

Resilience in Adolescents: The Role of Parental and Adolescent Emotion Regulation

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Resilience is the quality that helps individuals cope in the face of adversity by maintaining emotional wellbeing. During the growing years, parents play a valuable role in instilling the skills required for becoming resilient. The present study thus aims to examine the relationship between the emotion regulation strategies of parents and adolescents and the resilience of adolescents. Two hundred and four adolescents (aged between 13-19 years) were assessed on ERQ-CA, CDRISC-HA, while parents filled out ERQ. The analysis of correlation revealed that cognitive reappraisal used by the trio (adolescent, mother, and father) correlated positively and significantly with resilience; however, expressive suppression of any of the members of the trio failed to correlate with resilience. Since the demography of individuals plays a major role in one's abilities, hierarchical regression was applied to control the effect of demography in relation to emotion regulation abilities and resilience. After controlling for demographic variables, a mother's use of cognitive reappraisal emerged as the most significant predictor of adolescents' resilience, supported by the adolescent's own cognitive reappraisal. These findings suggest that mothers, along with adolescents who have the ability to reinterpret any emotion inducing situation, may reduce the negative impact of emotions and make them more resilient. It is thus, indicated that such relations may be accounted for by the emotion socialisation process and observational learning.

Keywords: adolescents, emotion regulation, mother, resilience, reappraisal, suppression

Introduction

Resilience is understood as the achievement of positive outcomes along with the avoidance of negative outcomes in response to adversity (Zatura et al., 2010). Adolescents need to develop this characteristic for coping with and responding to hardships (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Theorists have believed that resilience may be inherited from birth (Lucken & Gress, 2010); however, there is strong evidence suggesting that it can be developed and cultivated based on interpersonal experiences and interactions (Buzzanell, 2010). The study of resilience emerged around the 1970s by analyzing the impact of trauma and stress on the function and overall development of individuals and

families (Masten & Cicchetti, 2016; Walsh, 2016). Thus, not surprisingly, the review of resilience theory among children and adolescents suggests that the framework of resilience incorporates interwoven roots of individual and family factors, especially indicative of parenting processes as a crucial set of processes linking child and family resilience theory (Masten, 2018). This study is a step further in the direction of exploring how the individual skills of parents and adolescents may encourage or challenge the development of resilience in adolescents.

Among various factors contributing to resilience in children, emotion regulation has emerged as a factor accounting for the great variance in outcomes after stress (Gartland et al., 2019). Research has demonstrated that people's ability to regulate their emotions may be a critically important factor in determining resilience (Crowell et al., 2013), attributing this to Lazarus's (1999) understanding of stressful events as inherently emotional. Troy and Mauss (2011)

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proposed emotion regulation as the protective factor for resilience in the face of stress and adversity. They suggested that the use of an antecedent-focused strategy of cognitive reappraisal, which changes emotional experiences successfully by modulating cognitive processes involving reinterpretation of emotional events, may contribute to resilience by helping individuals decrease negative responses to emotionally challenging situations. People who use reappraisal are able to change the intensity of negative emotions by reframing emotionally negative stimuli more positively, which in turn increases the experience of positive emotions (Gross & Thompson, 2007) and reduces the negative impact of stress. Also, reappraisal is understood as an adaptive strategy among adolescents (Hughes et al., 2010; John & Gross, 2004). Hence, it can be assumed that the ability to regulate one's emotions could play a vital role in developing resilience. Despite having found the connection between emotion regulation and resilience as 'overlooked' in literature, the use of Gross and Thompson's (2007) process model of emotion regulation could help identify useful techniques for building resilience and could complement existing literature (Kay, 2016).

Recent empirical investigations have supported the idea that adaptive emotion regulation is associated with predictors of adolescents' resilience through models of resilience (Ruffino et al., 2022; Sunbul & Guneri, 2019). Empirical and neurobiological studies conclusively indicate that emotion regulation strategies involving cognitive reappraisal (Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012; Mestre et al., 2017) aimed at increasing positive emotions (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2006) and the general ability to upregulate any emotional responses to negative stimuli (New et al., 2009) may serve as a protective factor in the face of stressful events and thus be associated with resilience. Additionally, difficulties with emotion regulation are identified as a transdiagnostic factor across major psychopathologies (Sheppes et al., 2015). Meta-analytic studies have also suggested that adolescents' ability to effectively manage their emotional responses is related to coping and levels of psychopathological symptoms (Compas et al., 2017). So, it is reasonable to presume that effective emotion regulation ability may aid in preventing adolescents, which is a pivotal age for developing ER skills, from engaging in irrational and risky behaviours that are commonly assumed at this

developmental stage (Silvers, 2022). Conclusively, the existing western literature studies indicate a positive relationship between adaptive emotion regulation and resilience. Research in India also suggests links between emotion regulation strategies among Indian adolescents and their resilience (Mehta & Gupta, 2021a; Singh & Singh, 2021), especially the use of the cognitive reappraisal strategy of regulating emotions strongly relating to resilience among children living in children's homes (Prakashan & Banerjee, 2022). However, the associations between specific ER strategies and resilience among the community sample have been left unexplored. The existing western literature studies indicate a positive relation between adaptive emotion regulation and resilience, but not many of them implied the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) based on Gross's model as a self-report measure to explore the differentiating effects of suppression and reappraisal with resilience.

Role of Parental Emotion Regulation

Since the initial days of individual resilience, parenting and the caregiver-child relationship have been recognized as central to the development of child resilience, probably because parenting serves so many functions in child development, cultural transmission, and the well-being of societies (Masten, 2018). Parents nurture and protect children from environmental harm and serve as primary socializing agents. For instance, Gottman's (2000) emotion regulation theory highlights how a parent's feelings and thoughts about their emotions are related to the child's competence. Doty et al.'s (2017) model of cascading resilience identifies parents and their parenting skills as one of the key leveraging points that can promote adaptive outcomes, especially resilience in children (Masten & Palmer, 2019). Additionally, many interventions intended to promote resilience among children, adolescents, families, and communities have focused attention on the multiple roles of parenting (Brent, 2016; Masten & Palmer, 2019; Sandler et al., 2015). Thus, drawing on the above models of resilience and Troy and Mauss's (2011) model, this study proposes a link between parents' emotion regulation and the resilience of their adolescents.

Researchers suggest that parents' ability to regulate their emotions has been associated with negative outcomes, for instance, internalizing symptoms in their children (Palmer et al., 2020), child anxiety (Kerns et

al., 2017), and aggressive behavior (Crandall et al., 2016). Furthermore, studies on parental emotion coaching, primarily among mothers, suggest that effective coaching may protect children from oppositional defiant disorder (Dunsmore et al., 2013) and behavioral impulsivity (Haverfield & Theiss, 2019). Research in India focusing on emotion socialization among urban middle-class families also indicates that mothers's emotion socialization predicts adaptive outcomes in young children, especially girls (Raval et al., 2014; Raval et al., 2018). As mentioned by Kohlhoff et al. (2016), parents' inability to regulate emotions may be related to negative parenting, so it can be assumed that children of parents who cannot imply effective emotion regulation may be at risk. It can also be put forward that parents who can effectively regulate their emotions may have children who are hardy, as they could serve as role models for the development of adaptive emotion regulation strategies that their children can utilize over the course of their lives to adapt to challenges, thereby increasing their resilience. Also, studies have indicated that the age of the child can influence resilience (Nourian et al., 2016) and emotion regulation abilities (Gullone et al., 2010). Additionally, the maternal influence may vary with respect to the age and gender of the children (Sikorska & Paluch, 2018). The present study therefore aims to understand the relation and relative contribution of emotion regulation abilities of parents and adolescents to adolescents' resilience while also attempting to control for demographic characteristics among the indexed sample.

Context for the present study

Reviewing the recent literature in India, focusing on conditions that have an emotional component by disposition, people's ability to manage their emotions seems to be a crucial factor for determining resilience. For instance, adaptive emotion regulation among adolescents has been linked with lower psychological problems and psychopathology (Lavanya & Manjula, 2017), greater well-being (Singh & Sharma, 2018), better school functioning (Raval et al., 2018), reduced risk for health (Singh & Singh, 2022), and self-injurious behaviors (Kharasti & Bhola, 2016), along with healthy coping with bereavement (Bhushan et al., 2011). Conversely, suppressing emotions is related to suicidal ideation (Chattopadhyaya & Joshi, 2020). Secondly, Indian adolescents, who are living in the current era of

rapid modernization and development, are more vulnerable to adopting risky behaviors, facing mental health problems, and witnessing violence (Singh & Gopalkrishna, 2014) and generally perceive themselves as non-resilient (Banerjee et al., 2018). Hence, it is imperative to shift attention towards adolescents living in sub-urbs, as they are more vulnerable due to the socio-economic condition of poverty, subsequent early-age employment, and exposure to social media without much parental supervision. Thirdly and interestingly, classic studies advocate parental factors as potential influences among adolescence, despite strong peer influences (Arnett, 1999), along with recent studies suggesting self-regulation abilities to predict resilience during this developmental phase (Dias & Cadime, 2017). A collectivistic culture in India has its base in the rich values of respect for elders combined with strong family ties (Isaac et al., 2013). Indian families are traditionally devoted to the importance of familial bonds, interdependence, and obedience (Karkar, 1978). Most parents believe in utilizing so-called 'folk wisdom' for their parenting influences and developmental outcomes, wherein mothers are considered to have a prime role in disciplining the child (Nair et al., 2009). Although in urban educated communities, parents are increasingly encouraging the development of self-reliance, sufficiency, and adaptiveness to survive in the current environment (Saraswathi & Pai, 1999), the same may not be true for sub-urban and rural families. As a consequence, it may be understood that Indian parents may have a significant influence on the resilience of their children.

Based on the rationale, the following hypotheses were made for the current study:

1. Adolescents' use of cognitive reappraisal will relate positively to resilience.
2. Parents's emotion regulation abilities will relate positively to the resilience of adolescents.
3. The emotional regulation abilities of both parents will be relatively more important than adolescents' own emotion regulation in predicting adolescents' resilience.
4. The demographic characteristics of the adolescents would influence the parental and adolescents' own emotion regulation abilities and resilience relationship.

Method

Participants

The adolescent-mother-father triad sample was drawn using a convenient sampling method from suburban districts in central Uttar Pradesh, India. A shared common household wherein parents and adolescents lived together on a regular basis and the absence of any ongoing treatment for severe psychiatric illness or significant physical impairment (as per their own best knowledge) were the two key features of the inclusion criteria of the triads. Thus, the final sample after data screening consisted of 204 adolescents (age range 13–19 years; $M = 15.73$, $SD = 1.28$; 73.5% females), their mothers ($M = 41.88$ years, $SD = 5.33$), and fathers ($M = 45.94$ years, $SD = 6.00$). Almost half of the adolescent's sample were studying in 12th grade (45.1%), while the rest were studying in 9th (20.6%), 10th (13.2%), and 11th grade (21.1%) in schools affiliated either with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) or the Board of High School and Intermediate Education, Uttar Pradesh (U.P. Board). Nearly the entire sample reported themselves as belonging to the Hindu community or religion (93.1%), while a handful self-identified with the Muslim (6.4%) and Sikh (0.5%) communities. All fathers were employed outside of home, in farming (35.3%), government or private sector (27.4%), or self-employed (37.3%), while the mothers were majorly homemakers (86.8%). The sample was nearly equally divided with respect to family type (44.1% nuclear family and 55.9% joint family).

Measures

1. Conner Davidson Resilience Scale 25 (CD-RISC-25-H-A) (Connor & Davidson, 2003): The Hindi version of this scale was translated by Rehman and Shahnawaz (2019), consisting of 25 items. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from a score of 0 (not true at all) to 4 (true nearly all the time) based on how statements have applied to participants over the last month. The total score thus ranges from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating higher resilience. The alpha reliability coefficient of CDRISC-25-H-A was found to be 0.90 by the authors, suggesting high internal consistency.

2. The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire: (Hindi version; Gross & John, 2003) was used to assess the emotion regulation questionnaire of parents. The 10-item scale has been designed to measure

respondents' propensity to regulate their emotions in two ways, viz., cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Participants answered each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from a score of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The ERQ has sound reliability (α ranging from 0.75-0.82 for CR and 0.68-0.76 for ES) as suggested by the authors.

3. Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA; Gullone & Taffe, 2012) : This 10-item questionnaire is a revision of the adult measure ERQ (Gross & John, 2003), investigating the use of the same two specific strategies of emotion regulation. The items were responded to on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The alpha reliability coefficient as reported by the original authors for the six-item CR ranges from 0.82 to 0.86 and from 0.69 to 0.75 for the four-item ES scale. The Hindi version of ERQ-CA (ERQ-CA-H) was developed using cultural backtranslation, and the internal consistency coefficients of ERQ-CA-H were 0.62 and 0.53 for the CR and ES scales, respectively, in the current study.

Procedure

The adolescents, along with their parents, were contacted for participation in the study. The purpose and procedure of current research were explained to adolescents and their parents. Although adolescents believed that if ample information is provided regarding participation in research, their consent is sufficient (Al-Sheyab et al., 2019), written consent from adolescents along with parental self- and adolescent consent was obtained from willing triads. Each participant and member of the triad responded to questionnaires as per instructions in the presence of the researcher. Due care was given to every item, and it was assured that respondents must have filled out all items. The data was then coded and analyzed.

Results

In order to test the first and second hypotheses product moment correlation was conducted and findings are depicted in Table 1. It is evident from the table that cognitive reappraisal (one of the dimensions of ER) by adolescents ($r = 0.266$, $p < 0.001$), mothers ($r = 0.271$, $p < 0.001$), and fathers ($r = 0.141$, $p < 0.005$) related significantly and positively with the adolescent's resilience. The findings suggest acceptance of first and second hypotheses, implying that the use of CR strategy for regulating one's emotion is likely to promote greater resilience in adolescence.

Table 1
Pearson's correlations between adolescent resilience, adolescent and parent emotion regulation strategy

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child						
1 Resilience	-					
2 Reappraisal		0.266***	-			
3 Suppression	0.031	0.347***	-			
Mother						
1 Reappraisal	0.271***	0.218**	0.140*	-		
2 Suppression	0.042	0.093	0.246***	0.481***	-	
Father						
1 Reappraisal	0.141*	0.212**	0.105	0.545***	0.341***	-
2 Suppression	0.008	0.044	0.237**	0.295***	0.450***	0.524***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The third and fourth hypotheses were tested using a stepwise multiple regression to evaluate the relative contribution of emotion regulation abilities of both parents and adolescents to resilience. Since expressive suppression was not related to resilience, only parents' and adolescents' use of CR were considered predictors. The results of the same indicated in Table 2 indicate maternal cognitive reappraisal as the strongest predictor predicting adolescents' resilience with 7.3%,

and adolescents' own cognitive reappraisal contributed significantly 4.5% towards resilience. So far as the direction of the relationship is concerned, the mother and adolescent's CR and resilience were found to be positively related ($\beta = 0.271$ and 0.218 , respectively). The positive relation indicates that the utilization of cognitive reappraisal by mothers and adolescents as an emotion regulation strategy may likely increase the resilience of adolescents. The findings resulted in the acceptance of both hypotheses.

Table 2
Results of Step-wise regression analysis with parent and adolescents' emotion regulation abilities as predictors and resilience as criterion

Variables	R	R ²	R ² Change	B	SE	t
Maternal Reappraisal	0.27	0.07	0.07	0.27	0.16	3.99**
Adolescent Reappraisal	0.34	0.11	0.45	0.21	0.25	3.21**

* $p < 0.0001$

Here, it is important to mention that the observed contribution of previously mentioned emotion regulation predictors to resilience may be confounded with various demographic characteristics of adolescence as indicated in the literature (Gullone et al., 2018; Mestre et al., 2017; Sun & Stewart, 2007; Zimmermann & Iwanski, 2014). Therefore, to test the fifth hypothesis,

a hierarchical regression analysis was performed to control the effect of demography. The demographic characteristics (viz., age, gender, educational qualification, and religion of adolescents) were entered in the first step, followed by the entry of maternal cognitive reappraisal in the second and cognitive reappraisal of adolescence in the third step. The obtained results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3
Results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis using age, gender, educational qualification and religion as control variables

Predictors	R	R ²	R Square change	F change	Significance of F change	B	T	p
Dependent Variable: Resilience								
Control	Variable:							
Demographic characteristics	0.175	.031	0.031	1.566	0.185			
Maternal-Cognitive Reappraisal	0.306	.093	0.063	13.723**	<0.001	.257**	3.704	1<0.001
Adolescent-Cognitive Reappraisal	0.368	.135	0.42	9.519*	<0.00	.214*	3.085	<0.005

It is apparent from Table 3 that maternal cognitive reappraisal emerged as a relatively more important predictor of resilience for adolescents', contributing 6.3% of resilience while controlling for demographic variables. Likewise, the contribution of adolescents' cognitive reappraisal was predicted to be approximately 4.2% of resilience when demographic variables were controlled. Further, it is also evident from this analysis that the high magnitude of the contribution of the maternal CR dropped significantly after controlling for the contribution of demographic characteristics to resilience. For example, maternal CR contributed 7.3% to resilience without control, but when the effect was controlled, it contributed 6.3% after controlling for demography. However, the magnitude of the contribution remained negligible for adolescents' CR even after partialling out the effect of other variables.

Overall, the findings of this analysis suggest that during the adolescent phase of development, maternal cognitive reappraisal is a relatively more imperative predictor of an adolescent's resilience as compared to the adolescent's own usage of cognitive reappraisal.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study is to understand the role played by the emotion regulation strategies of adolescents and their parents on the resilience of adolescents. As predicted after controlling for demographic characteristics of adolescents, the use of cognitive reappraisal by mothers and adolescents is significantly related to resilience. These findings are in sync with the theoretical framework of Tross and Mauss

(2011), suggesting that the use of CR strategies may alter the evaluation of stressors, leading to an attenuated adaptive negative emotional reaction, which in turn may protect individuals from stress, thereby increasing the likelihood of resilience. The relationship in a positive direction is also supported by an understanding of cognitive reappraisal as an adaptive strategy (John & Gross, 2004) and previously suggested among Indians (Mehta & Gupta, 2021a; Prakashan & Banerjee, 2022; Singh & Singh, 2022) and other cultures (Mestre et al., 2017; Yule et al., 2019). Emerging cross-cultural evidence demonstrates that adaptive parental socialization of emotions shapes the children's emotional repertoire, such as emotion recognition, expression, and regulation (Breux et al., 2018; Raval et al., 2014), which further impacts child adjustment (Raval et al., 2018). The findings of the current study comply with the existing impact of maternal emotion socialization on the adjustment of adolescents (Perry et al., 2020), which is impacted by cognitive reappraisal (Bao & Kato, 2020), and the tripartite model of family influence on emotion regulation and child adjustment by Morris and colleagues (2007). The amount of variance in explaining maternal and adolescent cognitive reappraisal suggests that mothers could serve as role models, and their cognitive evaluation or reappraisal ability may provide insight to adolescents on how to successfully and adaptively respond to an adverse environment through the social learning paradigm.

The results of the present study provide universal acceptance of parental contribution towards making

their children capable of handling adversities throughout various societies by corroborating with the existing links between resilience of adolescents and various parenting variables such as parental stress, parent-child relationship, parenting styles (Cusinato et al., 2020; Flouri et al., 2015; Yule et al., 2019; Zakeri et al., 2010), etc. Further, the results of the correlation and regression analysis of the study echo family resilience models (Doty et al., 2017; Masten, 2018) too.

Moreover, a comparison of maternal and paternal effects in this study suggests that only mothers use of reappraisal is a strong predictor of resilience among adolescents. Such findings are not unexpected, especially since mothers have been regarded as primary caregivers since time immemorial across all cultures. Research on emotion socialization among urban middle-class families in India indicates that mothers' emotions and the socialization of those emotions predict outcomes in young children (Raval et al., 2014). Additionally, a positive mother-daughter mutual relationship has been identified as a facilitator of emotion regulation (McKone et al., 2021). Lastly, the study acknowledges mother's role to be more significant as compared to fathers in the resilience of adolescents, which is similar to findings suggesting that the relationship adolescents share with their mothers has a stronger influence on adolescents' psychopathology in Asian cultures (Qi et al., 2022; Shek & Zhu, 2019). Qualitative findings among clinical mother-daughter dyads also indicate a close relationship shared between mothers and adolescent daughters (Mehta & Gupta, 2021b). Such findings are especially significant as the majority of the adolescent's sample were females, and adolescence is a period where mothers and daughters share close bonds by aiming to realign their relationship (Trad, 1995), which could open avenues for socio-emotional learning between them.

Interestingly, the significant but low positive correlation between a father's cognitive reappraisal and adolescent resilience cannot be ignored, especially as there were girls in the majority but also 26.5% boys in the current sample of adolescents. Cross-cultural research consistently identifies the importance of fathers' role during adolescence for boys and girls (Jessee & Adamsons, 2018; Little et al., 2019; Ravindran et al., 2020; Su-Kubricht et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2019) and in their psychopathology (Schulz et al., 2023). However, comparing outcomes for boys and

girls with respect for fathers, findings are mixed. For instance, research in the Netherlands indicates fathers' attachment to daughters facilitates positive development when compared with sons among adolescents (Keizer et al., 2019). Conversely, in another study by Rizvi (2015) in Pakistan, which is similar in culture to India, it was reported that girls may not be as close to their fathers in late adolescence as they identify with their mothers. Yet, recently, no cultural differences have been found in maternal and paternal parenting regarding adolescent behavioral problems (Vazsonyi et al., 2022). Indian adolescents living in a society tangled with western and traditional Indian cultural upbringings highlight the possible emerging role of fathers in adolescent lives. It also directs attention to the involvement of fathers in parenting research as well as exploring gender-based differences in parental roles. As the study did not aim to explore the differentiating effects of maternal and paternal roles among sons and daughters. Gross (2015) indicated that questions concerning the developmental trajectory of ER skills in adolescents as accelerated by support from caregivers are an area open to investigation. The current study thus provides a step in this direction by further opening the scope for the development of family models of emotion regulation and resilience incorporating societal, cultural, and demographic characteristics.

Conclusion

Textbooks often like to quote Shakespeare or Plato, who, centuries ago, saw youth as a difficult stage. The findings of the present study indicate investment in adolescents implies instilling emotion regulation skills amongst them to be able to face adversities and lower their vulnerability to risks. Adolescents who are able to change the way they think about potentially emotion-eliciting events become more resilient. The existing study suggests that parents, especially mothers, may be facilitative towards the development of adaptive emotion regulation among their adolescents through observation or directive or facilitative teaching. The findings thus contribute to a greater understanding of prevailing opinions on the mother-child relationship while confirming Gross's process-oriented model of emotion regulation (Gross, 2015) as a guiding theoretical and therapeutic framework for resilience in families. To the author's best knowledge, this is the first study in India's sub-urban areas attempting to

explore the influence of emotion regulation skills of mothers, fathers, and adolescents on resilience. As the sample was predominantly girls, future studies may

focus on evaluating gender differences and societal context in exploring various pathways of parent-child interaction in determining resilience.

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