controversial stage of human development as it triggers a number of mental health disorders (Myhilli, 2004). In addition to intense learning and rapid development, adolescents show high risk-taking behavior, moodiness, and embarrassment. Peer pressure and influence play an important role in risk-taking behavior among adolescents. This stage is incredibly stressful as there are significant advances and shifts in perception, personality characteristics, and adjustment patterns. Prolonged stress due to physical changes related to puberty, school life

demands, expectations of parents, lack of resources, peer pressure becomes a threat to the overall healthy development of adolescents. Consequently, adolescents have to cope with these challenges, where some individuals struggle to do so while others face them head-on and come back even stronger. This ability to bounce back from adversity is called resilience.

In this study, the result shows that adolescents with higher levels of self-efficacy are stronger when difficulties and problems emerge in their lives, as they believe in their capability to find solutions. By fostering self-efficacy in young people, we can empower them to approach challenges with confidence and develop resilience. Mindfulness correlates with reduced anxiety and increased emotional regulation, which are essential components of resilience. In conclusion, enhancing self-efficacy and mindfulness in youth can contribute significantly to the development of resilience.

These findings are supported by earlier research, with Rutter (1985) arguing that self-efficacious outlooks substantially support resilient outcomes. According to McMillan and Reed (1994), "resilient students had high internal motivation, an internal

locus of control, and a high level of self-efficacy". According to Lightsey's (2006) theory, a person's self-efficacy is one of the most important factors affecting their resilience, and is therefore of paramount importance.

Further on, as we move to the variable mindfulness, it can be seen that the results of this study are in line with the findings reported by Keye and Pidgeon (2013), who found that mindfulness accounted for 44% of the variation in resilience levels and that there was a substantial positive association between mindfulness and resilience ($r = 0.67, p = 0.000$). Similar reporting was also done by Thompson et al. (2011) and they found that adopting a mindful and accepting approach to experiences helped promote psychological resilience after a setback by decreasing ruminative and depressive thoughts. Bajaj and Pande (2016) argue that mindful people are better equipped to respond to challenging situations without automatically reacting in a non-adaptive and automatic manner. In their research, Joyce et al. (2019) concluded that online mindfulness-based resilience training can enhance adaptive resilience. It may be inferred that when one can focus on the present without judgment, one does not engage in a blame game but instead contemplates ways to address the current problem or situation rather than fixating on past events. By consciously engaging with their thoughts and emotions, individuals overcome their difficulties and problems quickly and with their efforts, making them resilient. Mindfulness has a potential role in bolstering resilience among the younger population.

Limitations and Implications of the study

In this study, a small sample size has been employed for the purpose. The sampling technique is dependent on the availability of the adolescents. The study needs to be conducted on a larger sample size, and youths from diverse populations can be compared. Gender differences can also be studied for deeper understanding.

Young people rely heavily on the sources of information from their families, schools, and social

settings. Teachers and parents should consult various sources to aid in developing youths' resilience and self-efficacy. For instance, a variety of mindfulness-based interventions are available for building resilience in youth, including programs that improve cognitive abilities and emotional regulation, as well as those that reduce stress levels. Through educational and mental health programs, mindfulness-based practices can contribute to youth's well-being and adaptive coping skills. The long-term effects of mindfulness interventions on resilience among diverse youth populations need to be investigated, as well as the optimal implementation strategies.

In Conclusion, the focus should be on the positive youth development movement, which directs its focus on the development of mental health. It is crucial to make youth resilient to face the challenges in life. The positive youth development approach promotes enhancing strengths and positive outcomes by fostering healthy relationships and providing opportunities. There is a need to promote positivity, mindfulness and self-efficacy in the youth. Efficacy beliefs regulate human functioning and emotional well-being. It enhances cognitive and motivational processes and makes the individual more capable. During the developmental phase, individuals explore profoundly, seeking transcendence and grappling with the quest for meaning. Mindfulness becomes a critical aspect of the youth cognitive landscape, influencing their perception of self and purpose in life. The study suggests that these variables can promote strength and positive mental health in youth.

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