



Resilience and Coping mechanisms in times of crisis among Young Adults

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Abstract

The current paper is a primary research on the topic resilience and coping mechanisms in times of crisis among young adults. The study explores the dynamic interplay of resilience and coping mechanisms among young adults facing crisis. The aim of the current research is to verify if having high resilience among young adults correlates with better coping mechanisms when faced with a crisis and if resilience helps them become more adaptable to crisis situations. As this demographic encounters unprecedented challenges, understanding their ability to withstand adversity becomes paramount. A sample of 120 young adults in the age of 18-26 was taken. Standardised tools were used to measure level of resilience and coping. The results indicated a strong positive correlation between the two variables resilience and coping. This validated the stated hypothesis, which stated that young individuals with greater resilience are

more likely to use successful coping mechanisms in difficult situations. In contrast, individuals with weaker resilience could find it more difficult to handle challenges in an effective manner.

Keywords: *Resilience, coping, young adults*

Introduction

Resilience

Resilience, according to APA, is the ability “to adjust effectively in the face of hardship, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even substantial levels of stress” (American Psychological Association, 2014). The term "resilience" describes the capacity to effectively adjust to pressures and preserve psychological health in the face of hardship. There is no right or wrong way for someone to possess resilience. It deals with attitudes, actions, and behaviours that everyone may acquire and grow. Being flexible is key to resilience. It comes down to adaptability. It's about realizing that we have strengths that, until we need to use them, we may not have known we possess (U.S. Department of State, 2017).

One key aspect of resilience is its dynamic nature. Rather than being a fixed trait, resilience is malleable and can be cultivated over time through various interventions and experiences (Southwick & Charney, 2012). For example, engaging in activities that foster positive emotions, such as mindfulness meditation or gratitude exercises, has been shown to enhance resilience by promoting adaptive coping strategies and enhancing psychological assets (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Being resilient isn't about "toughing it out" or grinning in the face of every obstacle. When faced with a setback, resilient people nonetheless experience sadness, rage, or frustration. However, they manage to move forward and approach obstacles with optimism, inventiveness, and a positive outlook (U.S. Department of State, 2017).

Coping Mechanisms

“Our employment of behavioural and cognitive strategies to deal with both internal and external stressors is known as coping” (Algorani & Gupta, 2021). Coping is the application of behavioural and cognitive strategies to reduce negative emotions and conflict brought on by stress, or to manage expectations when they are judged to be excessively demanding or exceed one's resources (APA, 2018).

Types of Coping

Coping is typically classified into four main types (Algorani & Gupta, 2023)

- ***Problem-focused coping***: This centres attention on the problem causing the distress. Examples of this kind of coping include planning, suppressing competing activities, active coping, and controlled coping.
- ***Emotion-focused***: This strategy seeks to minimise negative emotions related to the problem. This strategy includes, among other things, accepting oneself, laughing, positive reframing, and turning to religion.
- ***Meaning-focused***: in this approach, an individual uses cognitive strategies to determine and control the meaning of the circumstances.
- ***Social coping***: The method by which a person asks their community for physical or emotional assistance in order to deal with stress.

Coping Styles

When faced with a stressor, individuals react to it in various ways known as "coping styles." Coping styles refer to a set of consistent traits that shape a person's actions during stressful situations. In general, there are two types of coping; reactive coping, which deals with stressors after they arise, and proactive coping, which attempts to avoid stress in the future. In contrast to proactive coping, who are less sensitive to external cues and more inflexible and

methodical in their approach, reactive people perform better in environments that are more changing (Algorani & Gupta, 2023).

Theories of Coping

- ***Transactional Model of Stress and Coping:*** This theory emphasizes the dynamic relationship between individuals and their environment. It proposes that coping involves cognitive appraisal processes, where individuals evaluate the situation (primary appraisal) and their resources for managing it (secondary appraisal). Coping strategies are then selected based on these appraisals, aiming to reduce or manage the perceived stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)
- ***Coping Styles Theory:*** This theory proposes that individuals adopt different coping styles based on their personalities and situational factors. Two primary coping styles identified are problem-focused coping (efforts to actively address and solve the problem) and emotion-focused coping (efforts to regulate emotional responses to the problem) (Carver et al., 1989).
- ***Social Support Theory:*** This theory highlights the importance of social relationships and support networks in coping with stress. It suggests that perceived social support can buffer the impact of stressors and enhance coping abilities (Cohen & Wills, 1985)

Young adulthood and the Transition

Young adults, typically aged between 18 and 40, is a critical period of transition from adolescence to full-fledged adulthood (Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development). Young adulthood is a special developmental stage in which the young adult can engage in self-examination and identity creation through important developmental tasks. Injuries, mental health problems, drug abuse, and disorders related to the sex and reproductive system are

comparatively common among young adults. Young adults are particularly vulnerable because of their higher propensity for risk-taking behaviour and the negative health effects that follow. (Higley, Elena, “Defining Young Adulthood” (2019)

Crisis

A circumstance that causes a great deal of mental or emotional strain on anyone involved (APA, 2018). Young adults face a number of crisis:

- ***Education and employment:*** According to YMCA research, 44% of young people worry about their studies and the stress of exams since schooling has become a competitive environment in young people's lives. Since more people are required to pursue higher education each year, academic standards are greater than ever. Additionally, there is a belief that youth lack the necessary skills for employment, because of which they are paid less than previous generations.
- ***Mental health difficulties:*** More youth than ever before are struggling with mental health issues. This may have an impact on their friendships, relationships, school, and home lives.
- ***Uncertainty:*** The times we live in are uncertain. For many young individuals, the future is an area of great uncertainty. Inequalities in society have been brought to light and intensified by the pandemic; individuals are voicing serious financial worries as the crisis deepens, and many young people are, of course, worried about climate change (Rm-Admin, 2021).

Rationale

The rationale behind the decision to focus on studying young adults, is that, this is the most difficult stage of life, since people undergo significant transformations at this time. The fact that adolescents and teens suddenly have to deal with more difficult adult issues since they

abruptly become adults, in itself sounds challenging. Young adults face a variety of crisis, as this stage involves individuals passing out of schools and colleges and either looking for higher studies or jobs, some even decide to get married early which can bring various different forms of crisis. In times of crisis, young adults often face various stressors such as economic instability, academic pressure, and social upheaval. Understanding how young adults cultivate resilience and utilise coping mechanisms during crises can shed light on effective interventions and support systems. Through this research, the aim is to explore the science behind resilience, if and how resilience can enhance our coping mechanisms and the level of resilience and coping among young adults in times of crisis.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To investigate the level of resilience and coping mechanisms employed by young adults during a time of crisis.

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to conduct primary research on the topic resilience and coping mechanisms in times of crisis among young adults.

Hypothesis

H1- Higher levels of resilience in individuals will correlate positively with the utilisation of effective coping mechanisms.

H2- Lower levels of resilience in individuals will be positively associated with a lower reliance on effective coping mechanisms.

Variables

The independent variable selected is resilience and the dependent variable selected are coping mechanisms.

Sample

A sample of 120 individuals falling in the age range of 18-26 years was taken. The sample's age range of 18-26 is crucial because it represents a pivotal stage of transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Tools

- **Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)**

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) is a psychological tool used to measure an individual's ability to bounce back from stress and adversity. It consists of six items assessing aspects of resilience, with responses indicating the degree to which a person identifies with certain statements. The scale aims to provide a quick assessment of an individual's resilience levels. For each of the six items, the responses ranging from 1 to 5 are added together to create a score range of 6 to 30. Then divide the total sum by the total number of questions answered. This will provide you with a total score of your level of resilience. There was good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha falling between .80 and .91. Measures of social support, active coping, positive reframing, optimism, and meaning in life were all positively linked with the BRS, indicating convergent validity. It was inversely correlated with anxiety, depression, negative affect, and physical symptoms in terms of discriminant validity.

Coping Scale

The Coping Scale developed by Hamby, Grych, and Banyard in 2013 is designed to assess an individual's coping strategies in response to various stressors and adversities. This scale

aims to measure the effectiveness of coping mechanisms employed by individuals when faced with challenging situations. It typically includes a range of items related to coping behaviours, and respondents rate their agreement or frequency of engagement with these strategies. The scale contributes to understanding how individuals navigate and manage stress, providing valuable insights into their coping styles. The scale consists of 13 items, each answer category was assigned a value from 4 to 1. All of the components' sums or means can be included in the final score. Greater degrees of coping are indicated by higher scores. The main sample's internal consistency is 0.91, while the pilot sample's is 0.88. The main sample's validity was demonstrated by substantial correlations with other measures of regulatory strengths, including Endurance ($r = .63$) and Anger Management ($r = .57$), as well as with well-being indicators, including Subjective Well-Being ($r = .53$) and Post-traumatic Growth ($r = .65$).

Procedure

The participants were introduced on the topic of our. They were informed of the study ethical codes and considerations along with the confidentiality after which their informed consent was taken. Following that, Google forms were used to create a questionnaire that included two standardised scales namely 'Brief Resilience Scale' and 'Coping Scale'. The responses were gathered and used for scoring and data analysis.

Statistical analysis

The level of resilience and coping mechanisms were compared using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient.

Result**Table 1***Mean and standard deviation of resilience and coping mechanism*

	Resilience	Coping mechanisms
N	120	120
Mean	18.808	34.975
Standard Deviation	5.626	9.488

The objective was to assess the level of resilience and coping mechanisms employed by young adults during times of crisis (Table 1). Resilience gave a mean of 18.808 and a standard deviation of 5.626, it suggests that, on average, young adults exhibit a moderate level of resilience. However, there is notable variability among individuals, with some displaying higher levels of resilience and others lower. This variability could indicate diverse coping strategies and personal strengths among young adults facing crisis. Coping mechanisms gave a mean of 34.975 and standard deviation of 9.488, indicating that, on average, young adults employ various coping strategies at a moderate level. Similar to resilience, there is considerable diversity in coping mechanisms among individuals, with some relying more heavily on coping strategies than others.

Table 2

Correlation between resilience and coping mechanisms

	Resilience	Coping mechanisms
Resilience	1	0.96*
Coping	0.96*	1

Note: *p < .05

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between resilience on the and coping mechanisms among young adults (Table 2). A total of 120 responses were taken from individuals falling in the age range of 18-26. The raw scores were then calculated according to the two scales- Brief resilience scale (BRS) and Coping Scale (CS). Then the correlation between resilience and coping was evaluated using Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The correlation came out to be 0.96, which indicates strong positive correlation between the two variables, which interprets that as resilience levels increase, coping mechanisms also tend to increase, and vice versa. The result is notable at $p < .05$.

Discussion of Results

The aim of the research was to study the relationship between resilience and coping mechanisms among young adults during a time of crisis. The raw scores were calculated which were then used to measure the correlation between the two variables- resilience and coping. Pearson correlation coefficient was used for analysing the data. The scores provided a correlation of 0.96, which interprets a strong positive correlation between the two variables.

The first objective was to investigate the effect of level of resilience on the level of coping mechanisms and vice versa. The first hypothesis was that higher levels of resilience in individuals will correlate positively with the utilisation of effective coping mechanisms. The second hypothesis was that lower levels of resilience in individuals will be positively associated with a lower reliance on effective coping mechanisms. The results indicate that as resilience levels increase, coping mechanisms also tend to increase, and vice versa. This finding suggests that young adults who demonstrate higher levels of resilience are more likely to engage in effective coping strategies when faced with challenging situations, and those with lower resilience may struggle more in effectively coping with stressors. This high correlation suggests that interventions targeting one aspect, such as resilience, may inadvertently influence the

other, highlighting the interconnectedness of these constructs. Hence, the hypothesis has been accepted.

The second objective was to assess the level of resilience and coping mechanisms employed by young adults separately during times of crisis. The mean resilience score of 18.808, with a standard deviation of 5.626, suggests that, on average, young adults possess a moderate level of resilience. This indicates a baseline ability to bounce back from adversity and maintain psychological stability during challenging situations. The mean of coping mechanism score of 34.975, with a standard deviation of 9.488, indicates a higher level of coping resources available to young adults during times of crisis. This suggests that, on average, young adults employ a diverse range of coping strategies to manage stress and navigate difficult circumstances effectively.

The study conducted by Ukil and Jenkins (2023) sheds light on the intricate relationship between fear of failure, resilience, and entrepreneurial intentions, especially in the context of developing countries with high unemployment rates. Their study, which utilised both structural equation modelling (SEM) and partial least square (PLS)-SEM, involved a substantial sample size of Bangladeshi students. The results support a mediation model, indicating that resilience positively influences entrepreneurial intentions and mitigates the adverse impact of fear of failure on those intentions. Connecting this study to our research on resilience and coping mechanisms among young adults during crises, we can infer that resilience not only influences coping strategies in challenging situations but also extends its impact to shaping entrepreneurial intentions. The strong positive correlation found in the research examining resilience and coping mechanisms aligns with the findings of the study that resilience positively influences entrepreneurial intentions. Moreover, the mediation model proposed by them implies that resilience acts as a buffer against the detrimental effects of fear of failure on entrepreneurial

intentions. This finding resonates with the notion that individuals with higher resilience levels are better equipped to navigate uncertainties and setbacks.

Hence, the hypothesis has been accepted.

Conclusion

The current research aimed to assess the level of resilience and coping mechanisms among young adults in times of crisis. The first hypothesis was that higher levels of resilience in individuals will correlate positively with the utilisation of effective coping mechanisms. The second hypothesis was that lower levels of resilience in individuals will be positively associated with a lower reliance on effective coping mechanisms. The correlation between resilience and coping mechanisms indicated extremely high positive correlation. This proves the hypothesis that young adults who demonstrate higher levels of resilience are more likely to engage in effective coping strategies when faced with challenging situations. Conversely, those with lower resilience may struggle more in effectively coping with stressors.

Hence, the hypothesis has been accepted.

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