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Peer status: Predicting resilience among children in late childhood of Dharwad and Tura regions

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Abstract
Resiliency refers to the ability to withstand and emerge without serious harm from the experience of adversity. The influence of peer status on resiliency and vulnerability in children in late childhood was studied on a sample of 310 children 145 from Dharwad, Karnataka and 165 from Tura, Meghalaya. The samples were drawn by sociometry with five each peer rejected and accepted. Child's resiliency was assessed by using Embury's (2006) scale. Results revealed a significant association between socio-metric status and sub component of a sense of mastery i.e., self-efficacy and support (sense of relatedness) among Tura children. No significant association was found between Dharwad children and sub components of resiliency.

1. Introduction
The Children exposed to hostile, stressful, and aversive early family experiences, worrisome social phenomena and school bullying are at elevated risks which undermine positive child development. However, some children raised in such difficult circumstances show better adjustment. How this happens has been a question for models of child's "resilience" and the search for countervailing experiences that might offset early experiential risks.

Resilience is the ability to adapt and change when faced with new and often stressful circumstances. However, being resilient does not mean that one do not experience stress. Rather, it is an ability to face adversity with a strategic advantage. Children in late childhood learn about the wider world and master new responsibilities that increasingly resemble those they will perform as adults. Improved athletic abilities, mastery of basic literacy skills, and advances in self-understanding, morality and friendship are the hallmark of this period. Children have encounters and relationships with many peers, but they prefer some peers over others as playmates. When formal schooling begins children are exposed to age mates who vary in many ways, including achievement, ethnicity, religion, interests and personality. Contact with a diversity of peers probably contributes to school age children's awareness that others have a viewpoint different from their own. Children of this age can better interpret others emotions and intentions and take them into account in peer dialogues. Rimkiene and Kardelis (2005) [8] reported that adolescents of negative sociometric status face peer relation problems that can influence various emotional and social disadaptation features. In order to have a better understanding of sociometric status influences on resiliency the present study has been undertaken with an aim to compare the resiliency between peer accepted and peer rejected children in late childhood years.

2. Material and methods
The population of the study comprised of boys and girls in late childhood (8-12 years) studying in third, fourth, fifth and sixth standard from government and private schools. Two each government and private schools were selected randomly from each region. From the four selected schools, five accepted and five rejected children were selected through sociometry from each class, thus a total of twenty accepted and twenty rejected children from each school. The total sample comprised of 310 children (145 from Dharwad, Karnataka and 165 from Tura, Meghalaya). Child's resiliency was assessed using "Resiliency scale for children and adolescents" by Embury (2006) [3].

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It is a four point likert style format in which students were asked to rate 64 items as never (0), rarely (1), sometimes (2), often (3) and almost always (4). It assesses resilience of an individual through its sub scales namely:
1. Sense of Mastery with 20 items which includes 3 sub scales: Optimism, self-efficacy and adaptability. Adaptability subscale is scored and interpreted for ages15-18 only.
2. Sense of Relatedness with 24 items which has 4 sub scales viz., trust, support, comfort and tolerance. For children ages 9-11 years tolerance subscale was considered less internally consistent.
3. Emotional reactivity with 20 items which includes sensitivity, recovery and impairment. The pre-testing of resiliency tool on a non-sample of 32 was done by the split half method. Reliability was 0.72. Student's 't' test was used to compare between peer accepted and rejected children on resiliency.

3. Results and Discussion
The comparison between peer accepted and peer rejected among children of Dharwad and Tura is made component wise and on total resiliency as follows

a) Comparison on sense of mastery
As illustrated in Table 1, with regard to (sense of mastery which has two components viz; (optimism and self-efficacy), it was noticed that a higher number of accepted children from Dharwad had an average level of optimism with 35.6 per cent and rejected children by 31.9 percent. But, in low level, rejected children showed 27.8 percent, while in the case of high and above average, accepted children had 5.5 per cent and 9.6 per cent respectively. With regard to Tura region, majority of accepted children had average and below average level of optimism with 36 per cent and 37.2 per cent respectively. As in the case of low level, 30.4 percent was observed among rejected children, and in high 2.3 per cent was noticed for accepted children. But statistical analysis showed no significant association between sociometric status and optimism in both the regions.

With respect to the second component i.e. self-efficacy, among accepted children from Dharwad region, it was observed that, 34.2 per cent were seen in below average and 6.8 per cent in above average. Only 1.4 per cent of rejected children were seen in high level. Again, 33.3 per cent was observed in average and low level for rejected children. In Tura region, 48.8 per cent of accepted children were found in below average level. But, rejected were seen in lesser percentage, 24.1 per cent in average and higher in (38%) in low levels. Chi square analysis showed a significant association between sociometric status and self-efficacy. But the comparison of mean scores showed no significant differences (table 1).

Table 1: Comparison on sense of mastery among children of Dharwad and Tura region N=310

Category	Dharwad			Tura		
	Optimism					
	Accepted n=73	Rejected n=72	Total N=145	Accepted n=86	Rejected n=79	Total N=165
High	4(5.5)	3(4.2)	7(4.8)	2(2.3)	1(1.3)	3(1.8)
Above average	7(9.6)	6(8.3)	13(9.0)	5(5.8)	7(8.9)	12(7.3)
Average	26(35.6)	23(31.9)	49(33.8)	31(36.0)	24(30.4)	55(33.3)
Below average	23(31.5)	20(27.8)	43(29.7)	32(37.2)	23(29.1)	55(33.3)
Low	13(17.8)	20(27.8)	33(22.8)	16(18.6)	24(30.4)	40(24.2)
Modified χ²	2.09 ns			4.34 ns		
Mean(SD)	16.32(6.11)	15.15(6.27)		16.23(4.72)	14.96(5.46)	
t-value	1.13 ns			1.60 ns		
Self-Efficacy						
High	-	1(1.4)	1(0.7)	1(1.2)	2(2.5)	3(1.8)
Above average	5(6.8)	3(4.2)	8(5.5)	3(3.5)	8(10.1)	11(6.7)
Average	23(31.5)	24(33.3)	47(32.4)	20(23.3)	19(24.1)	39(23.6)
Below average	25(34.2)	20(27.8)	45(31.0)	42(48.8)	20(25.3)	62(37.6)
Low	20(27.4)	24(33.3)	44(30.3)	20(23.3)	30(38.0)	50(30.3)
Modified χ²	2.43 ns			12.16*		
Mean(SD)	21.05(7.39)	20.33(7.45)		20.97(5.97)	20.65(8.04)	
t-value	0.58 ns			0.29 ns		

**p≤0.01 level of significance
*p≤0.05 level of significance

b) Comparison on sense of relatedness
A glance at Table 2 reveals that sense of relatedness (three components viz; trust, support and comfort) among the children of Dharwad region that accepted children were in higher number in low level (49.3%) and only 6.8 per cent in the high category with trust as a dimension. Among rejected children, it is interesting to note that, they were found in average and below average level with 20.8 per cent and 30.6 per cent respectively. Whereas, with regard to Tura region, accepted children were noticed in average with 39.5 per cent and 37.2 per cent in below average category, whereas, rejected were in high category with 2.5 per cent and 32.9 per cent in low level. Chi square revealed no significant association between sociometric status and trust. Further, there was no significant difference in mean scores as indicated by 't' test.

In case of support, the second component of a sense of relatedness among Dharwad children, it was noted that accepted children showed higher percentages in high level with 11 and 23.3 per cent in the above average category. Whereas, for children who were rejected by peers showed a higher number in below average with 19.4 and 50 per cent in low level. A similar trend was observed for children from Tura region, where accepted showed 5.8 per cent in above average and 51.2 per cent in average, while, 29.1 per cent in below average and 40.5 per cent of rejected children were noted in low level of support. Statistical analysis showed a significant association among support and sociometry as revealed by chi square (12.76), but, no significant difference was observed in 't' test.

Values in table 2 show association of sociometric status and comfort. Among children of Dharwad, as depicted in the table, 12.3 per cent of accepted children had a high level of comfort, while rejected were seen in higher number in below average with 15.3 percent? The distribution of percentage was found quite similar for both the peer status in average with 32 per cent and lower level with 43 percent. With Tura region, 32.6 percent of accepted children had average level, while 30.4 per cent had low level of comfort. Again, the distribution of percentage was found quite similar for both the peer status in above average with 12 per cent and below average with 31 percent. The statistical analysis also revealed no significant association between comfort and sociometric status in both the regions. There was no significant difference in mean scores too.

Table 2: Comparison on sense of relatedness among children of Dharwad and Tura region N=310

Category	Dharwad			Tura		
	Trust					
	Accepted n=73	Rejected n=72	Total N=145	Accepted n=86	Rejected n=79	Total N=165
High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above average	5(6.8)	3(4.2)	8(5.5)	1(1.2)	2(2.5)	3(1.8)
Average	11(15.1)	15(20.8)	26(17.9)	34(39.5)	22(27.8)	56(33.9)
Below average	21(28.8)	22(30.6)	43(29.7)	32(37.2)	29(36.7)	61(37.0)
Low	36(49.3)	32(44.4)	68(46.9)	19(22.1)	26(32.9)	45(27.3)
Modified χ^2	1.36 ns			3.85 ns		
Mean(SD)	13.40(6.4)	13.50(5.92)		16.17(4.80)	15.03(4.96)	
t-value	0.1 ns			1.51 ns		
	Support					
High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above average	8(11.0)	7(9.7)	15(10.3)	5(5.8)	4(5.1)	9(5.5)
Average	17(23.3)	15(20.8)	32(22.1)	44(51.2)	20(25.3)	64(38.8)
Below average	13(17.8)	14(19.4)	27(18.6)	18(20.9)	23(29.1)	41(24.8)
Low	35(47.9)	36(50.0)	71(49.0)	19(22.1)	32(40.5)	51(30.9)
Modified χ^2	0.23 ns			12.76**		
Mean(SD)	14.19(6.36)	13.85(6.10)	-	17.03(4.9)	14.61(5.04)	-
t -value	0.33 ns			3.10 ns		
	Comfort					
High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above average	9(12.3)	5(6.9)	14(9.7)	11(12.8)	10(12.7)	21(12.7)
Average	24(32.9)	24(33.3)	48(33.1)	28(32.6)	20(25.3)	48(29.1)
Below average	8(11.0)	11(15.3)	19(13.1)	27(31.4)	25(31.6)	52(31.5)
Low	32(43.8)	32(44.4)	64(44.1)	20(23.3)	24(30.4)	44(26.7)
Modified χ^2	1.61 ns			1.52 ns		
Mean(SD)	8.23(4.28)	7.86(3.99)	-	8.85(3.84)	8.19(4.05)	-
t- value	0.54 ns			1.07 ns		

**$p \leq 0.01$ level of significance
*$p \leq 0.05$ level of significance

c) Comparison on tolerance
Tolerance, which was assessed only in 12 years old revealed that in average level, 20 per cent were children who were accepted by their peers, while, rejected children were found in higher number in below average with 45.5 per cent and 36.4 per cent in low level. At a high level, 5 per cent were children who were accepted while, 4.5 percent were rejected children. With Tura region, in average level 31.8 percent were accepted children. In below average, there were 31.2 percent and 50 percent in low level of tolerance among rejected children. The association between sociometric status and tolerance was found to be non-significant. 'Student's t' test was also non-significant. (Table 3)

Table 3: Comparison on tolerance among 12 year old children of Dharwad and Tura region   N=70

Category	Dharwad			Tura		
	Accepted n=20	Rejected n=22	Total N=42	Accepted n=22	Rejected n=16	Total N=38
High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above average	1(5.0)	1(4.5)	2(4.8)	-	-	-
Average	4(20.0)	3(13.6)	7(16.7)	7(31.8)	3(18.8)	10(26.3)
Below average	8(40.0)	10(45.5)	18(42.9)	6(27.3)	5(31.2)	11(28.9)
Low	7(35.0)	8(36.4)	15(35.7)	9(40.9)	8(50.0)	17(44.7)
Modified χ^2	0.33 ns			0.82 ns		
Mean(SD)	13.75(4.80)	14.50(1.97)		14.18(5.00)	12.88(4.25)	
t- value	0.35 ns			0.84 ns		

d) Comparison on emotional reactivity
A close examination of table 4 shows association of sociometric status and sensitivity (component of emotional reactivity) among Dharwad children, 8.2 percent of accepted were in high level, while on average and below average, both the peer status showed a similar percentage (73 and 20 respectively). Whereas with Tura region, accepted were found in above average with 9.3 per cent and 73.3 per cent in the average category, while rejecting children 19 per cent were in below average and 1.3 in low level of sensitivity. Further,

statistical analysis revealed no significant association between sensitivity and neither sociometric status in both the regions nor significant difference in mean scores.

With recovery (the second component of emotional reactivity) among children from Dharwad region, it was revealed that, in high level rejected children had 8.3 percent, and 69.4 per cent in the average category. While, children who were accepted by a peer group, showed 19.2 per cent in above average, 15.1 in below average and 1.4 per cent in low level. With regard to Tura region, it is interesting to note that, 7.6 percent (high level) and 16.5 per cent were noticed in above average for rejected children. Whereas, accepted children were 65.1 percent in average and 19.8 percent in below average levels of recovery. No significant association was found as indicated by chi square. No Significant difference in mean scores as indicated by t test.

With impairment, (third component of emotional reactivity), among Dharwad children, it was revealed that rejected showed 65.3 per cent in the average level while accepted showed 27.4 per cent in below average category. On above average both the peer statuses, showed a similar percentage (15%) (Table 4). While among children from Tura region, accepted group showed up with higher number in high level with 3.5 percent, 16.3 percent in above average and 66.3 per cent in the average category, whereas, rejected children had 22.8 percent in below average level. Further, statistical analysis revealed no significant association between sensitivity and sociometric status in both the regions. There was no significant difference in mean scores as indicated by t test.

Table 4: Comparison on emotional reactivity among children of Dharwad and Tura region   N=310

Category	Dharwad			Tura		
	Sensitivity					
	Accepted n=73	Rejected n=72	Total N=145	Accepted n=86	Rejected n=79	Total N=165
High	-	-	-	-	-	-
Above average	6(8.2)	4(5.6)	10(6.9)	8(9.3)	7(8.9)	15(9.1)
Average	53(72.6)	53(73.6)	106(73.1)	63(73.3)	56(70.9)	119(72.1)
Below average	14(19.2)	15(20.8)	29(20.0)	15(17.4)	15(19.0)	30(18.2)
Low	-	-	-	-	1(1.3)	1(0.6)
Modified χ^2	0.42 ns			1.18 ns		
Mean(SD)	8.70(3.45)	8.75(3.40)		8.59(3.37)	8.71(3.53)	
t- value	0.66 ns			0.21 ns		
	Recovery					
High	4(5.5)	6(8.3)	10(6.9)	4(4.7)	6(7.6)	10(6.1)
Above average	14(19.2)	8(11.1)	22(15.2)	8(9.3)	13(16.5)	21(12.7
Average	43(58.9)	50(69.4)	93(64.1)	56(65.1)	51(64.6)	107(64.8)
Below average	11(15.1)	8(11.1)	19(13.1)	17(19.8)	8(10.1)	25(15.2)
Low	1(1.4)	-	1(0.7)	1(1.2)	1(1.3)	2(1.2)
Modified χ^2	4.03 ns			4.77 ns		
Mean(SD)	3.64(3.38)	3.79(3.28)		2.98(3.22)	4.09(3.58)	
t- value	0.26 ns			2.09 ns		
	Impairment					
High	-	-	-	3(3.5)	1(1.3)	4(2.4)
Above average	11(15.1)	11(15.3)	22(15.2)	14(16.3)	8(10.1)	22(13.3)
Average	42(57.5)	47(65.3)	89(61.4)	57(66.3)	52(65.8)	109(66.1)
Below average	20(27.4)	14(19.4)	34(23.4)	12(14.0)	18(22.8)	30(18.1)
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Modified χ^2	1.33 ns			3.77 ns		
Mean(SD)	12.26(6.15)	13.18(5.93)		14.42(6.46)	12.28(6.65)	
t- value	0.91 ns			1.11 ns		

e) Comparison on resiliency

With resiliency in table 5, it was found that among Dharwad children, 4.1 percent were observed in high level among accepted children, while rejected showed 4.2 percent in average and 6.9 per cent in below average level. Majority of them both accepted and rejected were in low levels of resiliency. Tura region too, 94.2 percent of accepted children had low level of resiliency, while, 6.3 percent of rejected were in average and 5.1 percent in below average category. Further, statistical analysis revealed no significant association between resiliency and sociometric status in both the regions. There was no significant difference on mean scores too.

Table 5: Comparison on resiliency among children of Dharwad and Tura region N=310

Category	Dharwad			Tura		
	Accepted n=73	Rejected n=72	Total N=145	Accepted n=86	Rejected n=79	Total N=165
High	3(4.1)	-	3(2.1)	-	-	-
Above average	-	1(1.4)	1(0.7)	-	-	-
Average	2(2.7)	3(4.2)	5(3.4)	1(1.2)	5(6.3)	6(3.6)
Below average	4(5.5)	5(6.9)	9(6.2)	4(4.7)	4(5.1)	8(4.8)
Low	64(87.7)	63(87.5)	127(87.6)	81(94.2)	70(88.6)	151(91.5)
Modified χ^2	4.31 ns			3.17 ns		
Mean(SD)	26.84(11.98)	26.62(10.99)		27.75(9.15)	26.04(10.26)	
t- value	0.11 ns			1.13 ns		

**$p \leq 0.01$ level of significance
*$p \leq 0.05$ level of significance

f) Comparison on vulnerability
Among Dharwad children, in high level, accepted were 74 percent, while 15.3 per cent of rejected children were noticed in the average category. In above average and low level accepted were 4.1 percent. In Tura region, 75.9 percent of rejected children were observed in high level and 11.4 per cent on average, while 17.4 per cent of accepted were noticed in the above average category. However, statistical analysis revealed no significant association between sociometric status and vulnerability in both the regions. Further, there was no significant difference in mean scores as indicated by t test. (Table 6)
Rimkiene and Kardelis (2005) [8] reported that adolescents of negative socio-metric status faced peer relation problems that influenced various emotional and social mal-adaptations. Adolescents who had peer acceptance and a positive reputation adapted easier to life. Epstein and Karwest (1983) [4] indicating that positive peer relation helps to negotiate easier various critical situations. This increases the importance of peer relation as the main component of social competence Fisher *et al*., (1986) [5]. The estimated socio-metric status connection with peer reputation variables shows that the positive sociability- leadership factor could be associated with better adaptation to life in older age group Eder (1989) [2].

Also consistent with Gauze *et al*,. (1996) [6] who observed that friendship helped a child compensate for vulnerabilities and stresses that were derived from particular family environments. Further, close relationships with peers increased self-esteem and reduced some of the negative effects of abuse on children's development Bolger *et. al*., (1998) [1]. Werner and Smith (1982) concluded that resilient children who were accepted tended to be more self-reliant than were children who were rejected. Even though they may come from poor, chaotic and discordant homes, resilient children tended to be well liked by their playmates and classmates and had one or more close friends. These children tended to keep their childhood friends into adulthood and rely on them for ongoing emotional support, which was more prevalent for women than for men.
But in most of the sub components of resiliency non-significant differences were observed which may be due to the transitory nature of peer rejection in late childhood. Children are bound to experience social failure or rejection at one time or another throughout childhood, and therefore, learning to deal with rejection or social failure is important.
However, O'Donnell and Muyeed (2002) [7] reported that peer support increased resilience level decreased, adding strength that peer support is needed in vulnerable groups.

Table 6: Comparison on vulnerability among children of Dharwad and Tura region N=310

Category	Dharwad			Tura		
	Accepted n=73	Rejected n=72	Total N=145	Accepted n=86	Rejected n=79	Total N=165
High	54(74.0)	51(70.8)	105(72.4)	62(72.1)	60(75.9)	122(73.9)
Above average	8(11.0)	8(11.1)	16(11.0)	15(17.4)	9(11.4)	24(14.5)
Average	5(6.8)	11(15.3)	16(11.0)	8(9.3)	9(11.4)	17(10.3)
Below average	3(4.1)	1(1.4)	4(2.8)	1(1.2)	1(1.3)	2(1.2)
Low	3(4.1)	1(1.4)	4(2.8)	-	-	-
Modified χ^2	4.32 ns			1.29 ns		
Mean(SD)	23.55(16.10)	23.61(14.39)		24.45(13.08)	25.20(13.46)	
t- value	0.98 ns			0.36 ns		

**p≤0.01 level of significance
*p≤0.05 level of significance

4. Conclusion
Peers can have a significant influence on the development of a person, especially during childhood when peer relations assume great importance. Peer accepted showed higher resiliency than peer rejected children in the study. So teachers and parents need to provide a structured environment in school and at home that would facilitate good relations among all. This congenial environment may also support in overcoming the adversities children face in their ecological environment.

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