#61 PAPER 85 -
EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADOLESCENT RESILIENCE, SELF-PERCEPTION AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

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Abstract
The present study aims to explore the relationships between resilience, self-perception, and locus of control, hypothesizing that high resilience is associated with high self-esteem and resilient adolescents tend to exhibit higher levels of internality. The study was conducted on an adolescent sample from several high school in Brasov (N = 156). The results showed that highly resilient adolescent have a higher level of self-esteem and are more internally oriented, rather than externally oriented. There were no gender differences regarding the resilience and its dimensions. The results confirmed the main hypothesis.

Keywords: Adolescent; resilience; locus of control; self-perception.

1. INTRODUCTION

Resilience refers to a class of phenomena characterized by good outcomes in spite of important threats to adaptation (Masten, 2001). Psychological resilience can be understood from three different perspectives: as an outcome of effective coping to stress, as the process of successful adaptation despite adversity, or as a psychological ability to successful recovery from negative emotional experiences (Cazan & Truța, 2015). In the present study, resilience is approached as a trait, from the perspective of its protective factors (Nakaya, Oshio, & Kaneko, 2006). Protective factors are defined as characteristics of the child or adolescent, family, and wider environment that reduce the negative effect of adversity on individual outcome. Past research operationalizes resilience as the outcome of specific protective factors (Masten & Reed 2002). Among these protective factors, we can include intelligence, emotion regulation, self-esteem, locus of control, parenting, safe neighborhoods and school environment (Vanderbilt- Adriance & Shaw, 2008). The two protective factors included in this study are self-esteem and locus of control. Self-esteem is the extent of people's evaluations of their own self-worth, the extent to which they view themselves as good, competent, and decent. Self-esteem and resilience are highly correlated. As the self-perception of an individual increases, his or her self-confidence and self-worth also increase leading to higher levels of resilience, as a result of higher sense of autonomy and independence (Karatas & Cakar, 2011). The internal locus of control is another protective factor approached in this study. Locus of control is a belief about whether the outcomes of our actions depended on what we do (internal locus of control) or on events outside our personal control (external locus of control). The research in the field showed that the more control an individual perceives over a situation, he or she will approach situations in a calm manner and will adapt and eventually overcome (Diehl & Hay, 2010).

2. METHOD

2.1. Aims

The present study aims to explore the relationships between resilience, self-perception, and locus of control, hypothesizing that high resilience is associated with high self-esteem and resilient adolescents tend to exhibit higher levels of internality. Thus, the present study hypothesizes that there will be significant correlations between self-esteem, locus of control and the dimensions of adolescent resilience.
2.2. Participants and procedure

The study was conducted on an adolescent sample from several high schools in Brasov (N = 156) including high school students, 68 girls and 88 boys, aged between 13 and 19, with a mean age of 15 years. The participants gave their informed consent to participate in the study. The questionnaires were completed during class time, were anonymous and no compensation was offered.

2.3. Instruments

The following instruments were used:

The Adolescent Resilience Scale (ARS - Oshio, Kaneko, Nagamine, & Nakaya 2002) consists of 21 items and three factors: Novelty Seeking, Emotional Regulation, and Positive Future Orientation. Novelty seeking refers to the ability to show interest in and concern about a wide variety of events. Emotional regulation is a trait of individuals who exhibit composure and control their internal emotions. Positive future orientation concerns approach to goals in the future (Nakaya et al., 2006). The scale was translated and adapted for the Romanian population and the psychometric analysis revealed high reliability coefficients for all the dimensions: .76 for Novelty Seeking, .70 for Emotional Regulation, .82 for Positive Future Orientation and .81 for the entire scale (Cazan & Truța, 2015).

The Questionnaire of Self-perception (QSP - Clinciu, 2010) consists of 30 items which are rated on a bipolar scale from -3 to +3 which express self-evaluation, easiness in decision-making and attitude towards risk. The items provide both a self-depreciative component (negative) of self-esteem and a self-appreciative component (positive). The algebraic sum of the two components reveals the synthetic image of self-esteem. Alfa Cronbach for the entire scale is .91 (Clinciu, 2010).

The Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Inventory (Levenson, 1973) consists of 24 items measuring three dimensions: internal powerful others, and chance, each of which is comprised of eight items, in a Likert format. The items attempt to measure the degree to which a subject perceives events in his life as being a consequence of his own acts, under the control of powerful others, or determined by chance. The internal consistency coefficients were: .64 for the Internal Locus of Control scale, .76 for the Powerful Others Scale, and .73 for the Chance Scale.

Factual data related to age and gender were also collected.

3. RESULTS

The main aim of the study was to examine the associations between resilience, self-esteem and locus of control. The Pearson correlation coefficients confirmed the hypothesis of the study, showing that highly resilient adolescents have a higher level of self-esteem and are more internally oriented, rather than externally oriented. While internal locus of control correlates positively with the dimensions of resilience, the other two external aspects correlate negatively. High self-esteem scores correlated with high resilience scores and high self-esteem scores correlated also positively with the internality score (Table 1). Both self-esteem and internal locus of control showed the highest correlations with positive future orientation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Pearson coefficient correlations between adolescent resilience, self-esteem and locus of control</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novelty seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal locus of control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Powerful others</td>
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<td>Chance</td>
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**N = 156, p < .001

There were no gender differences regarding the resilience and its dimensions, and age correlated positively only with emotion regulation (r = -.16, p = .05). In order to explore the relationship between the variables, we tested a mediation model, aiming to highlight that locus of control mediates the association between self-perception and psychological resilience (Figure 1).
Fig. 1. Mediation model for the associations between self-perception, locus of control, resilience and age

Our model included self-perception as mediator and the model fit was satisfactory ($\chi^2/df = 6.35/4, p = .17$, RMSEA = .062, CFI = .994, GFI = .987), the path analysis showed significant indirect effects locus of control on resilience, as shown in Table 2. Although resilience (measured through ARS) is a trait, our model tries to determine the effects of other personality traits such as self-perception and locus of control on psychological resilience. Resilience is not an innate trait, which remains unchanged during lifetime (Waller, 2001), in fact, resilience is a positive adaptation in response to adverse conditions (Masten, 2001). Recent studies showed significant influences of personality traits including Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Flexibility on total score of resilience, confirming that personality traits can potentially affect resilience (Foumani, Salehi, & Babakhani, 2015).

Table 2. Direct, indirect and total effects (Standardized estimates) for the mediation model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exogenous/ Exogenous variables</th>
<th>Self-perception</th>
<th>Resilience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct/Total</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-perception</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal locus of control</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.50**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerful others</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$N = 156 * p <.05, ** p <.01$

The three types of locus of control had significant direct effects on resilience, positive effects for the internal locus of control and negative for the external locus of control. Self-perception has a direct positive effect on resilience. Although the small sample size lead to the necessity to further analyze this results. On the other hand, the results are important, showing that personalities of adolescents who have psychological traits leading to resilience could explain the individual differences in adjustment and reactions to adversities. The most important indirect effect is the positive effect of internal locus of control and the negative effect of powerful others, although weaker than the internal control. Chance has no significant effect on resilience, but the other external factor, powerful others has both direct and indirect negative effects.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study's goal was to analyze the relationships between the self-esteem (self-perception), dimensions of resilience, and locus of control. The statistical analyses confirmed the main hypothesis that high self-esteem and resilience is associated with the presence of an inner locus of control, both high self-esteem and internal locus of control being aspects of a highly resilient adolescent.

The results confirmed previous research in the field, showing that the level of self-esteem could determine the attitudes towards life (Brown, 2010; Richardson, Ratner, & Zumbo, 2009). In addition, the results showed that locus of control mediates the association between self-perception and resilience. Kalantarkousheh and his
colleagues (2013) revealed that there is even a causal relationship between internal locus of control and self-concept dimensions, the positive consequences of behavior, attributed to self, allow the individual to form a self-image characterized by competence and confidence while the external locus of control does not lead to a positive self-image. An increased level of internal locus of will lead people to think that they hold the control of their own lives while placing a value on their abilities and skills, internal locus of control predicts positive self-esteem (Saadat, Ghazemzadeh, Karami, & Soleimani, 2012), which our research also demonstrated. Due to the connections demonstrated between self-esteem and locus of control in the literature, we expected and we revealed that high self-esteem is positively correlated with high internal locus of control, thus these individuals would also exhibit resilient characteristics (Judge, Erez, Bon, & Thoresen, 2002). As Nakaya and his colleagues (2006) said, there are many factors involved in developing resilience, but personality traits are among the most important; examining psychological characteristics of those who show adaptive recovery from adversities offer pertinent information to the improvement of adolescents’ psychological health and adjustment. We can conclude that self-esteem and internal locus of control are personal protective factors of the resilient individual (Fayombo, 2010).

Future research will tend to continue this study, by measuring also adolescent adjustment and well-being, as outcomes of resilience or predicting adolescents’ psychological resilience by other personality traits indicated in the literature but not covered in the present study. A longitudinal study could also reveal the stability of this associations over time. Another research direction is the inclusion of a larger variety of protective factors, such as: personal protective factors (autonomy, self-help skills, aptitudes, and self-efficacy), familial protective factors (family structure, family support, parental attachment style, supportive family network) and extra-familial protective factors (relationships with pro-social adults, positive peer relationships) (Boyden & Mann, 2005).

5. REFERENCES


