Muhammad Saqib Shabir, Farhana Kazmi & Noreeta Suleman

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Impact of Social Skills on Resilience and Self-Efficacy among Young Orphans

[1]Muhammad Saqib Shabir, [2]Farhana Kazmi & [3]Noreeta Suleman
[1]PhD Scholar, Department of Psychology, Hazara University, Mansehra Pakistan.
[2]Chairperson, Department of Psychology, Hazara University, Mansehra, Pakistan
[3]PhD Scholar, National Institute of Psychology, Islamabad, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Access to safe and reliable water is generally considered to be a This paper examines the influence of social skills on resilience and self-efficacy of young orphans. Not being under parental control, psychological problems are more widespread among teenagers. The methodology of the present study was correlational as it was aimed at studying whether social skills could act as a protective resource that improves resilience and self-efficacy. The participants were selected (N = 78) conveniently at SOS Village in Rawalpindi, and were aged 15-19. Three instruments were used, which were validated, including the Social Skills Questionnaire (Spence, 2003), the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995), and the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (Liebenberg et al., 2012). The SPSS 26.0 was used to analyze the data. The findings indicated that social skills were positively correlated with self-efficacy (r =.608, p <.01) and resilience (r =.518, p <.01). Regression analysis revealed social skills as one of the significant predictors of resilience and self-efficacy. These findings suggest that enhancing social abilities of orphans might be an effective intervention method to enhance their psychological comfort. Implications on the future policy and intervention are investigated.

Corresponding Author's Email: saqibshabir.psy@gmail.com

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1.0 Introduction

Although there are over 4.6 million orphans in Pakistan, very little studies have been conducted on the psychological issues these children are going through in this country (Mahmood, 2020). The analysis of the psychological factors that can enhance the life of the orphaned children is vital as most studies have shown that most of them experience stress and depression. Farah et al. (2022) state that such factors are social competence, resilience, and self-efficacy. Pakistan does not have many studies that examine closely the ways of improving the psychological health of the youth in the orphanages. In Pakistani orphanages, adolescents are prone to melancholy, inadequacy, and poor resilience (Khalid et al., 2022).

Adolescence impacts most on the life of an individual due to the alterations in health and well-being. Those who lack their parents to take care of them usually undergo dramatic changes that require the love and care. The death of a parent can be very devastating to the psychological growth of a child. Orphans are prone to mental health problems when their parents die and they do not receive much family support (Woldeamanuel, 2020).

The psychosocial development of orphans in the regions with a lack of support is a significant issue. Orphans often experience issues with self-worth and confidence after the loss of their parents, and it makes them less resilient (Jami & Kamal, 2017). These individuals experience more academic difficulties, social isolation, anxiety, and hopelessness (UNICEF, 2021). In such situations, social skills enable orphans to cope up with issues, develop better relationships with others, and become more mentally healthy.

According to Gresham and Elliott (2008), social skills are the skills that an individual acquires to facilitate healthy interpersonal relations. Practice teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and emotional control are required to be strong and confident. Self-efficacy is the idea that one is able to achieve good results in certain instances and resilience is the ability to bounce back fast after failing (Bandura, 1997). Research also shows that vulnerable individuals feel more empowered and confident after they have acquired social skills (Nasheeda et al., 2019; Zolkoski and Bullock, 2012).

Social skills training (SST) has the potential of assisting the teens who are orphaned to overcome the challenges of life. SST has been applied under different settings to assist youth who can be exposed to psychosocial problems (Spence, 2003). Little research has been conducted on the orphaned children as the conditions in Pakistan are not similar to the rest of the world. The question of the role that social skills play in development of psychological characteristics in such a population is therefore important to be investigated.

This study will aim at investigating the impact of social skills on the resilience and confidence of young Pakistani orphans. By targeting this group, the study would be able to make contributions to the field and present results that would aid in developing aid.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Social skills

Social skills are significantly affected in the development of the mental health of people. Gresham and Elliott (1990) defined social skills as behaviors that allow one to successfully relate

to people and avoid inappropriate reactions. Active listening, striking up a conversation, demonstrating empathy, being forceful, and handling conflict are a few examples (Spence, 2003). A person's academic performance, mental health, interpersonal interactions, and sense of self are all impacted by social competence skills and talents (Rose-Krasnor, 1997).

People learn social skills via interacting with friends, family, and neighbors (Bandura, 1977). For young people to control their emotions and gain acceptance from their peers, these abilities are essential (Wentzel & Erdley, 2016). Living in various institutions, going through trauma, and the response of caregivers all have a big impact on social skill development (Elias & Haynes, 2008).

2.2 Impact of Social Skills on Young Orphans

The close, caring relationships required to promote social learning are absent from many institutionalized orphans. Children who live in institutions have lower social and emotional skills than children who do not live in orphanages, according to studies (Groark et al., 2011; Dozier et al., 2012). Children may lack psychological fortitude and a strong feeling of their own abilities as a result of this delayed development.

Children in Pakistani orphanages are more likely to be reclusive and display behavioral problems (Khalid et al., 2022). According to Farah et al. (2022), orphanages frequently concentrate on giving kids health and education, but they seldom ever address their social and emotional development. Consequently, improving social skills is crucial since it enables the individual to feel included and better control their emotions and issues (Shuja et al., 2020).

2.3 Self-Efficacy and its Psychological Significance

Self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1997), is the belief that you can prepare ahead of time and take the necessary actions to deal with upcoming situations. In difficult situations, it affects our resolve, feelings, and thoughts. Individuals who feel that they can are more motivated, tougher, engage in more activities and have a greater control over their emotions (Zimmerman, 2000). In order to develop self-efficacy, individuals depend on the perceptions of other individuals, watch success of other people, and experience social interactions. According to Pajares (2002) more socially skilled individuals are more likely to perceive their social interaction in a positive way, have positive feedback and feel more confident. Klassen and Usher (2010) found that social skills and self-efficacy had a strong correlation.

2.4 Resilience: Adaptive Force in Adversity

The capacity to surmount significant difficulties is resilience (Masten, 2014). It is affected by both internal and external factors (Luthar et al., 2000). Strong orphans are in a better position to handle the pressure of losing their parents, trauma and feeling an outsider. Liebenberg et al. (2012) note that the social support is crucial as it assists youths to get out of challenging circumstances. Orphans cannot easily become stronger without companions, mentors, and organized activities (UNICEF, 2019). Social skills play an essential role since they allow the youth to participate in self-strengthening, get access to resources, and build significant relationships. Good social skills were linked to a lower level of anxiety, hopelessness, better emotional management and optimism among the adolescents (Compas et al., 2017).

2.5 Interrelationship between Social Skills, Self-Efficacy and Resilience

Other more recent studies have found that social skills, resilience and self-efficacy are all highly related elements of teenage psychological functioning. According to Caprara et al. (2004) and Ungar et al. (2007), social skills and self-assurance assist a person to cope with stress. Avci and Yildiz (2018) state that a significant improvement in resilience and self-efficacy was observed among teens who were provided with social skills training. According to Bala (2022), social skills improved the psychological well-being of pupils because it increased their self-efficacy. Close interpersonal relationships favor the healing of orphans and their self-esteem. According to a recent study in Ethiopia, orphans with good relationships with peers and other people are more resilient and possess higher self-esteem (Woldeamanuel, 2020). Self-efficacy and coping skills are observed to increase when such ideas are imparted in Pakistan (Shuja et al., 2020).

2.6 Research Gap Analysis

Not many studies have been done on social skills of Pakistani orphaned populations even though research across the globe has shown that social skills are important in enhancing the mental health of the young people. Some of the studies distinguish self-efficacy or resilience and social skills as a potential mediating factor. Moreover, the studies in the West have shown that social skills ensure that the kids are more resilient and confident, yet, the adequate research of the situation in Pakistani orphanages has not been conducted so far. Whether these people can get their mental health enhanced through long-term social skills programs in a long-term manner is unclear. The paper will focus on investigating the connections among social skills, resilience, and self-efficacy in the life of Pakistani orphans.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This research is premised on the Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura (1997) which believes that behavior, the environment, and individual factors interact and influence each other. The key idea of the given ideology is the belief in the ability to achieve goals and make the world better. According to Bandura (1986, 1997), self-efficacy can be affected by accomplishment of goals, observing other individuals, receiving other support and experiencing particular feelings.

According to this paradigm, social skills enable people to gain experience and maintain positive behavior toward others. Teens are more likely to have positive interactions with others, which raises their self-esteem, if they can cooperate, communicate, and demonstrate empathy. Thus, people's self-efficacy beliefs are both predicted and reinforced by social skills.

This study also considers Masten's (2014) definition of resilience, which defines it as the positive result of normal development that enables people to overcome obstacles. According to this paradigm, resilience is influenced by both environmental support (such family, friends, and schools) and personal assets (like self-confidence).

Adolescents who are orphaned must develop new psychosocial coping mechanisms as they have no family to turn to. Therefore, social skills are essential for helping people overcome challenges and enhance their mental well-being. Combining these concepts makes it clear that social skills are something that can be enhanced and can raise young people's self-efficacy both directly and indirectly.

2.8 Rationale of the Study

This study is needed due to the lack of access to mental health treatments, orphans in Pakistan and other poor nations must be assisted in their psychological development, which is why this study is necessary. Adolescents in institutions may have feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, and increased stress due to a lack of support. While studies conducted in the West show that social skills enhance adaptive coping and a person's self-confidence, there is insufficient data in South Asian nations. According to this study, social competence development may be crucial in assisting orphaned adolescents in strengthening their resilience and self-confidence since social skills can be enhanced through educational initiatives. The study focuses on finding evidence in Pakistan to inform those in charge of policy, education and mental health about simple, effective ways to help vulnerable adolescents take charge of their lives.

2.9 Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between social skills and self-efficacy.
2. To explore the relationship between social skills and resilience.
3. To assess the impact of social skills on self-efficacy and resilience among young orphans.

2.10 Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant positive relationship between social skills and self-efficacy.
2. There will be a significant positive relationship between social skills and resilience.
    Social skills will significantly predict self-efficacy and resilience among young orphans.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

To investigate how the research variables, social skills, resilience, and self-efficacy relate to one another. A correlational research design was used in this study. Because it enables researchers to ascertain the direction and strength of correlations between variables without changing any conditions, this approach was chosen.

3.2 Participants

78 teenage orphans from SOS Children's Village in Rawalpindi made up the study's sample. The participants, who represented late adolescence, ranged in age from 15 to 19. A developmental stage characterized by increased need for social competence, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy. A convenience sampling technique was used to recruit participants due to the accessibility of the population within the institutional setting and the cooperative support provided by the organization's administration. All adolescents who met the age criteria, were residing at the facility, and were willing to participate were included in the study.

3.3 Inclusion Criteria:

- Participants having age range from 3 to 19 were included.
- Participants residing in (SOS Village) at least from 1 year
- Participants capable of responding and understanding English and Urdu questionnaires

3.4 Exclusion Criteria:

- Participants that having any physical and intellectual disability.
- Participants not residing in SOS village.

- Participant who si diagnosed with any psychiatric disorder.

3.5 Instruments

- Social Skills Questionnaire (Spence, 2003)
- General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995)
- Child and Youth Resilience Measure (Liebenberg et al., 2012)

3.6 Procedure

A booklet consisted of three questionnaires along with demographic sheet were administrated in group structure by following all ethical considerations.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by using SPSS 26. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and regression analysis were applied to analyze the result.

4.0 Findings and Results

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variable	M	SD
Social Skills	83.33	10.25
Self-efficacy	29.18	5.18
Resilience	31.45	5.77

The table below shows the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) analysis for the variables resilience, self-efficacy, and social skills. They give a summary of the average scores and level of variation among the participants.

Table 2 Pearson Correlation Matrix for Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3
1. Social Skills	—	.608**	.518**
2. Self-Efficacy	.608**	—	.459**
3. Resilience	.518**	.459**	—

**Note. ** *p* < .01 (2-tailed).

The relationships between resilience, self-efficacy, and social skills are shown in this table. Every correlation between the variables is found to be very significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 3 Regression Analysis Predicting Self-Efficacy

Predictor	B	$SE\ B$	β	P
Social Skills	.315	.045	.607	< .001

This table shows that social skills are a major predictor of self-efficacy and account for a large amount of variance (*R² =.369*). The standardized beta (β) indicates the strength of the predictive association.

Table 4 Regression Analysis Predicting Resilience

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	β	*P*
Social Skills	.274	.053	.519	< .001

This table displays the results of a regression analysis, which shows that social skills have a substantial effect size (*R² =.270*) and significantly predict participants' resilience.

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

This paper discussed the association that exists between social skills and resilience and self-efficacy of institutionalized or orphaned adolescents. There were very strong and high levels of correlation between all the factors, implying that teens who possess stronger social skills are also more resolute and confident. These findings are in line with the extensive bodies of research conducted in the global context that highlight the role of interpersonal skill in emotional and cognitive adaptation (Caprara et al., 2004; Nasheeda et al., 2019).

The high correlation between social skills and self-efficacy is congruent with Bandura Social Cognitive Theory (1997) that states that self-confidence is acquired by a human being through social interactions and mastery experiences. The more adolescents are better in their interpersonal and communication skills, then there is a greater likelihood that they will get positive reinforcement, fruitful peer interaction, and even pleasant social contacts, all of which increase self-confidence. Positive social experiences can be used as compensatory factors to enhance the self-efficacy of the orphans who do not generally have parental support.

On the same note, the definition of resilience as an outcome of adaptive mechanisms that help people to surmount adversity by Masten (2014) is consistent with the positive predictive influence of social skills on resilience. Social competency is believed to be one of such adaptive systems, particularly in cases of teenagers who have traumatized or suffered deprivation of emotions. Social skills may be keys that allow orphans to receive assistance, establish relationships, and cope with stress as their childhood might have included loss, instability, and absence of emotional attention. The findings can be explained by the findings of Woldeamanuel (2020), who found that interpersonal relationships and communication skills have a stronger impact on orphans and their coping strategies, showing that better coping and reduced psychological distress.

The findings of the research also support the idea that, even being exposed to socioemotional inadequacy, institutionalized adolescents can be of significant benefit due to structured social skills development programs. On the same note, Shuja et al. (2020) concluded that social skills training, done selectively, enhances the coping skills and emotional stability of orphans in Pakistan significantly. The research paper is a significant contribution to the local literature, as it empirically demonstrates the direct predictive relationship between social competence and resilience and self-efficacy in the context of the Pakistani orphanage.

In general, the findings indicate the significance of the social skills that should be acquired by orphaned adolescents as a protective mechanism. Such skills influence not only their present

welfare, but also their ability to interact with society, continue with education and have supportive relationships, which are in many cases damaged in institutionalized young people.

5.1 Limitations and Suggestions

Since only one SOS community was chosen in the study, it cannot be generalized. Moreover, the items were not in Urdu, which means that some of the participants might not have comprehended them completely.

Researchers should consider using different areas in future, mixing other methods and carrying out long-term studies to verify the effects of social skills.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings of the study show the relevance of social skills in assisting young orphans in institutional care to gain resilience and self-efficacy. Better social skills enable adolescents to be more confident and cope with emotional and environmental challenges. This brings out the prospect of societal skill generation as one of the effective intervention methods of promoting the psychological welfare of the disadvantaged youths in the society.

It is not only good but also necessary to raise social competency considering the emotional and social deprivation that institutionalized children are likely to encounter. Through offering orphans the skills, they will be able to communicate, handle their emotions, find help, and establish meaningful relationships, social skills training will help to reduce the adverse effects of early adversity. The given study shows that the development of such internal resources as resilience and self-efficacy is impossible without the improvement of social skills as they are the conditions of success and healthy growth in the future.

The findings will go a long way to benefit policymakers, mental health experts and social organizations working to assist the orphans in Pakistan. It is proposed that school programs and institutional practices should incorporate systematic social skills training programs. To sum up, the research proves that social skills are not merely interpersonal tools, but rather important psychological traits that influence the ability of an adolescent to adapt, persist and believe in his or her talents. The lives of orphaned teenagers may be greatly enhanced by the institutions that focus on the enhancement of these skills and help them to move to healthier, stronger, and more confident futures

Contribution

Muhammad Saqib Shabir: Problem Identification, Theoretical Framework and Drafting
Noreeta Suleman: Methodology and Revision
Farhana Kazmi: Data Analysis, Supervision
Conflict of Interests/Disclosures
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