

Prosocial Behaviour As A Predictor Of Psychological Resilience In Single Parents: A Quantitative Exploration

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Abstract

The single parents of today are seen to be facing the varied challenges involving emotional, financial as well as societal or social concerns that can be an instance requiring one to be resilient in an attempt to sustain and flourish in their lives and that of their offsprings. In this study, the interconnected relation of prosocial behaviour and resilience in single parents, namely single mothers is highlighted and explored. It also helps to gather an understanding about the prosocial or altruistic behaviours focussing with community based interactions that can significantly improve the mental, emotional strength and ability to cope. The sample size was n = 100 and by employing methods of quantitative research design, the study gathers relevant data for analysis, revealing a weak positive correlation. It highlights the potential need for improvising upon the existing policies and provides psychological as well as social interventions which can notably uplift and alleviate the overall well-being of single parents and their families.

INTRODUCTION

As the new-age, progressive times in the family setups emerge, there has been an increase in the number of single parents, namely single mothers. It is observed and often highlighted that there is a growing rate of single parent led families (Yorks, 2021). Their struggles have amplified and there is a constant need for individuals to build positive values as well as traits. With most researches having a constant focus on the children in single parent families, this study aims to analyse the levels and correlation of prosocial behaviour and resilience in single parents. The ability to jump back up from a difficult situation (Fleming and Ledogar, 2008) which can help mothers to be resilient in the face of difficulties. The understanding for prosocial behaviour in individuals can be viewed as their ability to focus on the welfare of others (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990) as well as extending a helping hand, whenever required. The research outlines an understanding and carving out the relationship between prosocial behaviour and their resilience. Each of these variables are present in individuals in varied degrees, however there can be numerous factors that can create alterations in its prevalence and intensity. As for resilience, factors ranging from social, psychological, financial, legal, personal can be taken into account. With respect to prosocial behaviour, the factors can range from moral values, empathy, traits of personality, experiences, timing, their personal gains and much more. For any individual, the factors can play a vital role in varied amounts and degrees, for instance empathy can play a vital role in humans as well as animals while highlighting sensitivity with motivation for complete welfare (Decety et al., 2016).

Both the concepts of prosocial behaviour and resilience yield important and extremely vital aspects that highlight the necessity of this variable individually in any human. There is an important interplay that can be visible in situations such as engaging in prosocial acts can strengthen the levels of resilience in individuals, which has been individually highlighted by certain studies .

According to the concepts of prosocial behaviour and resilience, a study by (Kuru & Ungar, 2024) addressed the levels of prosocial behaviour in earthquake affected families of Turkey. It focused upon the relation of parental psychological stress, the quality of parenting and the offsprings psychological difficulties which presented a link to the child's psychological complications. All while stating that positive parenting can arbitrate distress and the prosocial behaviour of the children. Accordingly, a research by (Lidiawati, 2023) wherein the emotional regulation strategies, chiefly cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression played a cardinal role as mediators on resilience amongst single mothers. It also highlighted the challenges faced and the negative societal outlook. And presented an understanding that cognitive reappraisal technique can have a greater influence on their resilience. This leads to a study conducted by (Haroz et al., 2013) which discussed about the Acholi adolescents of Northern Uganda, highlighted the prosocial behaviour depicted by them in relation to enhanced mental health results and after effects in

the war affected youth of the nation. It states that higher levels of prosocial behaviour can have a significantly positive effect on the symptoms of anxiety and depression. However it also emphasised that caregiver loss can negatively impact the positive effects and improvements, which may be addressed and improvised upon. According to a study by (Esparza-Reig et al., 2021), it was elucidated that the correlation between social support and the levels of resilience which tend to act as moderators for prosocial behaviour during the covid-19 isolation. It reveals that social support can predict the prosocial behaviour along with resilience playing a crucial intermediary role. And another research by (Haller et al., 2022) highlighting the relationship between prosocial behaviour and well-being at time of the covid-19 epidemic while outlining the determinants of prosocial behaviour. It concluded that prosocial behaviour associated with improved well-being in the eight regions throughout the world, of the participants form the research. And found that higher levels of social support can forecast the levels of prosocial behaviour. Further an understanding of intrafamilial support, was presented by a study conducted by (Greef & Fillis, 2009) highlighting aspects such as intrafamilial support, support from external means, hardiness of the family and religion which act as the cardinal resilience factors amongst single parent families. The results emphasised upon the intrafamilial support as the chief factor for resilience. There was observed a positive association within family aspect of coherence as well as support variables. Also (Shakiba et al., 2022) points out the effects of covid epidemic related hardships and the strict parenting on children's levels of prosociality in that settings. It highlights that the parenting behaviours are observed to be related to their offsprings prosocial development. And concluded that the covid severity that can influence the style of parenting and the level's of prosocial behaviour of the children. The results also outlined parents exhibiting high adversity tend to display higher levels of depression, anxiety and strict parenting, which also decreases and affects prosociality negatively in the children. A study presented by (Petrowski et al., 2014) outlined the focus amongst recall parenting rearing behaviours, resilience as well as psychological indicators in the adult community of population. These can influence resilience and psychological symptoms in individuals. Resilience is observed to be described as stable amongst gender and ages of the population. Another study by (Kjellstrand & Harper, 2012) outlined that factors of resilience in middle and upper- income class single mothers, accentuating upon individual competence and persistent tenacity that acts as chief aspects of resilience. It concluded that the single mothers with middle and upper- income tend to be more resilient. A research proposed by (Caragata et al., 2021) around the concept of resilience via adaptation and strategies of coping techniques in single mothers who are exposed to and have experienced situations of severity. It presented results highlighting the continuous adaptation and development of new outcomes while building resilience. And single mothers demonstrating coping which highlights noteworthy and tactical adaptation. Upon further exploration, a research by (Sari et al., 2019) revealed that resilience in single mothers post the passing of their partners, stressed upon the requirement of assistance and strategies of coping. It also brought to light, the new challenges that newly single mothers need to face, ranging from social concerns, economic difficulties, household obligations. Another research was highlighted by (Sia & Aneesh, 2024) it was found that prosocial behaviour which is a feature of social competence tends to positively correlate with mental well-being in single parent adolescents. It outlines the crucial role it performs in uplifting the resilience and holistic psychological health of the participants. And a research was conducted by (Brodsky, 1996) focussing on the psychological aspect of community in resilient single mothers living in certain risky neighbourhoods and outlining the positive as well as negative aspects of PSOC. The results revealed that single mothers who are resilient tend to endure negative psychological sense of community. It was also observed that having a negative PSOC can yield an individual towards positive individual consequences.

Method

Aim:

- To examine the level of prosocial behaviour as a predictor of resilience in single parents.

Objectives:

- To understand the relationship between prosocial behaviour and resilience in single parents.
- To predict the relationship between prosocial behaviour and resilience in single parents.

Hypothesis:

- H1: There will be a significant relationship between prosocial behaviour and resilience in single parents.
- H2: prosocial behaviour will be a significant predictor of psychological resilience in single parents.

Research Design:

- Quantitative, Cross Sectional, Correlational research design.

Sampling technique:

- Purposive Sampling Method

Sample size:

- n= 100 single mothers

Method of data collection:

- Survey method through questionnaire.

Statistics:

- Descriptive statistics: Mean, Standard Deviation.
- Inferential Statistics: Correlation and Regression

Criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Single parent/ Widowed/ Divorced/ Separated/ Unmarried with children shall be considered.
- Primary caregiver with children either biological or legally adopted.
- Adult single parent for at least 1 year are considered effective participants.
- Literate and educated individuals shall be taken into account.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Individuals reporting severe mental conditions will be excluded.
- Individuals with physical disabilities will not be considered.

Tools:

1. The Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA), developed by Gian V. Caprara and colleagues (Caprara et al., 2005): the scale includes a total of 16 items, each describing a varied number of common situations in any individual's life. It comprises of responses which are to be responded upon a likert scale ranging from 1=never, 2= rarely, 3= occasionally, 4=often and 5= always. The internal reliability of the scale is indicated by the Cronbach's alpha = 0.91 and the mean corrected item total correlation was 0.59.

2. The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) developed by Smith, B.W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P. and Bernard, J. (2008): the BRS scale includes 6 items each which are designed for evaluating the levels of resilience amongst individuals. It is observed as a 5 point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This comprises a scoring method of reverse scoring as well. The value of each of the response of the six items is totalled and then divided by 6. The total resultant score attained thereafter indicates the final levels of resilience of the individual. Each score corresponding to 1.00-2.99 = Low resilience, 3.00-4.30= Normal resilience and 4.31-5.00 = High resilience.

Procedure:

The participants were selected from the current population pool of single parents, specifically single mothers. The required permissions and approvals along with their approval for voluntary participation was secured prior. The participants falling under the inclusion and exclusion criteria's are considered further for the study. The participants were made comfortable and briefed about the study. They were provided with the Prosocialness Scale for Adults (PSA) and Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), then they were requested to complete the questionnaires as per the brief given at the beginning. Upon completion of each form, they were thanked for their participation and devoting their valuable time for the study.

RESULTS

Table 1 Prosocial Behaviour and Resilience in Single Parents (n=100)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error
Pro-Social Behaviour	62.33	9.368	-0.389	-0.154	0.478
Resilience	20.37	3.697	0.078	-1.047	0.478

Table 2 Relationship Between Prosocial Behaviour and Resilience

		Pro-Social Behaviour	Resilience
Pro-Social Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.194
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.053
Resilience	Pearson Correlation	.194	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.053	

Table 3 Predictive Influence of Prosocial Behaviour in Resilience

Predictor	B	SE B	B	t	p
(Constant)	15.594	2.465	—	6.327	.000
Pro-Social Behaviour	0.077	0.039	.194	1.959	.053

This study was focussed at examining as well as gathering an understanding about the relationship amongst prosocial behaviour and the resilience in single parents. The participants in the study were single mothers with an age range of 29 – 55 years of age. The levels of education amongst the participants ranged from undergraduates, postgraduates and doctorates, as part of the study. They hailed from varied professional backgrounds including lawyers, corporate employees, homemakers, educators and other professions. As per Table 1, the descriptive statistics revealed that the mean for prosocial behaviour was found to be 62.33 and that for resilience was 20.37 along with their standard deviations being 9.368 and 3.697 respectively. As per the descriptive statistics depicted in Table 1, it highlighted the mean of prosocial behaviour as 62.33 with a standard deviation of 9.368 and a range of 35 to 80. It was also observed that the skewness and kurtosis was found out to be -0.389 and -0.154, which can indicate symmetrical as well as normal distribution of the scores of prosocial behaviour. The findings also highlight that resilience was observed to indicate a mean score of 20.37 and a standard deviation of 3.697 as per Table 1. The range was also observed to be between 13 to 29 with a skewness of 0.078 and kurtosis of -1.047, which demonstrate a flatter distribution but in certain acceptable limits of normality. The results gathered for the study revealed that there the variables of prosocial behaviour and resilience as represented in Table 2, exhibit a value of 0.194 which corresponds to a non-significant, weak positive correlation between the variables. There exists a relationship amongst prosocial behaviour and resilience in single parents, namely single mothers. It was found that the relationship between the two are weak and positive in nature. The person correlation in Table 2 revealed a weak positive correlation with $r = 0.194$ and $p = 0.053$ as observed in the table values. The study was conducted in an attempt to decipher and understand the relationship between the variables of prosocial behaviour and resilience in single parents. The results revealed the existence of a positive yet weak correlation between the two variables. It was also found that

the $p = 0.053$ indicated the result to be not significant statistically and highlighting a possibility of higher levels of prosocial behaviours may be linked with higher levels of resilience. It implies that individuals who tend to participate in acts of prosociality may be able to build adaptive coping mechanisms as well as psychological power or strength. While examining the levels of prosocial behaviour, the scores revealed a mean value of 62.33 in Table 1, which demonstrate a moderately high level for prosocial abilities amongst the participants of the study, namely single mothers. This highlights that the participants tend to actively be involved in acts that can be beneficial to others, which can subtly indicate an impression of their roles and responsibilities while being caregivers for most of the single parents. Also the levels of resilience in the study participants was found to be a mean value of 20.37 as per Table 1, indicating that the resilience level was moderate. It highlights that though challenges might prevail yet the single parents exhibit a level of strength, adaptability and might in the individuals. As per Table 3, simple regression was employed in order to understand and find out if prosocial behaviour could significantly predict the resilience in single parents. It revealed that as per the objective, to predict the relationship between of prosocial behaviour and resilience in single parents, the regression revealed a low and positive correlation. In this study, prosocial behaviour was the independent variable and resilience was the dependant variable with $N = 100$. Table 3, depicts regression with $R^2 = 0.038$ which highlights a variance of 3.8% in resilience by the prosocial behaviour. The scores also revealed and interpreted as marginally non-significant with $F(1, 98) = 3.839$ and $p = 0.053$. The levels of unstandardised beta coefficient and standardised beta was $B = 0.077$ and $\beta = 0.194$ respectively. This indicates that higher levels of prosocial behaviour tend to be weakly linked with higher levels of resilience. The low levels of R^2 value highlights that certain varied factors tend to play a powerful part in foretelling resilience including aspects such as self-efficacy, coping skills, social support etc. As the value for $p = 0.053$, it highlights that the result is not statistically significant, yielding the objective to be partially supported and therefore emphasise the requirement for further research and exploration with added variables and a greater sample.

DISCUSSION

The study explored and analysed the relationship between the variables of prosocial behaviour and resilience in single parents. The research appraised the relationship between the two variables amongst single parents, namely single mothers, wherein prosocial behaviour functioned as the independent variable while resilience acted as the dependant variable. The participants of the study were notably observed to be single mothers ranging from 29 – 55 years of age. Their education level also varied from undergraduates, postgraduates and doctorates. Coming from a variety of professional backgrounds such as lawyers, corporate employees, homemakers, educators and many more. This research analysed two different hypothesis, which evaluated the relationship as well as predictive analysis for the variables. This study when conducted revealed that individuals who often engage in acts of prosocial behaviours, tend to exhibit higher resilience.

The results validate an association of variables, which can be observed as a weak positive correlation. As the findings predict a remotely positive shift, there exists a requirement of further research utilising a greater sample size and is suggested to include other supplementary variables in further studies, to effectively understand the relationship and role of prosocial behaviour and resilience.

It also understood that prosocial behaviours with respect to the psychological sense of community can be directing the single mothers towards positive individual consequences (1). Apart from the psychological sense of community, the aspect of resilience in single mothers who might have experienced the passing of their partners, can be highlighted by the assistance and strategies of coping (14). Also the strategies of emotional regulation can play a vital role on resilience in single mothers (12).

The results indicated that greater levels of prosocial behaviour tend to be weakly associated with greater levels of resilience. The lower levels of value of R^2 suggests that varied factors might play a powerful part in predicting resilience including concepts like self-efficacy, coping skills, social support etc. Various other factors like intrafamilial support, support from other external means, associating with the resilience (7).

The research outlines that engaging in as well as performing acts of prosocial behaviours can yield increased levels of resilience in single mothers, although a weak correlation but one that can be observed. Although there is a positive relationship between prosocial behaviour and resilience while outline a certain degree of predictive influence of prosocial behaviour on psychological resilience. Even though the strength of the relationship is weaker, there exists a positive relationship between the two variables. There are other factors also which can be explored and those can affect resilience.

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