

## The role of Family Adaptability and Family Cohesion in coping and resilience among adolescents

Dr. Daisy Sharma\* and Ms. Rupa Sharma\*\*

### ABSTRACT

Family is the primary agent of socialization in children's lives. The primary caregivers are the parents, who familiarize them with the outer world. Parenting styles, family environment and adaptability influence children's acquisition of various social skills. The present study aims at studying the role of family adaptability and family cohesion on the coping and resilience of adolescents. A cross-sectional study was conducted taking a representative sample of 100 adolescents (50 boys and 50 girls). Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales III, Brief COPE and Resilience scale were employed to collect the data from the participants. The correlational analysis demonstrated a positive relationship between family adaptability, family cohesion, coping, and resilience. No significant gender or age differences in family adaptability and family cohesion in terms of coping and resilience. No significant impact has been found for family adaptability and family cohesion variables on coping and resilience.

**Keywords:** Resilience, coping, family adaptability, family Cohesion and resilience.

### About author

\* Associate Professor, Keshav Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi, India

\*\*Assistant Professor, GIAST, GGSIP University, Delhi, India

Corresponding Author: Dr. Daisy Sharma, Associate Professor, Keshav Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi, India

### Introduction

Parenting is a complex concept that influences a child's behavior, such as their academic areas, career choices, all-around development, and different abilities such as problem-solving, coping skills, and resilience (Sulaiman, H. 2000). The type of parent-child relationship is often associated with children's behavior. Adolescence is a critical development period as many changes may be seen in an individual's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social aspects. During this stage, adolescents face challenges and how they solve their problems can impact their well-being and overall development. Family cohesion and family adaptability are the two important factors that play a vital role in influencing an adolescent's coping skills and resilience. Family adaptability is associated with the family's way of adjusting to the changing circumstances and new situations in the environment. A family helps adolescents deal with challenges more effectively by providing a

safe and supportive environment. Family Cohesion means an emotional bond among family members to each other.

Family adaptability and family cohesion are considered as the two vital aspects of developing coping and resilience abilities among adolescents. It has been found that the higher levels of family cohesion and adaptability were associated with positive coping strategies employed by family members to adapt to life stressors (Marotz-baden, R., 1989). Previous researches related to the impact of parenting style on adolescent resilience skills have found a significant positive relationship between the types of parenting styles and resilience. The studies on the development of family adaptability and cohesion from adolescence to young adulthood and the impact of perceived parental acceptance, psychological control, structure marital status, socioeconomic status, and parenting behaviour show a significant developmental decline in perceived family cohesion but no change in adaptability from

adolescence to young adulthood (Spitz, A., et. al, 2023); Zakeri, H., et.al, 2010. The present study has taken up the variables of family adaptation and family cohesion and their effect on coping and resilience among adolescent boys and girls. It also purports to explore the age wise differences between the variables of family adaptability and family cohesion

### Objectives

- To study the relationship between family adaptability, family cohesion, coping, and resilience among adolescents.
- To study the gender and age differences between family adaptability and family cohesion about coping and resilience among adolescents.
- To study the impact of family adaptability and family cohesion on coping and resilience among adolescents.

### Hypothesis

- There will be a significant relationship between family adaptability, family cohesion, coping, and resilience among adolescents.
- There will be no significant gender or age differences in family adaptability, family cohesion, coping, and resilience among adolescents.
- There will be a significant impact of family adaptability and family cohesion on coping and resilience among adolescents.

### Method

#### Participants

A cross-sectional research design was followed to carry out this research. Purposive sampling

#### Variables used in the research

Sr. No.	Symbols	Name of the variables
1	FA	Family Adaptability
2	FC	Family Cohesion
3	PFC	Problem-focused cope
4	EFC	Emotion-focused cope
5	AC	Avoidant Coping
6	RES	Resilience

technique was used to collect the data from a sample of 100 (50 Boys and 50 girls) students of schools and colleges. Out of 100 students, 50 students' age groups were taken from the age group of 15 to 18 (late adolescents 25 Girls, and 25 Boys),  $M=16.06$ ,  $SD=0.68$ , and 50 in the age group of 19 to 21 years (young adults 25 girls and 25 boys),  $M=19.2$ ,  $SD=0.85$ . Age and gender were considered as the inclusion criteria for the sample selection. The sample was selected from the schools of Delhi.

### Psychological tools

#### Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales III

This scale was designed by the University of Minnesota's Family Social-Science Department to assess Family Cohesion, Family Adaptability, and family Type/Functioning. It is a highly reliable scale with test-retest reliability .80.

#### Brief COPE

The 28-item self-report questionnaire is constructed to measure ways to cope with stressful life situations. This test was developed as a short version from the original 60-item COPE scale (Carver et al, 1989). Test-retest reliability coefficients ( $r$ ) ranges between 0.46 and 0.86.

#### Resilience Scale

The resilience scale was designed by Smith et al., 2008. It measures a person's ability to recover from stress. The Cronbach's alpha for the reliability measures of this scale ranges from .80 to .91.

## Results and Discussion

*Gender difference in family adaptability (FA) and family cohesion (FC) on coping and resilience among adolescents (N=100)*

Variables	Boys		Girls		t-Ratio	P Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
PFC	2.85	0.551	3.02	0.49	1.511	0.134
EFC	2.44	0.377	2.58	0.48	1.464	0.147
AC	2.00	0.353	2.18	0.42	2.096	0.039
FC	39.7	2.97	39.7	4.84	0.006	0.995
RES	3.13	0.466	3.22	0.46	0.814	0.418
FA	26.9	6.08	28.5	6.08	1.308	0.194

The independent sample t-test was used to calculate the gender differences on FA, FC, PFC, EFC, AC, and resilience. The findings show that the mean score of girls is higher than boys in four variables. This demonstrates that family adaptability influences both genders differently, whereas family cohesion influences both genders equally with obtained  $t = 0.81$ ,  $p > 0.01$  level for resilience. The t-values of coping variables for PFC, EFC and AC were found to be  $t = 1.51$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ;  $t = 1.46$ ,  $p > 0.01$  and  $t = 2.0$ ,  $p > 0.01$  respectively indicating that obtained t values are

not significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Thus, the null hypothesis “there is no significant gender difference in family adaptability, family cohesion, coping, coping, and resilience” is accepted. The mean score of girls for Family Adaptability (A) is  $M = 28.5$  which is higher than boys' mean score ( $M = 26.9$ ) which means that girls have more family adaptive quality than boys and the family cohesion mean values for both girls and boys is 39.7 which shows cohesion influence both the genders equally.

*Age difference in family adaptability (FA) and family cohesion (FC) on coping and resilience among adolescents (N=100)*

Variables	15-18 years (Late Adolescents)		19-21 years (Young Adult)		t-value	P-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
RES	3.15	0.57	3.88	0.44	0.262	0.004
PFC	2.94	0.50	3.28	2.22	-0.720	0.169
EFC	2.48	0.44	2.57	0.45	1.634	0.697
AC	2.06	0.41	2.17	0.42	1.266	0.574
FC	39.4	4.53	40.0	6.03	1.125	0.176
FA	27.2	5.39	28.0	5.83	-0.944	0.760

The comparative analysis of FA, FC, PFC, EFC, AC and resilience show no significant age differences among the variables. The t-ratio for the variables of coping, cohesion and adaptability and resilience were found to be as  $t = -0.762$ ,  $t = 1.634$ ,  $t = 1.266$ ,  $t = 1.125$ ,  $t = 0.944$ ,  $t = 0.262$ ;  $p > 0.01$  level respectively. The mean scores of young

adults have been found to be higher than late adolescents for all variables. Thus, the null hypothesis “there will be no significant age difference in family adaptability, family cohesion, coping, coping, and resilience” is accepted regarding age differences as well.

*Relationship between family adaptability, family cohesion, coping, and resilience among adolescents.*

Variables	PFC	EFC	AC	FC	FA	RES
<b>PFC</b>	--					
<b>EFC</b>	0.372 ***	---				
<b>AC</b>	0.204 *	0.479 ***	----			
<b>FC</b>	0.146	-0.201*	0.011	----		
<b>FA</b>	0.096	0.003	0.118	0.147	----	
<b>RES</b>	0.177	0.297 **	-0.198*	0.078	-0.082	----

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Statistically significantly positive relationship has been found between the resilience and emotion focused coping ( $r=0.297$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). avoidant coping has been found to be significantly negatively associated with resilience ( $r=-0.198$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Family cohesion is significantly negatively correlated with emotion focused coping ( $r=-0.201$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The coping variables of PFC, EFC and AC have been found to be significantly correlated ( $r$  (PFC\* EFC) = 0.372,  $p<0.01$ ,  $r$  (PFC\*AC=0.204,  $p<0.05$  and  $r$  (EFC\*AC= 0.479,  $p<0.01$ ). Thus, these results indicate that there is a significant relationship between variables of family adaptability, family cohesion, coping, and resilience among adolescents.

*Impact of family adaptability and family cohesion on coping and resilience among adolescents.***Wilks Lambda test**

	Effect	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
	C	5.113	.069	.983
	A	4.923	.070	.988
	C*A	48.02	.106	.993

**Table6: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
C	Resilience	0.276	.962	.580
	PFC	2.347	.263	.921
	EFC	2.259	.274	.919
	AC	5.614	.090	.966
A	Resilience	0.290	.965	.670
	PFC	2.959	.202	.954
	EFC	2.699	.225	.950
	AC	10.662	.037	.987
C * A	Resilience	0.155	.720	.049
	PFC	0.240	.658	.074
	EFC	2.122	.241	.414
	AC	2.000	.252	.400

The two-way multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was applied to calculate the impact of family adaptability (FA) and Family cohesion (FC) on coping and resilience among adolescents. Table 5 indicates the impact of different variables as the family cohesion  $F=5.113$ ,  $p>0.05$  with a strong effect size (0.983). The family adaptability  $F=4.923$   $p>0.05$  with a strong effect size (0.988). Both  $p$  values are more than 0.05 level which means both values indicate insignificant results. The interaction impact of family cohesion and family adaptability  $F=48.02$ ,  $p>0.05$ . The

interaction effect of both variables collectively is more than the single variable effect size with a strong effect size. In Table 6, the between subjects' effects for cohesion as predictor variable, the F value for resilience ( $F=0.276$ ,  $p>.05$ ), coping (PFC ( $F=2.347$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and EFC ( $F=2.259$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and AC ( $F=5.614$ ,  $p>.05$ ) have been observed. Both values are statistically insignificant. This means results show no significant impact of family cohesion on coping and resilience of adolescents. However, the family cohesion values are higher than coping values, which means the impact of family cohesion on resilience is higher than coping. The between subjects effects for family adaptability as predictor variable, the F ratio for resilience ( $F=0.290$ ,  $p>.05$ ), coping (PFC ( $F=2.959$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and EFC ( $F=2.699$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and AC ( $F=10.662$ ,  $p<.05$ ) suggest that family adaptability has a statistically significant effect on avoidant coping. The adolescents having a higher level of family cohesion also have a high level of resilience. However, the analysis of the interaction impact of family adaptability and family cohesion have found insignificant effect on coping and resilience variables resilience ( $F=0.155$ ,  $p>.05$ ), coping (PFC ( $F=0.240$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and EFC ( $F=2.122$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and AC ( $F=2.000$ ,  $p>.05$ ).

***The abovementioned analysis reveals that the Family Adaptability and Family Cohesion have a significant relationship with coping and resilience among adolescents.*** A positive relationship has been found between the variables of family adaptability, family cohesion, coping and resilience and highly resilient adolescents have been found to be using less avoidant coping. The adolescents with high resilience have been found to be high on their ability to cope. Previous research studies conducted by Trask, et. al., 2003, Bell, C. J., Phillips, C. R. and Haase, J. E., 2007 also found similar findings suggesting that there exists a positive association between parental and adolescent coping, social support and their family functioning. Thus, families having high levels of family cohesion and adaptability employ more adaptive coping

strategies, while distress has been found to be associated with more use of maladaptive coping strategies. ***No significant gender differences have been found in the family adaptability and family cohesion, coping and resilience among adolescents.*** The hypothesis testing yielded statistically insignificant results, thereby suggesting that there is no gender difference in family adaptability, family cohesion, coping and resilience of boys and girls. Families with high cohesion promote positive coping strategies and are associated with better mental or psychological health. The ability to adapt to changing circumstances helps reduce the psychological impact of stressors. High levels of both promote emotional support, effective problem-solving ability, good relationships, a supportive environment, positive coping strategies, and psychological well-being. ***For the hypothesis suggesting that there will be a significant impact of family adaptability and family cohesion on coping and resilience among adolescents,*** the analysis of MANOVA was carried out. The results revealed an insignificant impact of family cohesion and adaptability on coping and resilience of adolescents. The Separated and connected are the balanced and central levels of cohesion and are known best for family relationships and functioning. Extremes and unbalanced levels are harmful to long-term relationships. In an enmeshed relationship, family members depend on each other and have emotional closeness. Adaptability and cohesion are essential for developing coping and resilience abilities among adolescents. Ghahvehchi-Hosseini, Shahyad, S., & Pakdaman, S. (2021) carried out a research study to explore the role of attachment styles, family cohesion and adaptability in the prediction of resilience in students and the results showed family cohesion is a significant negative predictor of resilience. As per the Circumplex model, a balanced family system is placed at the two central levels of the model. Families in the balanced area of the dimension provides family members with independence as well as close connection with the family. Adolescents having high levels of family cohesion help them to develop resilience and coping skills.

## Limitations

Several factors such as different cultural backgrounds, varied family structures like nuclear vs. extended families, life events, and willingness to share personal information accurately, as well as external factors such as social and economic conditions, and community support can be considered by future researchers to extend this work. Further studies employing diverse sampling methods and consideration of these factors can elucidate a comprehensive picture of these variables.

## Funding

There was no funding for conducting this research study.

## Declaration of competing interest

There were no financial or non-financial interests for carrying out this research paper.

## References

- Bell, C. J., Phillips, C. R. Haase, J. E. (2007). 24: Relationship of communication to family adaptability and cohesion in adolescents diagnosed with cancer. *Journal of Adolescents Health*, 40(2), S29. Doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2006.11.077>
- Carver, C. S. (1997). You want to measure coping but your protocol is too long: Consider the brief cope. *International journal of behavioral medicine*, 4(1), 92-100.
- Ghahvehchi-Hosseini, F., Shahyad, S., & Pakdaman, S. (2021). The Role of Attachment, Family Cohesion, and Adaptability in the Prediction of Resilience. *International Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 48-53.
- Kumar, R., Manika. M., Lal. R., Singh, B. (2006) Study of Cognitive Style and Need Patterns of Institutionalized Deprived Adolescents, *Indian Journal of Psychological Science*, 3 (1): 76-92.
- Lal, R. , Kumar, R., Dwivedi, (2011)Effect of TEST Anxiety and Self-Efficacy on Adolescent's Well Being, *Indian Journal of Psychological Science*, 2 (1): 108-116.
- Olson, D. H. (2000)., Circumplex Model of marital and family systems: *Journal of family therapy*.144-167.
- Place M, Hulsmeier J, Brownrigg A, Soulsby A. The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES): an instrument worthy of rehabilitation? *Psychiatric Bulletin*. 2005;29(6):215-218. doi:10.1192/pb.29.6.215
- R. Marotz-Baden, and P. Colvin, (1989) Adaptability, cohesion, and coping strategies of unemployed blue-collar families with adolescents. *Lifestyles*, 10, 1989, 44-60. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00986691>
- Singh, Dalip (2004). *Emotional Intelligence at Work*, Delhi, Sage Publication.
- Smith, B.W., deCruz-Dixon, N., Schodt, K., Torres, F. (2023). Brief Resilience Scale (BRS). In: Medvedev, O.N., Krägeloh, C.U., Siegert, R.J., Singh, N.N. (eds) *Handbook of Assessment in Mindfulness Research*. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77644-2\\_92-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77644-2_92-1)
- Spitz, A., &Steinhausen, H.C. (2023). Development of Family Adaptability and Cohesion from Adolescence to Young Adulthood and Associations with Parental Behavior. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 1-10.
- Sulaiman,H. (2000).Parental involvement and their relationship to the emotional well-being of adolescents.
- Trask P. C., Paterson A. G., Trask C. L., Bares C. B., Birt J. A., Maan C. (2003). Parent and adolescent adjustment to pediatric cancer: associations with coping, social support, and family function. *J. Pediatr. Oncol. Nurs*. 20 36–47. 10.1053/jpon.2003.5
- Zakeri, H. et.al (2010). Parenting styles and resilience. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 5, 1067-1070.