



Analyzing Resilience from Concept and Approach Point of View: A literature Review

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Abstract

Resilience is a term of multiple fields and perspectives, such that each perspective ends at same notion of strength. It's only been past few decades that it grew and got attention in field of Human Psychology. In these decades manifold studies have been conducted on the topic across different cultures with diverse methods and dimensionalities. The study aims to provide brief information upon the different kinds of approaches that have been taken to study resilience. It is notable that few direct studies along with several reviews have been pooled for this purpose. Several clusters are explained to shed light upon the approaches taken and have existed for review. The future directions for further exploration are given. As existing literature is varied, diversified and not unanimous, the review aims to provide base so upcoming researches are more concrete and connected in some way giving more meaning to existing literature too. The limitation of the study is that only approaches and concept is reviewed in short and not the extensive factors and results that are of grievous importance.

Keywords: Resilience, Mental Health, Approaches, Well-Being.

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Introduction

Resilience has been a versatile and complex topic that has been studied and addressed within different fields. It has been studied in fields of Business, sociology, Psychology and Education in different contexts. However the base theme of resilience as strength remains same across all.

Resilience theory emerged more as the attention shifted from pathology to strengths.(Patterson & Rak, 1996). Hawley and De Haan(1996) agree to this observation and claim that a similar trend has picked up in Family Therapy as well. In past few decades there has been a movement of change in the way family therapy works. The models are now modified to stress upon the clients strengths and not upon the weaknesses they possess. The clients and Families are being helped to explore their resources in search of psychological solutions.

Pearlin and Schooler(1982) stated that researchers have traditionally confined themselves to study of problems and pathology. The strengths, coping methods, survival strategies and even growth and learning haven't gained much attention in research. This has resulted into the following: An impression is created that Coping is a tolerating the adversity also being a distinctive or individual occurrence rather than being a normative and widespread phenomenon.(Antonovsky, 1979). It has impacted the establishment that coping is exclusive to exceptional individuals, hence overlooking the "Institutionalized resolutions of Common Life difficulties" (Schooler & Pearlin 1982, P 110 and Saleebey, 1997b) Pathology has received elevation within the sphere of Science and coping furthermore demoted to homely folklore world. (Goldstein, 1997) It has made Clinicians and other professionals resistant towards acknowledging the presence of strength and power within their clients. In the field of human services psychopathology and related nomenclature has been one of the primary hammers.

This could result in the concept of resilience turning to a rigid, rugged, don't look back, shake it off kind and in turn making individuals and systems susceptible to stressful conditions.(Schwartz, 1997) Efforts have been taken to promote Resilience as Flexible, compassionate, in-touch-with-life bounce back ability within a person.

Certain different definitions of Resilience in prevalence: "The capacity of a system to survive, adapt and grow in the face of change and uncertainty"(Fiksel 2006). "Resilience is the capacity

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of a system to absorb disturbance, undergo change, and retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks” (Longstaff *et al.* 2010).

George Vaillant (1993) defines resilience as the “self-righting tendencies” of the person, “both the capacity to be bent without breaking and the capacity, once bent, to spring back” (p. 248). (Goldstein, 1997, p. 30) Resilience means the skills, abilities, knowledge, and insight that accumulate over time as people struggle to surmount adversity and meet challenges. It is an ongoing and developing fund of energy and skill that can be used in current struggles. (Garmezy, 1994 in Saleebey, 1996, p. 298) Resilience continues to remain a broad and varied concept. In some fields it is well explored while continues to be just nascent in certain areas.

There are certain Occurrences which have been consistently correlated to Resilience in Literature. Barnard identified nine of these in 1994:

Being perceived as affectionate and cuddly in infancy period and beyond

No sibling being born after one’s birth within 20-24 months phase.

Having high Intelligence level

Having Skills and Capacity for budding intimate relationships

Achievement orientation since childhood

Capacity to assign meanings to events that help in enhancing the understanding of same events

Ability to compartmentalize that is to be able to engage and disengage from home and outside environments appropriately.

To have an internal orientation as well as Locus of control.

Not having to deal with any serious illness as an adolescent.

It is highly interesting that much of resilience research and theory has concentrated on situations which could not be easily changed like having certain terminal illness or being part of

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a war or growing up within scarcities etc. In such situations, one has no escape and some sort of coping mechanisms do develop or need to be developed.

The wide literature available could be divided into different clusters depending upon the way resilience is studied in them or the approach that was taken into consideration. Some basic clusters are specified below, Individual, Family and Community level Characteristics:

Depending upon the characteristics targeted (Personal Characteristics, Family possessed characteristics or Community based) in the study and kind of resilience studied, this cluster is formed. The literature available for this cluster is so huge that it's difficult to quantify even.

Individual Resilience has been extensively studied through different methods starting right with fixed scales and going to structured and unstructured interviews.(Gallo et al., 2009; Ungar, 2011; Frankenberg et al, 2013). Family Resilience surrounded two sort studies. One was how and why certain families thrive better than others that is how the family working patters are(Walsh, 2002; Greenberg, 2006). Another has been how childhood adversity and family relations effect resilience. McCubbin et al. has worked highly on this for decades giving us a huge support literature and interesting outcomes. Community Resilience was next in search of interventions on community level.(e.g., Djalante & Thomalla, 2011) Protective and Risk Model approach: Innumerable researched could be cited that have studied resilience from Protective and Risk Model perspective. These models are constructed based upon factors that either provide protection or act as risk and vulnerabilities. Some researchers have studied the two models together (Doll & Lyon, 1998) whereas others have studied either of the two models or factors (Either Risk or protective). When we go deeper into what and why of Resilience, "protective factors" is most encountered term and concept (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Masten & Coatsworth,1998). It is these factors that act as shield protecting a person from collapsing on any level whether may it be emotional, Psychological, social or physical. Rutter and Masten, the very known theorists in Resilience connection, have finely emphasized the value of protective mechanisms in their literature. Protective mechanisms not only determine but amend person's behavior in at risk situations providing emerging outcomes. External Intervention is not something that is very must for protective mechanisms to occur. At times there is need for external intervention, at other times it is inborn and working by default. Where Protective mechanisms relate to adaptation facet, there is another term Vulnerability Mechanisms that deals with susceptibility facet or risk

Analyzing Resilience from Concept and Approach Point of View: A literature Review factors. Vulnerability mechanisms exemplify how risk mechanisms occur and act on a person in negative way. Factors and mechanisms and terms are interchangeably used but however where first deals with constructs the later relates to the entire route of occurrence and processes underpinning. Psychometric driven or Variable Centered approach taken: Studied that use a standardized scale that has been tested upon the psychometric properties come under psychometric driven approach. The versatility of the application of the studies of the psychometric based studies is high as no other variable has to be taken in consideration for calculation. The unanimity of measured construct remains across different studies. Cross cultural comparison could be performed for studies that employ a when it valid measurement scale.

However we also need to look at other side, the cons of using fixed scale psychometric study of validation and norms will itself be a task before even the analysis begins the scales available for measurement the resilience Contra construct also need to be analyzed that whether they are measuring directly some different component of resilience.

Variable Centered:

What gave rise to such varied approaches is hard to say. One possible reason could be lack of multiple measures readily available. Different variables that strongly relate to resilience have been in centre of multitude of studies. In fact if we see the recent time studies, the inverse relationship has been extensively studied between pathological symptoms and mental health, wellbeing or resilience. Buffering methods and variables are more common in this way of study through outcome and effect analysis. (Rourke et al., 2010; Buric et al., 2019; Overstreet et al., 2017)

The Pattern Approach:

Pattern approach was put forward by Polk(1997). According to them, resilience unfolds into certain patterns that could be further understood in detail.

Dispositional Pattern:

Dispositional pattern is a huge umbrella covering factors that make a person competent, healthy and resilient. The characteristics at a person's personal disposition as well the factors a person is predisposed to possess genetically and physically have been identified to have strong effect on a person's health and well-being. Having high academic achievement, positive health record,

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receiving love and care from primary caregivers are certain common factors found related to this pattern.

Relational Pattern:

A pattern of resilience resources derived relationships. It includes multitude of relations that we have whether it's the close ones or the social circles a person remains in. The way a person relates to their life, job and adversities also form a part of relational pattern of resilience.

Situational Pattern:

An ability to act in accordance with situations and as per demands of time is additional quality that develops Resilience. Situational Pattern is a pattern that encompasses all the behaviors, qualities, analysis and the methods to be at par with adversity situations. It covers a wide range of abilities right from being self aware, to being capable to understand, to mastering the environment by making right decisions at the right timings. It is manifested in a variety of novelty seeking and creativity behaviors too.

Philosophical Pattern:

The beliefs that a person has have high impact on the way person behaves. It has been found that the philosophical believes a person holds contribute to resilience. The belief that life is meaningful has a bigger purpose and the outlook towards struggles all contribute positively to philosophical pattern of resilient individuals.

Qualitative (Case studies) and the quantitative data (Ample Sample collection) approach: As specified in title, qualitative and quantitative are differentiated based upon number of samples taken, or the exclusivity of data collection method applied. Qualitative includes the case studies and quantitative includes the collection of high sample collection method later analyzed mathematically or numerically. In respect of resilience these both have been applied positively giving valuable insights and results. Certain researchers have studied cases of people emerging from Earthquakes, Wars and other adversity situations for detailed knowledge whereas some collected samples and gave significant information analyzed by numbers.

Future directions for research

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Though concept of resilience is very comprehensive, characterized exclusively by emergence and positive adaptation, the researching difficulties for the construct remain.

Resilience being a term with conceptual difficulties and being context and culture specific makes it obscures to be studied across cultures in a uniform way which again needs certain solution. Some form of uniformity in definition, methods and approaches would make it easier for future researchers to identify the gaps and study those. Presently most researchers adopt an operational definition approach and an own kind of methodology which limits comparisons and collections. Though having ample insights into the term, we still lie nowhere concretely. It is important to acknowledge the positive side of widespread and varied perspectives too. Expansion of the studies and the concept is a positive outcome in certain respects, so as to provide a huge variety of information to researchers and possible explorations and ideas to work with.

Effect of spiritual and therapy interventions on resilience need to be taken into practice and studies to see some real life effects and implications of existing literature and researches. Hardly any measures are available for measurement of Resilience in Older people. Development of such measures would help develop some experiential insights into the concept. In elderly people, resilience could be researched in respect to lifestyles and coping.

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