



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CHILDREN ACROSS FAMILY CONTEXTS

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Abstract

This study looks at how emotional intelligence and psychological resilience are related in children aged 11 to 15. It also explores whether these two aspects differ depending on the type of family environment in which the child is raised, including nuclear families, single-parent families, and institutional care settings.

The sample included 170 participants. Resilience was measured using the CYRM-12, while emotional intelligence was assessed with the EQ-i:YV. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and one-way ANOVA.

The results showed a strong positive association between emotional intelligence and resilience, indicating that children with better emotional skills tend to cope more effectively with difficult situations. At the same time, significant differences were observed between groups, suggesting that family context plays an important role in both emotional functioning and adaptive capacity. Overall, the findings point to the importance of emotional development in supporting resilience, especially in more vulnerable environments.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, resilience, institutionalized children, psychological adaptation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Resilience in childhood is generally understood as the ability to deal with difficult situations and continue to function in a relatively balanced way. Rather than being something fixed, it develops over time and depends on a combination of personal characteristics and environmental influences. Children learn how to cope with stress through everyday experiences, especially through the relationships they build with the people around them.

Emotional intelligence is closely linked to this process. It refers to how well individuals can recognize their own emotions, understand what others feel, and manage emotional reactions in different situations. During adolescence, these abilities become increasingly important, as children face more complex social interactions and emotional challenges.

When looking at resilience and emotional intelligence together, it becomes clear that they are not independent from each other. Children who are able to understand and regulate their emotions tend to handle stressful situations more effectively. In turn, those who cope better with adversity often develop more stable emotional responses. This suggests that emotional intelligence may play an important role in supporting resilience.

At the same time, these processes do not develop in isolation. The family environment has a strong influence on both emotional development and adaptive functioning. In nuclear families, children often benefit from a more stable structure and consistent support, although this depends largely on the quality of relationships rather than the structure itself. In single-parent families, children may experience different types of challenges, such as increased responsibility or reduced availability of the caregiver, but this does not necessarily prevent the development of adaptive skills.

For children living in institutional care, the situation can be more complex. Many of them have experienced separation, instability, or lack of consistent emotional support. These experiences can affect both emotional regulation and the ability to form secure relationships. However, even in these contexts, children may develop resilience, especially when they have access to supportive adults or positive peer relationships.

Overall, differences between children raised in various family contexts are better explained by the quality of emotional and relational experiences than by family structure alone. Emotional intelligence and resilience appear to develop together, influenced by both individual abilities and environmental conditions. Understanding how these factors interact can provide useful insight into children's psychological development, particularly in more vulnerable groups.

2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological resilience in children aged 11 to 15, while also considering the influence of family structure. More specifically, the study aims:

1. To investigate the association between emotional intelligence and resilience levels in children.
2. To examine differences in emotional intelligence and resilience across children raised in nuclear families, single-parent families, and institutional care settings.

2.2. HYPOTHESES

H1: A significant positive relationship is expected between emotional intelligence and resilience in children.

H2: Children from institutional care will show lower levels of emotional intelligence and resilience compared to those from family environments.

3. METHOD

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

The study included a total of 170 children aged between 11 and 15 years. Participants were distributed across three groups based on family structure: 57 children raised in nuclear families, 56 from single-parent families, and 57 residing in institutional care settings.

The sample consisted of 84 boys and 86 girls, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. In terms of living environment, 86 participants were from urban areas and 84 from rural areas.

Participants were recruited using convenience sampling, with access facilitated through collaboration with schools and residential care institutions. Inclusion criteria required that participants fall within the specified age range and demonstrate the ability to understand and respond to the assessment instruments.

Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from parents, legal guardians, or institutional representatives, depending on the child's living situation. Additionally, all participants provided assent and were informed about the voluntary nature of their participation. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines, ensuring confidentiality and the protection of all participants.

3.2 INSTRUMENTS

Two standardized self-report instruments were used to assess the main psychological variables of the study: resilience and emotional intelligence.

1. The Child and Youth Resilience Measure - 12 items (CYRM-12) (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011) is a brief version of the original CYRM-28 designed to assess global resilience in children and adolescents. The scale evaluates resilience as a multidimensional construct, capturing individual, relational, and contextual resources that support adaptation in the face of adversity. It consists of 12 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not at all true for me) to 5 (a lot true for me). Total scores range between 12 and 60, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived resilience. For interpretative purposes, scores between 12 and 25 indicate low resilience, 26 to 45 moderate resilience, and 46 to 60 high resilience.

2. The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory - Youth Version (EQ-i:YV) (Bar-On & Parker, 2000) was used to assess emotional intelligence in children and adolescents. This instrument evaluates self-perceived emotional and social competencies across five domains: intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management, and general mood. The full version consists of 60 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very seldom true of me) to 4 (very often true of me). Raw scores are converted into standardized scores (mean = 100, standard deviation = 15). According to the normative interpretation, scores below 85 indicate low emotional intelligence, scores between 85 and 115 reflect an average level, while scores above 115 indicate a high level of emotional intelligence.

3.3 PROCEDURE

Data were collected in both school and residential care settings, with prior approval obtained from institutional representatives. The questionnaires (CYRM-12 and EQ-i:YV) were administered in small group sessions, under the supervision of the researcher.

Participants received clear instructions and were encouraged to answer honestly. The average completion time was approximately 25-30 minutes. All responses were confidential. The data were subsequently entered into SPSS and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and one-way ANOVA.

4. RESULTS

4.1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Error
Resilience	170	15	59	37.00	12.310	-.057	.186
Emotional Intelligence	170	61	270	121.77	49.849	1.111	.186
Valid N (listwise)	170						

Descriptive statistics were calculated for resilience and emotional intelligence in order to examine the overall distribution of scores within the sample.

The mean score for resilience was $M = 37.00$ ($SD = 12.31$), with values ranging from 15 to 59. According to the interpretation criteria, this reflects a moderate level of resilience among participants. The relatively wide range and standard deviation suggest noticeable individual differences, indicating that while some children demonstrate stronger adaptive capacities, others may experience more difficulty in coping with adversity.

For emotional intelligence, the mean score was $M = 121.77$ ($SD = 49.85$), with observed values between 61 and 270. Based on the standardized interpretation, this corresponds to a high level of emotional intelligence at the group level. However, the large standard deviation points to substantial variability, suggesting that emotional competencies differ considerably across participants.

Overall, the results indicate a sample characterized by moderate resilience and relatively high emotional intelligence, with significant individual variation in both constructs. These differences support the need for further analysis to better understand the relationship between the two variables and their variation across family contexts.

4.2 PEARSON CORRELATION ANALYSIS

A significant positive relationship is expected between emotional intelligence and resilience in children.

Table 2. Pearson correlation between resilience and emotional intelligence

		1	2
1. Resilience	Pearson Correlation	1	.889**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	170	170
2. Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.889**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	170	170

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To test the first hypothesis (H1), a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between resilience and emotional intelligence.

The results revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between resilience and emotional intelligence, $r(170) = .889$, $p < .001$. This indicates that higher levels of emotional intelligence are associated with higher levels of resilience among participants.

The strength of the correlation suggests a substantial relationship between the two variables, highlighting the role of emotional competencies in supporting adaptive functioning. In other words, children who demonstrate better emotional understanding and regulation also tend to exhibit greater capacity to cope with challenges and adversity.

4.3 ANOVA

Children from institutional care will show lower levels of emotional intelligence and resilience compared to those from family environments.

Table 3. One-way Anova examining differences in resilience across family structures.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18486.733	2	9243.367	216.704	.000
Within Groups	7123.267	167	42.654		
Total	25610.000	169			

To examine differences in resilience and emotional intelligence across family structures, one-way ANOVA analyses were conducted.

The results indicated a statistically significant effect of family structure on resilience scores, $F(2, 167) = 216.70$, $p < .001$. This finding suggests that resilience levels differ significantly among children raised in nuclear families, single-parent families, and institutional care settings.

The large F value points to substantial differences between groups, indicating that family context plays an important role in shaping children's adaptive capacities.

Table 4. One-way Anova examining differences in emotional intelligence across family structures.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	260081.560	2	130040.780	135.845	.000
Within Groups	159864.493	167	957.272		
Total	419946.053	169			

A similar pattern was observed for emotional intelligence. The ANOVA results showed a statistically significant effect of family structure on emotional intelligence scores, $F(2, 167) = 135.85, p < .001$.

This result indicates that children's emotional competencies vary significantly depending on their family environment. The magnitude of the F value suggests that these differences are not only statistically significant, but also meaningful at a practical level.

Taken together, the findings support the second hypothesis, confirming that both resilience and emotional intelligence differ across family structures. These results highlight the influence of environmental and relational contexts on children's psychological development.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to explore the link between emotional intelligence and resilience in children, while also considering the role of family structure.

The results showed a strong connection between the two variables, suggesting that emotional abilities are closely related to how children deal with challenges. In addition, differences between groups indicate that the environment in which children grow up can influence both emotional functioning and resilience.

These findings underline the importance of looking at both individual and contextual factors when studying adaptation in children. Developing emotional skills may represent a useful direction for interventions, particularly for those growing up in less stable environments.

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