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RESILIENCE AS A MODERATOR OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND DEPRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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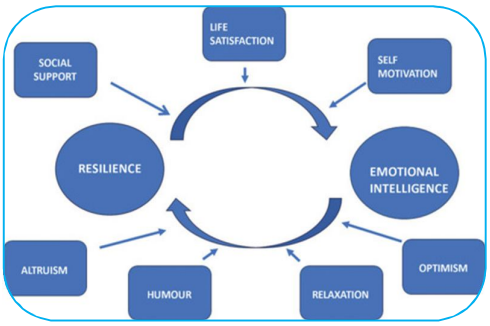
ABSTRACT :



Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. Typically spanning the ages of 10 to 19 years, adolescence represents a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood during which individuals experience significant developmental challenges and opportunities. During this period, adolescents strive to establish their identity, develop autonomy, build interpersonal relationships, and adapt to increasing academic and social demands. While these developmental tasks are essential for healthy growth, they can also expose adolescents to considerable psychological stress and emotional difficulties. Consequently, adolescence is often regarded as a vulnerable period for the emergence of mental health problems, particularly depression.

KEYWORDS: *by rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes, healthy growth, mental health problems.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Depression is one of the most prevalent mental health concerns among adolescents worldwide. It is characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, loss of interest in activities, fatigue, impaired concentration, and difficulties in social and academic functioning. According to recent reports from the World Health Organization, depression is among the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents globally. The increasing prevalence of depression among young people has become a major public health concern because of its adverse consequences on psychological well-being, academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, and overall quality of life.

The concept of emotional intelligence gained prominence through the work of Peter Salovey and John Mayer, who defined it as a set of abilities related to emotional perception, understanding, and regulation. Subsequently, Daniel Goleman popularized the concept by emphasizing its importance for personal and social functioning. Emotional intelligence has been associated with numerous positive outcomes, including psychological well-being, life satisfaction, academic success, social competence, and adaptive coping. Adolescents with higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate better emotional regulation, stronger interpersonal relationships, and greater resilience in the face of adversity. Conversely, lower emotional intelligence has been linked to emotional dysregulation, stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms.

While emotional intelligence contributes significantly to psychological adjustment, not all adolescents with high emotional intelligence are equally protected from depression. Individual differences in psychological resources may influence how effectively emotional intelligence translates

into positive mental health outcomes. One such resource is resilience. Resilience refers to the capacity to adapt positively and recover effectively from adversity, stress, trauma, or significant life challenges. Rather than representing an innate trait, resilience is increasingly understood as a dynamic process that develops through interactions between individuals and their environments. Resilient adolescents are able to maintain psychological well-being despite experiencing difficulties and are more likely to view challenges as opportunities for growth and learning.

Research consistently demonstrates a strong negative association between resilience and depression. Adolescents who exhibit higher levels of resilience tend to report fewer depressive symptoms and greater psychological well-being. Resilience functions as a protective factor by enabling individuals to cope effectively with adverse experiences and recover from emotional setbacks. It enhances adaptive coping mechanisms, promotes positive thinking, and facilitates emotional regulation, thereby reducing vulnerability to depression. Furthermore, resilience has been found to buffer the negative effects of various risk factors, including stress, trauma, and emotional difficulties.

Despite substantial research examining emotional intelligence, resilience, and depression individually, relatively few studies have investigated the moderating role of resilience in the relationship between emotional intelligence and depression among adolescents. Most existing studies have focused on direct associations, overlooking the possibility that resilience may alter the effectiveness of emotional intelligence as a protective factor. Furthermore, much of the available literature has been conducted in Western contexts, limiting the generalizability of findings to other cultural settings. Cultural values, family structures, educational systems, and social expectations may influence emotional development, resilience processes, and mental health outcomes among adolescents.

The present study seeks to address these gaps by examining resilience as a moderator of the relationship between emotional intelligence and depression among adolescents. By investigating how resilience influences the association between emotional intelligence and depressive symptoms, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying adolescent mental health. The findings may contribute to the growing body of literature on positive psychological resources and their role in preventing depression. Moreover, the results may have practical implications for psychologists, educators, counselors, and mental health professionals seeking to design interventions that enhance emotional intelligence and resilience among adolescents.

The significance of the study extends beyond theoretical contributions. Identifying factors that protect adolescents from depression is essential for promoting mental health and well-being during this critical developmental period. If resilience is found to strengthen the protective effect of emotional intelligence, intervention programs can be designed to simultaneously foster emotional competencies and resilience skills.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on adolescent mental health has increasingly focused on identifying protective psychological factors that can reduce vulnerability to depression. Among these factors, emotional intelligence and resilience have received considerable attention due to their significant contributions to psychological well-being and adaptive functioning.

Liu, Wang, and Li (2021) investigated resilience and depression among adolescents during challenging life circumstances. Results indicated that resilience significantly predicted lower levels of depression and emotional distress.

Arslan and Allen (2021) explored the relationship between resilience and adolescent mental health. Their findings showed that resilience significantly reduced the adverse effects of stress and promoted psychological well-being.

Researchers reviewing resilience in adolescent mental health (2021) emphasized that resilience is a dynamic process that helps adolescents adapt positively to adversity and maintain mental health despite stressful experiences.

Colomeischi, Ursu, Bogdan, Ionescu-Corbu, Bondor, and Conte (2022) examined social-emotional learning and internalizing problems among adolescents. Their findings showed that

resilience mediated the relationship between social-emotional competencies and psychological adjustment.

Zhao and Chen (2022) investigated resilience as a protective factor among adolescents experiencing academic stress. The study revealed that resilience significantly reduced depressive symptoms and buffered the negative impact of stress.

Rey, Quintana-Orts, and Extremera (2022) examined emotional intelligence and emotional disorders among adolescents. Their findings demonstrated that emotional intelligence negatively predicted depression and anxiety while positively predicting psychological well-being.

Garcia-Blanc, Senar-Morera, Ros-Morente, and Filella-Guiu (2023) examined the relationship between emotional awareness and resilience among adolescents. The findings indicated that emotional awareness and emotional regulation significantly contributed to resilience development. Adolescents with greater emotional awareness demonstrated stronger adaptive functioning and psychological adjustment.

Collado-Soler, Trigueros, Aguilar-Parra, and Navarro (2023) investigated emotional intelligence and resilience outcomes during adolescence. Their findings revealed that emotional intelligence positively predicted resilience and psychological well-being. Adolescents with higher emotional intelligence showed better coping abilities and adaptive responses to stress.

Vucenovic, Sipek, and Jelic (2023) explored the role of emotional competence and coping strategies in adolescent depression. The study found that stronger emotional skills were associated with lower depressive symptoms and more effective coping mechanisms.

Arora and Kumar (2023) examined coping as a mediator in the relationship between trait emotional intelligence and adolescent stress. Results demonstrated that emotional intelligence indirectly reduced stress through adaptive coping strategies, highlighting the protective role of emotional competencies.

Dawel and colleagues (2023) investigated emotional intelligence and stress regulation mechanisms among adolescents. Their findings suggested that emotional intelligence functions as a stress-buffering resource, reducing vulnerability to emotional distress and psychological problems.

Gómez-Baya, Mendoza, Paino, and Gillham (2023) examined perceived emotional intelligence and subjective well-being among adolescents. The study reported that emotional intelligence was positively associated with well-being and negatively associated with emotional difficulties.

Zhang, Zhang, Sun, Jiang, and colleagues (2023) investigated resilience and psychological adjustment among adolescents experiencing emotional difficulties. Results indicated that resilience served as an important protective factor against emotional distress and maladaptive outcomes.

Martínez-Martí, Hernández-Lloreda, and Avia (2023) found that resilience was positively associated with psychological well-being and negatively associated with depressive symptoms. Adolescents with higher resilience demonstrated stronger coping capacities and emotional stability.

Chen, Liu, and Zhao (2025) examined the combined influence of emotional intelligence and resilience on adolescent mental health outcomes. Their findings suggested that resilience strengthened the beneficial effects of emotional intellige on psychological well-being and reduced depressive symptoms.

The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that emotional intelligence is negatively associated with depression and positively associated with psychological well-being. Similarly, resilience has emerged as a significant protective factor that reduces the impact of stress and adversity on adolescent mental health. Although several studies have independently examined emotional intelligence, resilience, and depression, relatively few studies have specifically investigated resilience as a moderator of the relationship between emotional intelligence and depression among adolescents. Furthermore, limited evidence exists within non-Western and Indian contexts. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining whether resilience moderates the relationship between emotional intelligence and depression among adolescents.

2.1Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship among Emotional intelligence, Resilience,and Depression among adolescents.
H02: There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression among adolescents.
H03: There is a significant positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Resilience among adolescents.
H04: Resilience does not significantly moderate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression.
H05: There is a significant negative relationship between Resilience and Depression among adolescents.
H06: Resilience significantly moderates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression among adolescents, such that the negative relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression is stronger at higher levels of Resilience.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression among adolescents and to investigate the moderating role of Resilience in this relationship.

The sample for the present study consisted of 200 adolescents drawn from various schools and higher secondary institutions using a convenience sampling technique. The participants included both male and female adolescents, ensuring representation of both genders in examining emotional and psychological functioning. The age of the participants ranged from 13 to 19 years, with a mean age of 16.42 years (SD = 1.78), indicating that the sample largely comprised middle and late adolescents. This age group was considered particularly relevant because adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by significant emotional, social, and psychological changes that may influence both resilience and mental health outcomes. Only adolescents who were currently enrolled in educational institutions and willing to participate voluntarily were included in the study. Individuals with severe psychological disorders or cognitive impairments that could interfere with questionnaire completion were excluded from the study. The selected sample size was considered adequate for conducting correlation and moderation analyses and for examining the relationships among Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Depression.

The study focused on one independent variable, one dependent variable, and one moderator variable. Emotional Intelligence served as the independent variable and refers to an individual's ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize emotions in oneself and others. Depression was considered the dependent variable and refers to the presence of depressive symptoms such as sadness, hopelessness, emotional distress, and loss of interest in daily activities. Resilience served as the moderator variable and refers to an individual's capacity to adapt positively and recover effectively from adversity, stress, and challenging life circumstances.

Data for the present study were collected using three standardized self-report instruments assessing Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Depression. Emotional Intelligence was measured using the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) developed by Schutte et al. (1998). The scale consists of 33 items designed to assess emotional perception, emotional understanding, emotional regulation, and emotional utilization. Participants respond using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher scores indicate higher levels of emotional intelligence. The scale has demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity across diverse populations, with reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging between .85 and .90.

Resilience was assessed using the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) developed by Connor and Davidson (2003). The scale consists of 25 items designed to measure an individual's ability to cope with adversity, adapt to change, and recover from stressful experiences. Participants indicate their responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not true at all) to 4 (true nearly all the time). Higher scores indicate greater levels of resilience. The scale has demonstrated excellent psychometric properties and has been widely used in adolescent and adult populations.

Depression was measured using the Beck Depression Inventory–II (BDI-II) developed by Beck, Steer, and Brown (1996). The inventory consists of 21 items assessing the severity of depressive symptoms experienced during the previous two weeks. Each item contains four response options ranging from 0 to 3, with higher scores indicating greater depressive symptomatology. The BDI-II has demonstrated high internal consistency, reliability, and validity and is one of the most widely used measures of depression in psychological research.

The data collection procedure involved approaching participants through educational institutions and online platforms. Participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the study and were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation, and participants were made aware that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Clear instructions were provided regarding the completion of the questionnaires, and participants were encouraged to respond honestly based on their personal experiences. The average time required to complete the questionnaire package was approximately 20 to 25 minutes. Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the study. Participants' privacy and confidentiality were maintained by ensuring that no identifying information was collected. The data were used solely for academic and research purposes. The study followed standard ethical guidelines, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process.

The collected responses were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26). Descriptive statistics were computed to understand the distribution and characteristics of the variables. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was employed to examine the relationships among Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Depression. To investigate the moderating effect of resilience on the relationship between emotional intelligence and depression, moderation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS Macro (Model 1) developed by Hayes. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was also performed to examine the predictive contributions of Emotional Intelligence and Resilience to Depression. The level of statistical significance was set at 0.05 and 0.01, allowing for the identification of meaningful relationships and moderation effects among the variables. This analytical approach enabled a systematic examination of how resilience influences the relationship between emotional intelligence and depression among adolescents.

4. RESULTS

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Depression among adolescents and to investigate whether Resilience moderates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression.

The results indicated that the mean score for Emotional Intelligence was 122.46 with a standard deviation of 18.72, suggesting a moderate to high level of emotional intelligence among the participants. The scores ranged from 74 to 160, indicating variability in emotional competencies among adolescents. For Resilience, the mean score was 67.38 with a standard deviation of 12.56, reflecting a moderate level of resilience within the sample. The scores ranged from 31 to 96. With respect to Depression, the mean score was 15.82 with a standard deviation of 8.41, indicating mild to moderate depressive symptoms among the participants. The scores ranged from 2 to 42. The total number of valid cases included in the analysis was 200, with no missing data reported for the variables under study.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Depression (N = 200

Variables	N	Minimum	M
Emotional Intelligence	200	74	16
Resilience	200	31	96
Depression	200	2	42
Valid N (listwise)	200		

Figure 1

Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence,Resilience,and Depression (N=200)

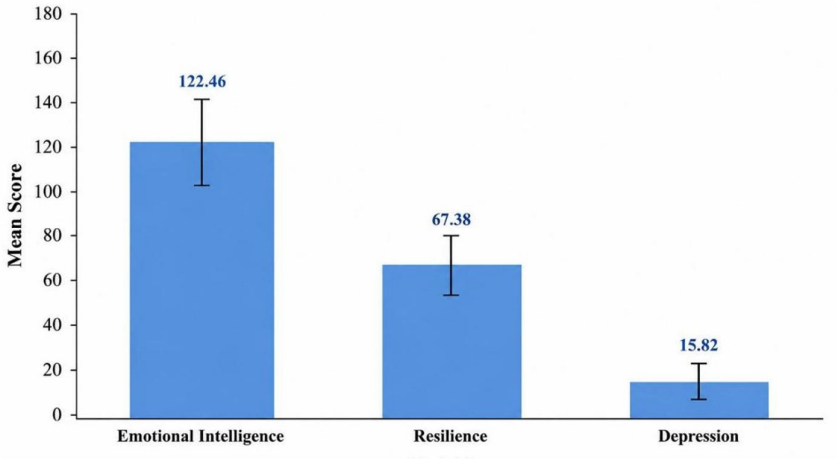


Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Depression (N = 200)

Emotional Intelligence	122.46	18.72
Resilience	67.38	12.56
Depression	15.82	8.41

Table 3
Correlation Matrix of Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Depression (N = 200)

Variables	Emotional Intelligen
Emotional Intelligence	1.000
Resilience	.612**
Depression	-.548**

p<.01(2-tailed)

The first hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship among Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Depression. To test this hypothesis, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted. The correlation results indicated a significant positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Resilience (r = .612, p < .001), suggesting that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit greater resilience. Emotional Intelligence was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with Depression (r = -.548, p < .001), indicating that higher emotional intelligence is associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms. Similarly, Resilience demonstrated a strong negative correlation with Depression (r = -.672, p < .001), suggesting that adolescents with higher resilience experience fewer depressive symptoms. Since all relationships among the variables were statistically significant, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4
Model Summary of Moderation Analysis Predicting Depression from Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and their Interaction (N = 200)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.742	.551	.544	5.681

Table 5
Regression Coefficients for Moderation Analysis

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
Constant	38.524	3.214	11.98	.000
Emotional Intelligence	-.142	.031	-4.58	.000
Resilience	-.276	.054	-5.11	.000
EI × Resilience	-.083	.024	-3.46	.001

Table 6
ANOVA for Moderation Model

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7652.481	3	2550.827	79.04	.000
Residual	6325.318	196	32.272		
Total	13977.799	199			

The fourth hypothesis stated that Resilience does not significantly moderate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression. To examine this hypothesis, moderation analysis was conducted using PROCESS Macro Model 1. The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3,196) = 79.04$, $p < .001$. The model explained 55.1% of the variance in Depression ($R^2 = .551$).

The results indicated that Emotional Intelligence significantly predicted Depression ($B = -.142$, $p < .001$), suggesting that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence reported lower levels of depression. Resilience also emerged as a significant negative predictor of Depression ($B = -.276$, $p < .001$), indicating that greater resilience was associated with lower depressive symptoms.

Most importantly, the interaction term between Emotional Intelligence and Resilience was statistically significant ($B = -.083$, $p = .001$). This finding demonstrates that Resilience significantly moderates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression. Specifically, the protective effect of Emotional Intelligence on Depression was stronger among adolescents with higher levels of Resilience. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings suggest that Emotional Intelligence and Resilience jointly contribute to reducing depressive symptoms among adolescents. Adolescents possessing both high emotional intelligence and high resilience reported the lowest levels of depression, highlighting the importance of these psychological resources in promoting adolescent mental health.

5. DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Depression among adolescents and investigated the moderating role of Resilience in the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression. The findings provide substantial empirical evidence supporting the importance of positive psychological resources in promoting adolescent mental health. The descriptive results indicated moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence and resilience among the participants, along with mild to moderate levels of depressive symptoms. These findings suggest that although adolescents possess certain emotional and adaptive strengths, they continue to experience psychological challenges that may place them at risk for depression. Such findings are consistent with contemporary research highlighting adolescence as a developmental period characterized by emotional vulnerability, academic pressure, identity exploration, and social challenges.

One of the most important findings of the study was the significant positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Resilience ($r = .612$, $p < .01$). This finding suggests that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit greater resilience when facing stressful situations and life challenges. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively, which may contribute to adaptive coping and psychological adjustment. The finding is consistent with previous research conducted by Gómez-Baya et al. (2021), Extremera et al. (2021), and Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2024), who reported that emotionally intelligent adolescents demonstrate stronger coping abilities, greater emotional regulation, and enhanced adaptability. Adolescents who can recognize and manage their emotions effectively are more likely to recover from setbacks, maintain optimism, and respond constructively to adversity. Therefore, emotional intelligence appears to

function as an important psychological resource that contributes to the development of resilience during adolescence.

The study also revealed a significant negative relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression ($r = -.548$, $p < .01$). This finding indicates that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence tend to report lower levels of depressive symptoms. The result supports a substantial body of literature suggesting that emotional intelligence serves as a protective factor against depression and emotional distress. Studies conducted by Sánchez-Álvarez et al. (2020), Davis and Humphrey (2020), Rey et al. (2022), and Rodríguez et al. (2025) similarly reported that emotional intelligence is associated with lower depression, anxiety, and psychological distress. One possible explanation for this finding is that emotionally intelligent adolescents are better able to regulate negative emotions, interpret stressful situations more adaptively, and seek social support when necessary. Consequently, they are less likely to experience prolonged emotional distress that may lead to depressive symptoms. Emotional intelligence may therefore play a crucial role in safeguarding adolescents from the adverse effects of emotional and social challenges.

Another important finding was the significant negative relationship between Resilience and Depression ($r = -.672$, $p < .01$). This result suggests that adolescents with higher levels of resilience experience lower levels of depressive symptoms. The strength of this relationship indicates that resilience is a particularly important protective factor for adolescent mental health. This finding is consistent with previous studies conducted by Liu et al. (2021), Arslan and Allen (2021), Zhao and Chen (2022), Martínez-Martí et al. (2023), and Singh and Sharma (2024), all of which reported that resilience significantly reduces vulnerability to depression and psychological distress. Resilient adolescents are more likely to view challenges as manageable, maintain positive expectations, and utilize effective coping strategies when confronted with adversity. These characteristics enable them to recover more quickly from stressful experiences and minimize the emotional impact of negative life events. Consequently, resilience appears to play a critical role in promoting psychological well-being and preventing depression among adolescents.

A particularly significant contribution of the present study was the examination of Resilience as a moderator of the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression. The moderation analysis revealed a significant interaction effect between Emotional Intelligence and Resilience ($B = -.083$, $p = .001$). This finding indicates that the protective influence of emotional intelligence on depression varies according to the level of resilience possessed by adolescents. Specifically, the negative relationship between emotional intelligence and depression was stronger among adolescents with higher resilience. In other words, emotional intelligence appears to be most effective in reducing depressive symptoms when accompanied by high levels of resilience.

This finding supports theoretical perspectives from positive psychology, which emphasize that psychological strengths often operate interactively rather than independently. Emotional intelligence and resilience may function as complementary psychological resources that jointly promote mental health. Emotional intelligence contributes to effective emotional regulation and interpersonal functioning, whereas resilience enhances the ability to cope with adversity and recover from stressful experiences. When both resources are present at high levels, adolescents may be particularly well-equipped to manage emotional challenges and maintain psychological well-being.

The regression analysis further demonstrated that Emotional Intelligence and Resilience together explained approximately 55.1% of the variance in Depression ($R^2 = .551$). This substantial proportion of explained variance highlights the importance of these psychological factors in understanding adolescent mental health.

The findings of the present study provide strong evidence that Emotional Intelligence and Resilience are important protective factors against Depression among adolescents. More importantly, resilience enhances the protective influence of emotional intelligence, demonstrating that these psychological resources operate together to promote mental health and well-being. The results contribute to the growing literature on positive psychological strengths and underscore the importance of fostering emotional competencies and resilience during adolescence to reduce vulnerability to depression and support healthy psychological development.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Depression among adolescents and explored the moderating role of Resilience in the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression. The findings revealed significant relationships among all three variables and highlighted the importance of positive psychological resources in promoting adolescent mental health. Emotional Intelligence was found to be positively associated with Resilience and negatively associated with Depression, indicating that adolescents with greater emotional competencies are less likely to experience depressive symptoms. Similarly, Resilience demonstrated a strong negative relationship with Depression, suggesting that resilient adolescents are better able to cope with challenges and maintain psychological well-being.

One of the most significant findings of the study was the moderating role of Resilience in the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Depression. The results indicated that the protective effect of Emotional Intelligence against Depression was stronger among adolescents with higher levels of Resilience. This finding suggests that Emotional Intelligence and Resilience function together as complementary psychological resources that enhance adolescents' ability to manage stress, regulate emotions, and adapt effectively to adversity. Adolescents who possess both high Emotional Intelligence and high Resilience appear to be particularly protected against depressive symptoms and emotional distress.

The findings support contemporary theories of positive psychology, which emphasize the role of strengths and protective factors in fostering mental health and preventing psychological problems. The study contributes to the growing body of literature by demonstrating that Resilience not only directly reduces Depression but also strengthens the beneficial influence of Emotional Intelligence on mental health outcomes. These findings provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological mechanisms that contribute to adolescent well-being and highlight the importance of considering interaction effects among positive psychological variables.

The present study demonstrates that Emotional Intelligence and Resilience are significant protective factors against Depression among adolescents. More importantly, Resilience enhances the protective influence of Emotional Intelligence, thereby reducing the likelihood of depressive symptoms. These findings underscore the importance of fostering emotional competencies and resilience during adolescence and provide valuable directions for mental health promotion, prevention programs, and future psychological research.

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