

Self-Esteem and Hopelessness, and Resiliency: An Exploratory Study of Adolescents in Turkey

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Abstract

Adolescence is a time of rapid development and change. In this developmental period, adolescents have to struggle with a large number of stress factors. In this process resilience is important to have as an adaptive, stress-resistant personal quality. The recent research considers that numerous factors contribute to resilience in adolescents; the internal characteristics associated with resilience include such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, perseverance, internal locus of control, coping and adaptation skills. The purpose of this study is to explore self-esteem and hopelessness as the predictor of resiliency of adolescents. The participants in this study are 223 high school school students (90 females and 133 males). Main instruments are Beck Hopelessness Scale, California Healthy Kids Survey Resilience-Youth Development Module High School Questionnaire and Coopersmith Self-Esteem Scale. The data has been analyzed by regression analysis. The findings showed that self-esteem and hopelessness is a significant predictor of resilience in adolescents. There was a positive relationship between self-esteem and resilience, but there was a negative relationship between hopelessness and resilience. In accordance with the results obtained from this study, there is a correlation between adolescents' self-esteem, hopelessness and resilience levels. Finally, findings warrant further investigation of the interaction effects of self esteem and hopelessness on resilience.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Hopelessness, Resilience, Adolescent

1. Introduction

Resilience, as a generic concept concerned with how individuals cope with stress and how they recover from trauma, is considered positive development, inclining towards the future and hope, such as positive coping, harmony/compliance and competence (Murphy, 1987). Resilience, in a more general sense, is described as having a successful adaptation capacity, showing a great effort and thus becoming successful despite compelling and menacing conditions. Accordingly, resilience is used to define three main facts in literature. The first one is used to describe, in spite of problems (under high risk) - the characteristic that enables individuals overcoming difficulties and exhibiting a better development than expected to survive or the belief that they have a personal talent. The second fact indicates the ability of the individual to rapidly adjust in the face of stressful living experiences. The point on which some research focused, on the other hand, can be the study of more than one stress agents having taken place recently at the same time. Such kind of studies examine the protective factors, reducing the negative effects of different stress sources on children and on their behavior or the factors increasing their vulnerabilities. The third phenomenon of resilience is to recover from the trauma. The studies regarding the third group are the studies examining the individual characteristics and differences, which play an important role regarding the recovery from possible effects of trauma. The destructive living experiences are expected to decrease the individual's living quality. Even though the concept of invulnerability has been used from the past to the present, nobody is really "invulnerable". When the sources of stress are excessive or reach the extents that will threaten life, resilience leaves its place to new traumatic life (Masten, 1994).

While Henderson & Milstein (1996) deal with the concept of resilience as a feature changing from person to person and increasing or decreasing in the course of time, Haynes (2005) elucidates the main features of resilient

individuals by summing them up under three headings: a) social features, b) emotional features, and c) cognitive/academic features. Social characteristics are classified as being gifted in developing friendships, the capability in establishing positive relationships with others, possessing effective communication skills requiring the appropriate use of language and finding help when needed. Emotional characteristics indicate a strong sense of self-efficacy, self-confidence being at a high level, high self-esteem and self-acceptance, controlling emotions and the skill of awareness, rapidly being able to adapt to new situations, the power to withstand against anxiety and obstruction. Cognitive/academic characteristics are described as high achievement motivation, the ability to consider and plan the future, struggling rationally against stressful and traumatic events, making much more inner attributions than outer attributions (lucky, ability, etc.), shaping and activating his/her environment again for the benefit of the others around him/her. In brief, resilience encompasses personal qualifications ensuring achievement despite problems, and it is represented as a changing, multi-dimensional feature depending on different conditions (Garmezy, 1985; Garmezy & Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1992; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It is indicated that resilient children have some common characteristics and these refer to four important characteristics:

1-Social activity: the ability to form positive responses in others, thus to establish positive relationships both with adults and their peers,

2-Problem-solving skills: the ability to ask for help from others and to plan the events under his/her own control,

3-Self-rule: one's feeling of possessing his/her own identity, behaving independently and the ability to try to control over his/her environment,

4-Having objectives and the feeling of future: the feeling of having some targets, educational expectations, hope and bright future (Krovetz, 1999).

To understand that the youngsters who have been growing up under risky situations and destructive living conditions are able to be successful and remain resilient despite all the problems affecting their development, will shed light on the preventive practices that can be made intended for the other children and youngsters under similar risks (Lambie, Leone & Martin, 2002; Masten & Reed, 2002). In the studies carried out in recent years with the individuals, who successfully adjust despite the negative living conditions in the field of mental health, the word "resilient" (the person recovering fast and pulling himself together used as a personality trait, the word "resilience" (the power of recovering fast, resiliency) is used. In the studies carried out in our country, it is observed that the word "resilience" is interpreted as "yılmazlık" by Ögülmüş (2001), Özcan (2005), Gürkan (2006) "psychological strength" by Gizir (2004), Karairmak (2006) and "the power of self-roundup" by Terzi (2006), Terzi (2008).

Windle (1999) emphasizes that three main points have been commonly stated in the definition of the concept of resilience. These are; a) risk and/or difficulty, b) showing positive adaptation, coping, self-sufficiency and c) protective factors. Rutter (1999) described resiliency as a dynamic concept arising as a result of the interaction between the risk and protective factors and stated that this dynamic structure changed the effect of negative events of living. In this case, it is necessary that risk and protective factors be clarified for the concept of resilience to be better understood.

Another mechanism regarding resilience is protective factors serving as buffer against difficulties. The protective factors describe the situations which soften, lessen or remove the risk or the effect of difficulty and develop the healthy adaptation and the individual's competencies (Masten, 1994). While the existence of protective factors in the individual or in the environment where the individual is present, on the one hand, enables the prevention of the occurrence of any problem and to decrease the formation of a problematic behaviour, it, on the other hand, enables the individual to survive against difficulties by helping individual's strengthening the behaviours, attitudes and knowledge to increase the emotional and physical well-being of him/her by reducing the effect of existing problem (Romano & Hage, 2000). While defining self positively, optimism, social sufficiency, social skills, problem-solving skills, assertiveness (Terzi, 2006; Friesen, 2007; Ungar et al., 2007) are considered as the individual characteristics included among the protective factors related to resilience and while the individual's value of self-respect and his/her beliefs about him/herself are stressed, and whereas high value of self-respect develops self-confidence and positive attitude in the individual, low value of self-respect decreases the self-confidence and increases negative expectations about, the future (Heinonen, 2003). In addition, it is stated that psychological health and empathy, inner control, self image and perceived sense of sufficiency play important roles (Magnus, Cowen, Wyman, Fagen & Work, 1999; Masten, Hubbard, Gest, Tellegen, Garmezy & Ramirez, 1999).

The theory of resilience is an approach which is focused on the understanding of risk factors encountered among adults, on their powerful aspects and on understanding healthy development despite problems (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). In fact, development of competence takes part against successful coping and positive adaptation

or an important risk, trouble or trauma in the center of explanations regarding resilience as a dynamic process (Wolin & Wolin, 1993; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten & Reed, 2002).

Adolescence is the period of development taking place between childhood and adulthood, of spiritual maturity and of preparation for life. The rapid growing starting in adolescence ends in physical, sexual and spiritual maturity at the end of this period. Adolescence is regarded as excited, daredevil and turbulent period everywhere and every time. At the same time, adolescence is a period of depressions, angers, conflicts and concerns. In brief, this period is a period in which all the feelings, whether positive or negative, are intense and all reactions are extreme (Yörükoğlu, 1993). Additionally, individuals may lose confidence in themselves and they may be possessed by hopelessness (Yörükoğlu, 1992). Comer (2002) describes hopelessness as continual, pessimistic and dejected belief. In this case, the beliefs accompanying the unchanged spiritual conditions, states and problems exist. Atabek (1990) stated that hopelessness is a human feeling, making the individual think there was nothing to do and people become hopeless. Young et al. (1996) argued that hopelessness does not change from person to person but changes in the same person in time and it is not static. Adolescents experience hopelessness both at school and at home from time to time. Futures being obscure, fail to guide him/herself. Failures and some major changes in the living conditions arouse negative feelings in the individual. These negative feelings also affect one self.

Self-respect states the personal and total feelings of self-value, self-confidence or self-acceptance (Leory, 1996). Self-respect is an evaluation of the information contained in the concept of self (Kılıççı, 2006). In the concept of self, people believe that they are talented, successful, worthy and important (Salami, 2010). Self-respect focuses on the person's need to evaluate himself or positively evaluate himself. Positive self-respect is described as person's accepting, appreciating and trusting himself entirely as an individual (Salmivalli et al., 1999).

Coleman & Hendry (1990) stated that those possessing high self-respect show tendency happy toward, healthy, productive and successful, make much longer effort to overcome the difficulties, sleep better at nights, have less risk in developing ulcer, show less tendency against accepting others and the pressures of their peers; those having low self-respect, on the other hand, are individuals who are worried, pessimistic, having negative thoughts about future and having tendency of unsuccess. Kassin (1998), on the other hand, stated that the individuals having low self-respect exhibit the characteristics, such as expecting unsuccess, being nervous, making less effort, and may ignore the important things in life, also make charges such as worthless and untalented against themselves when they are unsuccessful. Accordingly, the individuals having high self-respect prefer much more difficult activities, seem to be quite sure of their efforts' resulting in success, are less sensitive against emotional turbulences, are less affected by depression, are more open to accept critical analyses from efficient people, state less negative effect and do not experience negative effect when they notice that others are superior to them (Yelsma & Yelsma, 1998).

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a relationship between resilience and hopelessness and self-respect, and to what extent the variables of hopelessness and self-respect make a contribution to regression of resilience.

2. Method

The study group of this research is composed of 223 adolescents in total, including 90 girls (40.1%) and 133 boys (59.9%), who attend Cumhuriyet High School and Industrial Vocational High School in Burdur city center. The age range of the adolescents changes between 15 and 18 and their age average is determined as 16,2. In schools, participants are chosen randomly from different levels (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade) and using "random numbers table" students from different levels were determined.

2.1 Instruments

2.1.1 California Healthy Kids Survey Resilience and Youth Development Module High School Questionnaire: It was developed by Constantine, Benard & Diaz (1999) in order to determine characteristics of resiliency and protective factors which adolescents possess. The scale adapted to Turkish by Özcan (2005) is formed of 36 items and 8 sub-items. The sum of CYDÖ and its factors are as follows: the protective relationships in the society and high expectations, the possibilities for high expectations and meaningful participation, the protective relationships at school and high expectations, the protective relationships in the social circle, self-competence and self-awareness, empathy, objectives and longings, and solving problems. It was determined that Cronbach Alpha value is .89; split-half (Guttman) value is .77, and the item-total correlations changes between .28 and .52. Also, Cronbach Alpha Coefficient observed in the data of this research was determined as .93.

2.1.2 Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory: Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI) developed by Coopersmith (1967) to measure the self-esteem of students was used in the study. There is a long form of this scale consisting of 58 items and there is also a short form of it composed of 25 items. Short form was used in this study. The validity

and reliability study of Coopersmith Self-Esteem Scale was carried out by Pişkin (1996). The inner consistency coefficient of the scale's short form was found to be .76. The reliability of inventory calculated by Kuder Richardson (KR-20) Formula is .76.

2.1.3 Beck Hopelessness Scale: Beck Hopelessness Scale (Beck et al., 1974) was used to determine the levels of hopelessness. The scale is formed of 20 items. The option of "yes" in the 11 of the items is 1 point and the option of "no" in the 9 of the items is 1 point. The point range is 0-20. It is assumed that the hopelessness of the individual is high when the points taken are high (in cited Savaşır & Şahin, 1997). The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .85. The item-test correlation of the scale was found between .31 and .67. The scale's reliability of dividing in half is .85 (Durak, 1994). Durak & Palabıyıkoglu (1994) found the correlation coefficients between Beck Depression Scale and Hopelessness Scale meaningful at the values changing between .68-.71 according to diagnosis groups (in cited Savaşır & Şahin, 1997).

2.2 Data Collection

The research was carried out in Cumhuriyet High School and Industrial Vocational High School in the city of Burdur in the study year/academic year of 2009-2010. While the data was being collected, the researchers attended the classes and counseling hour and provided information regarding the objectives of the research, scales, voluntariness and the principle of confidentiality. The students were told not to write their names on the scales. The students' duration of answering the scales took about 20 minutes.

2.3 Data Analyses

In the study, Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient was used in order to be able to see the relations of the variables with each other in the examination of the data, and Stepwise Regression Analysis Technique was used to determine which order the variables regressing resiliency contribute. Of the multiple regression techniques, stepwise regression technique was utilized considering the variable number and the relations among the variables while forming the equation.

3. Results

The average and standard deviation results of the points that the students participating in the research got from each measuring devices are shown in Table 1.

When Table 1 is examined, it is observed that the students possess the score average of 108.97 for California Healthy Kids Survey Resilience and Youth Development Module High School Questionnaire, 12.83 for Beck Hopelessness Scale and 21.61 for Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory from the scales respectively.

Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient was applied in order to determine whether there is a relation between the variables over the data obtained in the investigation. The correlation belonging to the relations among the resilience, hopelessness and self-esteem scales was presented in Table 2.

When Table 2 is examined, it was observed that all relations are significant at the level of $p < .01$ when all the relations among the scores taken from the California Healthy Kids Survey Resilience and Youth Development Module High School Questionnaire and the scores taken from the other scales are examined. Also, it is observed that there is a significant relation between resilience and hopelessness in a negative aspect and between resilience and self-esteem is a significant relation in a positive aspect.

When Table 3 is examined, in the regression equation formed in order to determine the variable's predictor resilience, it is observed that the variable regressing the resilience at most is Hopelessness with its explanation percentage of the variance of 14.5%, and this is followed by self-esteem with 0.64%. All variables explain for the resilience percentage of the variance of 21%.

4. Discussion

In view of the consequence obtained in this study, the variables of hopelessness and self-esteem, which have been mentioned, are observed to contribute to the prediction of resilience in a meaningful way. While it is determined that hopelessness is the variable which most contributes to predict resilience the finding can be interpreted to explain that as the hopelessness levels of individuals increase, their resilience levels decrease and as their hopelessness levels decrease, their resilience levels increase, and in a way in which individuals hopeful for life can struggle with difficulties, coming through more easily against difficulties. When the literature is examined, this finding is parallel to the other research results (Masten, 1994; Mandleco & Perry, 2000; Capella & Rhona, 2001; Smith, 2009). Also, they have determined a positive meaningful relationship between positive well-being and resilience (Chuck-Ling Lai & Jit- Ho Mak, 2009).

In the research, the self esteem of the individuals has been determined as the second important variable to contribute to the resilience of adolescents. This finding can be interpreted in which, as the self esteem of an individual increases, his or her self confidence also increases and as an individual's self worth increases, his or her resilience also increases; besides if an individual's self esteem level increases, his or her power of struggle and indomitableness value also increase. Salami (2010) studied the mediatory effect of self esteem and social support and the relationship and resilience between adolescents being subject to posttraumatic stress disorder and violence, and determined a negative meaningful relationship between resilience and self-esteem and posttraumatic stress disorder. This finding has a feature of supporting the research finding. While self esteem is considered a protective factor in indomitableness studies (Moran & Eckenrode, 1992; Taylor, 1994; Rak & Patterson, 1996; Masten, 2001), high self-esteem is emphasized as an important power and capacity that increases the indomitableness of adolescents (Cicchetti, Rogosch, Lynch, & Holt, 1993; Spencer et al., 1993; Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994; Kumpfer, 1999; Mandleco & Peery, 2000; Werner & Smith, 2001). It is stated that indomitable children are prone to a higher sense of autonomy and independent study (Anthony, 1987; Benard, 1993; Gordon & Song, 1994); they can control the environment (Martinek & Hellison, 1997); indomitable adolescents have higher feelings of hope and optimism (Martinek & Hellison, 1997; Kumpfer, 1999; Tusaie-Mumford, 2001; Benard, 2004; Black & Ford-Gilboe, 2004); and resilience covers the behaviour that protect people from the conditions such as depression, psychological problems, loneliness, psychosocial isolation, physical problems (Smith, 2009).

One of the most comprehensive longitudinal researches related to the indomitableness carried out by Werner is a study which was started in 1955, in which 698 infants were examined in Kauai and which lasted 40 years, and in the consequence of this study, the children with high level of indomitableness were found to be more autonomous, independent, emphatic, task-oriented and curious and to have better relationships with their peers and to have a better ability to solve problems. At the consequence of this study, it was pointed out that some other factors about family and society are among those regarding indomitableness as well as age, social support, control focus, proficiency, self-esteem, character, social maturity, need for success, and ability to cope (Jew, Green & Kroger, 1999).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In view of the results obtained in this study, hopelessness and self-esteem variables are noticed to contribute to predict the resilience in a meaningful way. The importance of the subject reveals automatically for the researchers, experts of psychological health and pedagogues, who study with adolescent to preserve and develop the psychological health of the adolescents. In this context, during the guidance and counseling services in schools, the studies of increasing resilience and self-esteem, and decreasing hopelessness level can be included. The studies to be made can contribute to the individual's cognitive evaluations about being happy of his /her own life, which can help the hopelessness to decrease.

This research has some restrictions in terms of study group and method. Because this study has been carried out on high school students, it can be tested to what extent hopelessness and self esteem will predict resilience at different age groups. Also, it can be investigated what the contributions of different variables will be in predicting resilience.

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Table 1. The Result of Average and Standard Deviation

Scales	n	X	Ss
Resilience	223	108.97	19.73
Hopelessness	223	12.83	2.70
Self Esteem	223	21.61	2.11

Table 2. The Results of Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient

Scales	1	2	3
1. Resilience	-	-.38*	.30*
2. Hopelessness	-.38*	-	-.11
3. Self Esteem	.30*	-.11	-

*p<.01

Table 3. The Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis

	R	R2	R2 Change	F	F Change	Beta
Hopelessness	.381	.145	.145	37.56*	37.56	-.381
Self Esteem	.458	.210	.064	29.17*	17.90	.255

*p<.01 (n=223)