

Gender-Based Differences in Resilience and Attitude Toward the Future Among Adolescents

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Abstract

We presently studied resilience and future orientation in relation to gender with a sample of 150 (75 boys and 75 girls) adolescents in the age group of 10 to 19 (according to WHO definition of adolescence), from government and private schools of rural and urban areas of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. The Resilience Scale (RS-14; Wagnild, 2010) and the Children's Future Orientation Scale (CFOS; Saigh, 1995) were given. Boys were found to be slightly more resilient in comparison to girls. Girls oriented themselves toward the future with higher scores than boys did in that area (small effect sizes) and resilience correlated to future orientation moderately ($r = .46, p < .001$; see Table 2). The results underscore that it is important to promote resilience and orient the future in fostering adjustment and ensuring mental health in adolescents, and have implications for mental health programs based in schools.

Keywords: Adolescents, Resilience, Future Orientation, Gender Differences, RS-14, CFOS

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a life stage that is associated with multiple life-long psychological, emotional and social consequences. The World Health Organization 2014 defines adolescence as a period from 10 to 19 years, which is associated with rapid physical growth, changes and development in the regulation and activities of hormones, cognitive ability, and expansion of social roles. During adolescence, identity development, peer relationships, academic pressures, and planning for the future become more prominent. The prefrontal cortex, home of the brain's higher-level cognitive processes such as planning and decision making and the control of emotion, is still developing into adolescence, leading to meaningful advances in cognitive capabilities such as longer-term planning (Steinberg, 2014). These developmental changes provide a foundation for other important psychosocial constructs such as resilience and future orientation, which enable adaptive functioning in the context of these changes.

Adolescents in India feel academic pressure, compete for exam scores, transition through family structure, face socio-economic inequalities, migrate from rural areas to urban areas, and modernize with effects on their mental health. Resilience protects. Simultaneously, a future orientation helps adolescents when they transition from education to jobs, choose responsibly, and set long-term goals to pursue within an expanding society of ever-increasing complexity. Resilience exists within developmental psychology. It describes a broad array of processes and an outcome of positive adaptation despite adversity. Masten (2001) perceived resilience as an example of "ordinary magic", resulting from normative human adaptive systems. Wagnild and Young (1993) said that resilience has two components.

1. Personal competence as (self-reliance, perseverance, determination), and
2. Self and life accepting requires equanimity, flexibility, and adaptability.

Resilient adolescents are more ready to cope with academic problems, peer conflicts, fluctuations in moods, and environmental stressors. Indian studies show resilience relates positively to academic motivation through socio-emotional adjustment and mental health because of results (Joseph & John, 2018).

Future-orientation, understood from a motivational and developmental perspective, refers to cognitive, affective and motivational processes through which individuals think about, plan for and anticipate future events. Nurmi (1991) has argued that future-orientation must be viewed as a developmental system, which includes future orientation, planning and evaluation. Seginer (2009) proposed three more components:

- Motivational (aspirations, goals)
- Cognitive (future expectations, planning)
- Affective (optimism, feelings about the future)

That adolescents orient toward a high future can increase school engagement, time management, and planning for the future in them (Steinberg et al., 2009). In India, youth who oriented toward the future with a stronger sense showed higher academic motivation and coped better (Ghosh & Rana, 2015).

We can explore the environmental and social influences shaping these aspects for the exploration of gender differences in resilience, emotional reactivity, coping styles, and future orientation. Research suggests that, on average, adolescent boys are slightly more resilient because people idealize toughness and emotionally remain reserved for males as shown in Joseph & John, 2018. Adolescent females, however, orient to the future to a greater extent by working and planning academically and by showing high achievement motivation than males

do (Ghosh & Rana, 2015), although the differences are small and depend on sociocultural context.

Despite the importance of the above-mentioned variables, there is a scarcity of studies analysing the relationship of resilience and future orientation using standardized measures in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. The city has a heterogeneous urban and rural population and contains government and private schools. Therefore, the present study seeks to fill the research gap within the literature.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Resilience in Adolescents

There are many definitions of resilience; it has been frequently defined as a dynamic process that interacts between individual attributes and contextual resources. Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) described resilience as a phenomenon that means people not only survive trauma, but also that people maintain or regain mental health. In general, resilience is related to successful emotion regulation, study commitment, and social competence. Among Indian adolescents, resilience is related to coping, academic stressors, peer pressure, and family expectations.

2.2 Future Orientation in Adolescents

According to a developmental model by Nurmi (1991), future orientation is formed through motivational, cognitive and evaluative stages. The relevance of future orientation increases during adolescence when academic and career goals are formed. Higher levels of future orientation in adolescents are associated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation, less risk-taking, and superior decision skills (Steinberg et al., 2009). Future orientation is strongly related to academic success and exploration of career possibilities in India (Ghosh & Rana, 2015).

2.3 Gender Differences

There are minor differences between genders regarding resilience. For example, boys are more resilient because they are socialized to be more independent and tough (Joseph & John, 2018). Girls might be more resilient because they are more future-oriented than boys, likely because they are more willing to study, set goals, and plan (Seginer, 2009; Ghosh & Rana, 2015).

2.4 Relationship Between Resilience and Future Orientation

Theoretically, resilience associates in agentic processes that orient toward the future. Resilience encourages people to solve problems and persist, and it allows adolescents to pursue goals in the face of adversity (Masten, 2001). On the other hand, future orientation itself may lead

toward optimistic expectations and future-planning for adaptive coping, which may in turn lead to adaptive coping.

Data from studies conducted on adolescents have shown that adolescents with high efficacy expectations also report having high levels of optimism and structure when they think about their future.

3. Objectives

1. Assess resilience among male and female adolescents for the purpose of making.
2. To guide male adolescents and female adolescents to the future.
3. To investigate gender differences in resilience.
4. Examine gender differences in future orientation.
5. To examine the relationship of resilience to future orientation.

4. Hypotheses

H1: Male adolescents will be more resilient than female adolescents within the bounds of reason.

H2: Female adolescents will score higher than male adolescents on future orientation.

H3: Resilience relates to future orientation in a positive way.

5. Method

5.1 Research Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional, comparative, and correlational research design was adopted.

5.2 Participants

Researchers sampled 150 boys (n=75) and girls (n=75) of age group 10-19 years from government and private schools in urban and rural areas of Lucknow, U.P. through purposive sampling so both types of schools and urban and rural areas appear in the sample.

5.3 Tools

a. Resilience Scale (RS-14)

- **Developer:** Gail M. Wagnild (2010), condensed down from the original RS-25 developed with H. M. Young (1993)
- **Year of development:** 2010 (RS-14)
- **Item count:** 14

- **Scale structure:** 7-point Likert scale from which 1 equals Strongly Disagree and 7 equals Strongly Agree
- **Study domains:** personal competence includes self-reliance and persistence.
- Self acceptance and life acceptance like adaptability and equanimity.
- **Target population:** adolescents and adults in cultures and settings.
- **Score interpretation:** Total scores go from 14 to 98. Higher scores reflect greater levels of resilience
- **Psychometric properties:**
 - High internal consistency falls in a range from .85 to .94. It is usually noted with a Cronbach's alpha.
 - Indian samples report $\alpha \approx .82$
 - High construct and criterion validity, with strong associations to mental health and well-being.

b. Children's Future Orientation Scale (CFOS)

- **Developer:** Philip A. Saigh developed it (1995).
- **Development year:** 1995
- **Number of items:** Around 16 in total number
- **Scale structure:** 1 means Not at all to 5 means Very much This is a 5-point Likert scale.
- **Study domains:** Future career exists as one of the five domains, also family life, social relationships, personal well-being, and life expectations exist.
- **Target population:** Children and young adolescents alike
- **Interpretation:** Higher scores mean someone likely leans toward confidence with a positive attitude and hope about the future.
- **Psychometric properties:** Reliability coefficients for normative samples range from $\alpha = .80$ to up to .87 inclusively.

5.4 Procedure

Institutional approvals were obtained, and participant assent were taken before data collection. Researchers administered questionnaires to participants as a group in a classroom environment using a standardized protocol. Participants learned that their responses would remain anonymous, the study was voluntary, and the average amount of time to complete the study was 20-25 minutes.

5.5 Data Analysis

The SPSS Version 26 software was used to analyze data. Descriptive statistics reported on resilience and future orientation by way of means and standard deviations. Researchers ran independent samples t-tests for examination of gender differences regarding resilience and future orientation. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was calculated for determining the relationship between resilience and future orientation. A $p < .05$ importance level was used.

6. Results

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of future orientation and resilience by Gender

Variable	Boys (n = 75) M ± SD	Girls (n = 75) M ± SD
Resilience (RS-14)	74.10 ± 8.25	71.92 ± 7.80
Future Orientation (CFOS)	94.30 ± 10.05	98.62 ± 9.41

Boys scored higher in resilience than girls did. Girls scored higher on future orientation than boys.

6.2 Gender Differences

Resilience

- $t(148) = 1.82$
- $p = .035$
- Cohen's $d = 0.29$ with small effect

Future Orientation

- $t(148) = -2.68$
- $p = .008$
- Cohen's $d = 0.44$ showing a moderate effect

The data showed statistically meaningful gender differences on the variables. The effect sizes were small to medium.

6.3 Correlation

There was a weak positive correlation between resilience and future orientation:

- $r = .46$, p below .001

The study's participants showed that when resilience correlates positively, future orientation occurs.

7. Discussion

Support for the three hypotheses existed. As indicated in H1, male adolescents were more resilient than female adolescents. This aligns with Indian studies of gendered coping styles with socialization processes cultivating emotional resilience and autonomy among boys (Joseph & John, 2018).

Girls supporting H2 were more future-oriented, which is consistent with previous research that found girls to engage more in academic planning, set long-term goals and future-oriented behaviours (Ghosh & Rana, 2015; Seginer, 2009), partially due to being more academically conscientious, being socialized to pursue secure careers, and being more internally motivated to fulfil future aspirations.

H3 was confirmed as shown by a moderate positive relationship between resilience and future time perspective. Resilient adolescents tend to have a positive view toward their future and plan. This is consistent according to Masten's (2001) definition of resilience, which refers to the ability of individuals to draw from internal and from external resources to cope with adverse situations and to maintain hope. Furthermore, Nurmi (1991) defines future orientation as one's ability to set goals for oneself, in order to plan. This suggests that resilient adolescents will likely develop realistic and hopeful future expectations throughout life.

Overall, results supported the theorized association where resilience associates with future orientation then important but small gender differences exist within both constructs in an Indian urban-rural mixed setting.

8. Limitations

1. Since the study was conducted within Lucknow, extrapolation of the results to youth elsewhere is limited.
2. Because the study crosses sections, it cannot conclude about resilience causing future orientation.
3. Social desirability or response bias (e.g. over-reporting) could affect self-report measures upon use.
4. The relatively small sample size (N = 150) may limit the statistical power for the findings and only allow one to detect obvious differences between groups..

9. Future Recommendations

- Study resilience and orient toward the future over time to examine changes during adolescence.

- Investigate the effects of socioeconomic status, family structure, parenting styles, and school climate on resilience and future orientation.
- Head qualitative work such as interviews or focus groups to understand adolescents' views of their future, coping, and perceived risk of future victimization.
- Explore how effective school-based programs affect resilience and plan for the future.

10. Conclusion

The present study aimed at studying the gender difference on resilience and future orientation among adolescents of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh and to study the relationship between resilience and future orientation. The scales were administered to a sample of adolescents in the city and rural areas of Lucknow using the tools of RS-14 and CFOS. The purpose of the scales is to study the adolescent psychology in contemporary India.

They found that the boys were slightly more resilient. Previous studies have indicated that boys are socialized to be emotionally strong, independent, and active problem-solvers.

However, girls did considerably better when it comes to reported ability to focus on the future. This is consistent with other findings indicating that girls engage in more academic career planning, think more about long-term future goals or possibilities, and can think further ahead. While small in effect size, these differences reveal the detailed ways in which psychological development is connected with gender during this developmental period.

It is important that middle adolescent resilience correlated positively with future orientation because adolescents who are more resilient cope better in the present and can better conceptualize themselves for a positive future, then plan. These findings support theories on resilience (Masten, 2001) and future orientation (Nurmi, 1991) that stress cognitive and emotional aspects as positive developmental outcomes' antecedents. In particular, adolescents who cope effectively appear to motivate themselves more intrinsically, persevere and maintain positive expectations regarding the outcomes of their efforts compared to those who cope ineffectively.

The present work adds to the existing literature on adolescent psychology by evidencing data from inside the city of Lucknow, which intermingles tradition and modernity, and diversifies schools and socio-cultural contexts. The study includes both resilience and future orientation in its design to highlight the relationship between the two traits and their importance to adolescent health.

The findings imply schools should intervene for resilience and future-oriented competencies that matter for adolescents' well-being. Regulating emotions, solving problems, setting goals,

advising on academics, and guiding careers are among strategies for adolescents from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, academically challenged situations, or with family problems that may particularly benefit them. This study's results can aid teachers, school counselors, and policymakers in using the good qualities of teens as they get ready for school, relationship, and job problems.

These findings make important contributions to the research area of adolescence.

Adolescence is not merely a period of transition but also an important development period which sets up adulthood by resilience and future orientation. Underlining differential gendered patterns while still developing universal psychological skills can be mechanisms of action, which educators and clinical psychologists can use to effectively support young people in such a way that they learn to find their own future.

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