

## Correlation Between Family Resilience Factors and the Satisfaction with Peer Relationships

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### *Abstract*

The aim of the research is to determine the correlation between the factors of family resilience and the satisfaction with own peer relationships. The purpose of the research is linked to planning adequate activities for university students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Croatia, regarding their peer relationships in a wide sense, because relationships with peers have a very important role in adolescence which can be understood with regard to decisions made by adolescents, as well as to the way they behave. The regression analysis has been used as the multivariate method of data processing. The scientific value of the obtained results is manifested through indicators showing that both the help and support in problem solving offered by family and pleasant family atmosphere is important for a satisfaction with one's peer relationships.

**Keywords:** family, peer, resilience, satisfaction, university students.

### 1. Introduction

Numerous researches (Luthar Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Patterson, 2002a; Walsh, 2012; Southwick, Douglas-Palumberi & Pietrzak, 2014) have been dealing with family resilience. As an upgrade of individual resilience, the concept of family resilience appeared and its roots can be found in researches about stress and families' facing and adaptation to adversities (Patterson, 2002a).

Earlier researches of family resilience (Hawley, 2013) were under the influence of the strength-oriented approach and researchers defined resilience as a characteristic of the family (Henry, Sheffield & Harrist, 2015). Researchers were oriented toward the identification of characteristics or strengths of the resilient family, while the level of those strengths was seen as resilience. The most commonly mentioned family strengths were respect and love, positive communication, commitment, spiritual wellbeing, time spent together and the ability to cope with adversities (DeFrain & Asay, 2007). Such an understanding of family resilience is also dominant among practitioners (Patterson, 2002a). They consider family resilience a synonym of family strength and it includes the capacity of the family to successfully cope with challenging life circumstances (Patterson, 2002b). A major objection to such a view of family resilience is that it does not take into consideration the level of risk to which the family is exposed, or the potential interaction between risks and protective factors (Ungar, 2013), while the importance of

differentiating between family resilience and strength is pointed out (Patterson, 2002b; Ungar, 2013).

Family resilience is usually defined (Luthar et al., 2000; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000) as a dynamic process in which good outcomes are realized despite being exposed to risks. Hawley & DeHaan (1996, after Becvar, 2013) define family resilience as the path followed by the family during their adaptation and advancement in facing stress, both in the present and during the pass of time. According to them, a resilient family has a positive reaction toward such conditions, but in a unique way which depends on the context, developmental level and the interactive combination of risks and protective factors, as well as the family perspective.

Southwick et al. (2014) point out that determinants of resilience include a host of biological, psychological, social and cultural factors that interact with one another to determine how one responds to stressful experiences.

Black and Lobo (2008) point that family resilience is the successful coping of family members under adversity that enables them to flourish with warmth, support, and cohesion. Notable factors of resilient families include: positive outlook, spirituality, family member accord, flexibility, family communication, financial management, family time, shared recreation, routines and rituals, and support networks. A family resilience orientation, based on the conviction that all families have inherent strengths and the potential for growth, provides the family nurse with an opportunity to facilitate family protective and recovery factors and to secure extra familial resources to help foster resilience.

On the other hand, relationships with peers have a key role in adolescence which often has as a consequence the need to do what peers demand, which can be understood with regard to decisions made by adolescents, as well as to the way they behave. Research shows (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004; Allen, Chango, Szewedo, Schad & Marston, 2012) that the higher the adolescents' autonomy from peers, the higher their capability to resist their negative pressure, which depends on the young's maturity and is increased with age. Susceptibility to the group influence also depends on their common closeness, the quality of friendship and assertive rejection (Glaser, Shelton & Bree, 2010). Research also shows that subjective satisfaction is positively related to a variety of interpersonal variables that include measures of quality relationships with parents, as well as with non-family relations that provide emotional support, such as experiences in different institutions as school and faculty, and with peers (Suldo & Huebner, 2004; Shek, 2005; Konu, Lintonen & Rimpellä, 2002).

A family that supports a young person and satisfaction with own peer relationships are determinants of resilience that include a lot of factors, mostly biological, psychological, social and cultural. Those factors interact with one another to determine how one responds to different, mostly very stressful, experiences. Based on these foundations this research was carried out.

## 2. Aim, hypothesis and purpose of the research

The aim of the research is to determine the correlation between the factors of university students' family resilience and the satisfaction with own peer relationships. The study was done on university students (N=135) enrolled to the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Croatia.

The hypothesis was based on the assumption that there are statistically significant connections between the satisfaction with own peer relationships and factors of family resilience because relationships with peers have a very important role in adolescence which often has as a consequence the need to do what peers demand, which can be understood with regard to decisions made by adolescents, as well as to the way they behave.

The purpose of the research is linked to planning adequate activities for university students of the first study years regarding their peer relationships in a wide sense.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 *Sample of examinees*

The convenient sample of examinees was formed by first-year students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Croatia, namely 135 students.

A total of 98.5% of female and only 1.5% male students took part in the research. The largest number of examinees or 58.5% were in their nineteens. If summed up, most students, about 85% of them, were aged 18 to 20.

#### 3.2 *Sample of items*

The Questionnaire for the evaluation of family resilience was used for the needs of this paper. It is the instrument Family Resilience Assessment Scale (FRAS) (Sixbey, 2005) which was taken over and standardized for the Republic of Croatia (Ferić, Maurović & Žižak, 2016).

It started to exist following the family resilience model set by Walsh (1998). The model was based on the paradigm oriented toward competences and strengths (Walsh, 2002). It included three processes important for family resilience: the family system of belief, the family organisation and communication and solving problems. Sixbey (2005) developed the FRAS instrument based on the aforementioned Walsh's model. Its original version had 66 variables divided into nine sub-constructs which described the model and one "open" question. The factor analysis of the original instrument did not confirm the theoretical model of nine constructs (factors) because the items did not follow it by content. Based on the screen plot analysis, the characteristic square root and explained variance, Sixbey (2005) checked the six-factor solution which proved to be meaningful. This resulted in the exclusion of 12 items of the original questionnaire.

More experiments were carried out in different countries with the aim of validating the FRAS instrument. On Malta (Dimech, 2014) it was considered a valid instrument to measure the family resilience in the Maltese context, but with the notification that it was necessary to carry out a research on a larger sample to determine the validity of FRAS – MV. In Turkey, Kaya and Arici (2012) carried out a research with the aim of validating the FRAS instrument. The authors concluded that the Turkish version of the abbreviated instrument showed an acceptable reliability and could be used in psychology as a valid and reliable instrument, while a similar research was conducted in Romania on a population of pupils and their families (Bostan, 2014). In Italy the aim of the research was to estimate family resilience, albeit with chronic diseases patients, then the adaptation and confirmation of the Italian version of the instrument (Walsh-IT) which offers a profile of family resilience processes before and after interventions and assessment (Rocchi et al., 2017). However, the foreign research carried out with the aim of validating the FRAS instrument showed that this instrument had some flaws. The family connection as a scale had lower or low Cronbach alphas in all aforementioned research studies, while in some research this was the case for the scale Family spirituality as well. The reason for such results can lay in the translation of the instrument, but also in the different understanding of family connections and/or spirituality in different cultures and environments. This instrument's metric characteristic and factor structure were conducted and checked in Croatia even earlier (Blažević, 2012). The results of this research have to be carefully analyzed since a large number of variables of the original questionnaire have been excluded.

In the version used in this research (Ferić et al., 2016), the confirmatory factor analysis has shown that the shortened version of the FRAS instrument containing 45 items extracts six factors. This factor solution is similar to the original instrument to a great extent (Sixbey, 2005), but also to other inspections of the factor structure in various countries (Kaya & Arici, 2012; Bostan, 2014; Dimenich, 2014; Rocchi et al., 2017). The reliability of the four scales is satisfactory ( $\alpha$ = from .65 to .92), while two scales show a lower reliability (Giving meaning to adversities,  $\alpha$ =.58, Neighbours' support  $\alpha$ =.60). Descriptive factors indicate an asymmetry in the results distribution on all factors, or high values of results, which could indicate a poor sensitivity of the instrument.

Pursuing all previously said, the items found in the paragraph Results and Discussion have been considered as factors of family resilience (predictor items) for the needs of this research. It was possible to give answers following the five-degree Likert type scale – 1=I completely disagree, 2=I mostly disagree, 3=I neither agree nor disagree, 4=I mostly agree and 5=I completely agree. The criterion item *The satisfaction with own peer relationships* was added (on the scale from 1 to 10).

### 3.3 Methods of data processing

Basic statistical value and the regression analysis as the multivariate method of data processing determining the prognostic validity of the predictor items set were used for data processing. Data were analyzed using the SPSS Statistics 24.0 Standard Campus Edition (SPSS ID: 729357, 20 May 2016).

### 3.4 Methods of data collection

The research was carried out in 2017 using the method of polling among first year students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the Juraj Dobrila University of Pula. Before students started to fill in the questionnaire, the author gave them instructions on how it was to be filled in, she guaranteed anonymity and explained that the collected data would be only used for scientific purposes. The participation in the questionnaire was voluntary and students were explained that they could give it up at any moment of its completion.

## 4. Results and discussion

The family resilience factors' arithmetic means (Table 1) are highest for items: *In hardship, members of our family support each other (item 36)*, *We feel good when we spend time at home (item 31)*, *In our family we believe that we have the strength to cope with difficulties (item 32)* and *Our relatives and friends are ready to help in need (item 10)*.

Table 1. Basic statistical values of the observed items

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>The satisfaction with own peer relationships</i>	3.00	10.00	8.7407	1.4709
1. <i>We reach important family decisions together</i>	1.00	5.00	3.7926	1.0587
2. <i>We are able to reach common understanding even when we go through hard moments</i>	1.00	5.00	3.8148	1.0663
3. <i>Family members understand each other</i>	1.00	5.00	3.6370	1.0832

4. <i>We seek help and support from relatives and friends</i>	1.00	5.00	3.0889	1.1360
5. <i>Each of us can "vent" at home not upsetting the others</i>	1.00	5.00	2.7630	1.1603
6. <i>We can rely on relatives and friends</i>	1.00	5.00	3.6815	.9514
7. <i>When our family undergoes troubles, we find consolation in religion and/or spirituality</i>	1.00	5.00	2.9111	1.3353
8. <i>We consult each other about decisions we make</i>	1.00	5.00	3.7556	1.0182
9. <i>We discuss problems until we find the solution</i>	1.00	5.00	3.5778	1.2606
10. <i>Our relatives and friends are ready to help in need</i>	1.00	5.00	3.9407	.9832
11. <i>When something bad happens to our family, religion/spirituality makes us stronger</i>	1.00	5.00	2.9556	1.3487
12. <i>We know we are important to family and friends</i>	1.00	5.00	3.8519	1.1494
13. <i>We get presents and other tokens of appreciation from relatives and friends</i>	1.00	5.00	3.6370	.9432
14. <i>We share responsibilities in the family</i>	1.00	5.00	3.7407	1.0145
15. <i>We think it is better not to get too much involved with relatives and friends</i>	1.00	5.00	2.0963	.9213
16. <i>When our family encounters a problem, we draw the strength from religion and/or spirituality</i>	1.00	5.00	2.5037	1.2689
17. <i>We can go through difficulties as a family</i>	1.00	5.00	3.6296	1.3424
18. <i>When reaching important decisions, members of our family talk to each other</i>	1.00	5.00	3.4815	1.3375
19. <i>In our family there is a pleasant atmosphere</i>	1.00	5.00	3.5111	1.4135
20. <i>Religion/spirituality is an important part of our family life</i>	1.00	5.00	2.6222	1.3376
21. <i>In case of troubles, we know that we can get help from our relatives or friends</i>	1.00	5.00	3.4222	1.3297
22. <i>In our family, when we expect something from another family member</i>	1.00	5.00	3.6889	1.0613
23. <i>In our family we are honest to each other</i>	1.00	5.00	3.8741	.9882
24. <i>In our family we show each other how we feel</i>	1.00	5.00	3.6519	1.0881
25. <i>It seems like it is forbidden to show certain emotions in our family</i>	1.00	5.00	2.1111	1.2852
26. <i>When members of our family say they will do something, they keep their word</i>	1.00	5.00	3.4667	.9044
27. <i>In our family we see problems as part of life</i>	1.00	5.00	3.8593	.8566
28. <i>When our family finds itself in a problem, we know what caused it</i>	1.00	5.00	3.4741	.7806
29. <i>Religion/spirituality gives sense to our family life</i>	1.00	5.00	2.7481	1.3085
30. <i>When our family finds itself in a problem, we believe that everything will end up for the best</i>	1.00	5.00	3.7704	.9055
31. <i>We feel good when we spend time at home</i>	1.00	5.00	4.0296	.9921
32. <i>In our family we believe that we have the strength to cope with difficulties</i>	2.00	5.00	3.9778	.8505

33. <i>When problems occur, our family finds new ways of solving them</i>	1.00	5.00	3.8815	.9065
34. <i>Members of our family feel very close to each other</i>	1.00	5.00	3.8889	1.0414
35. <i>Both parents take part in leading our family to the same extent</i>	1.00	5.00	3.3852	1.5160
36. <i>In hardship, members of our family support each other</i>	1.00	5.00	4.0667	1.0089
37. <i>Disciplining is fair in our family</i>	1.00	5.00	3.5556	1.1569
38. <i>Our family's religion and/or spirituality helps us in coping with pain and serious problems</i>	1.00	5.00	2.9185	1.4354
39. <i>Our family can adapt to changes when it is necessary</i>	1.00	5.00	3.8667	.7899
40. <i>Members of our family like to spend part of their free time together</i>	1.00	5.00	3.7778	1.2012
41. <i>In our family, we share house chores</i>	1.00	5.00	3.3185	1.3138
42. <i>Although our family members have their personal interests, they take part in family activities, too</i>	1.00	5.00	3.6815	1.2073
43. <i>The rules and roles in our family are clearly set</i>	1.00	5.00	3.2074	1.1402
44. <i>When problems occur in our family, we are ready to compromise</i>	1.00	5.00	3.6444	1.0753
45. <i>Religious/spiritual rituals/activities are an important part of our life</i>	1.00	5.00	2.3852	1.3326

The obtained results of the multiple regression analysis (Table 2) show that there is a statistically significant connection between predictor items and the criterion item “the satisfaction with own peer relationships”. The predictor set of items has explained 60% of the common variance. In other words, by knowing the predictor set of items, it is possible to anticipate the progression the satisfaction with own peer relationships of university students in the analyzed sample.

Table 2. Coefficient of the multiple regression of the predictor set of items and the criterion

	Value
Multiple R	0.604
Multiple R <sup>2</sup>	0.365
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.044
F	1.138
p	0.03
Std. Err. of Estimate	1.44

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis for the criterion

	B	Std. Err. of B	Beta	t	p-level
<i>Intercept</i>	8.696	1.439		6.044	.000
1. <i>We reach important family decisions together</i>	.218	.231	.157	.945	.347
2. <i>We are able to reach common understanding even when we go through hard moments</i>	-.208	.242	-.151	-.858	.393

3. Family members understand each other	.222	.213	.164	1.041	.301
4. We seek help and support from relatives and friends	.567	.161	.051	.408	.684
5. Each of us can “vent” at home not upsetting the others	.133	.160	.105	.832	.407
6. We can rely on relatives and friends	-.220	.228	-.142	-.965	.337
7. When our family undergoes troubles, we find consolation in religion and/or spirituality	.126	.205	.115	.617	.539
8. We consult each other about decisions we make	.396	.220	.274	1.795	.076
9. We discuss problems until we find the solution	.545	.180	.467	3.027	.003*
10. Our relatives and friends are ready to help in need	.142	.236	.095	.603	.548
11. When something bad happens to our family, religion/spirituality makes us stronger	.372	.214	.341	1.740	.085
12. We know we are important to family and friends	-.472	.205	-.043	-.267	.790
13. We get presents and other tokens of appreciation from relatives and friends	.354	.219	.227	1.618	.109
14. We share responsibilities in the family	.902	.186	.041	.317	.752
15. We think it is better not to get too much involved with relatives and friends	.426	.183	.009	.078	.938
16. When our family encounters a problem, we draw the strength from religion and/or spirituality	-.038	.252	-.018	-.081	.936
17. We can go through difficulties as a family	.160	.272	.146	.587	.559
18. When reaching important decisions, members of our family talk to each other	-.441	.282	-.401	-1.564	.121
19. In our family there is a pleasant atmosphere	.504	.229	.485	2.207	.030*
20. Religion/spirituality is an important part of our family life	-.149	.220	-.135	-.676	.501
21. In case of troubles, we know that we can get help from our relatives or friends	-.121	.206	-.110	-.589	.557
22. In our family, when we expect something from another family member	.217	.219	.156	.989	.326
23. In our family we are honest to each other	-.530	.271	-.356	-1.952	.054
24. In our family we show each other how we feel	.261	.238	.193	1.095	.277
25. It seems like it is forbidden to show certain emotions in our family	-.387	.147	-.338	-2.626	.100
26. When members of our family say they will do something, they keep their word	-.570	.226	-.016	-.114	.910

27. <i>In our family we see problems as part of life</i>	-.478	.224	-.001	-.007	.995
28. <i>When our family finds itself in a problem, we know what caused it</i>	-.104	.278	-.055	-.375	.709
29. <i>Religion/spirituality gives sense to our family life</i>	.204	.194	.181	1.047	.298
30. <i>When our family finds itself in a problem, we believe that everything will end up for the best</i>	-.124	.237	-.056	-.385	.702
31. <i>We feel good when we spend time at home</i>	.348	.287	.023	.117	.907
32. <i>In our family we believe that we have the strength to cope with difficulties</i>	.694	.284	.016	.095	.925
33. <i>When problems occur, our family finds new ways of solving them</i>	-.161	.288	-.099	-.559	.578
34. <i>Members of our family feel very close to each other</i>	.151	.247	.107	.611	.543
35. <i>Both parents take part in leading our family to the same extent</i>	-.872	.135	-.071	-.509	.612
36. <i>In hardship, members of our family support each other</i>	-.286	.297	-.196	-.964	.338
37. <i>Disciplining is fair in our family</i>	.595	.168	.028	.214	.831
38. <i>Our family's religion and/or spirituality helps us in coping with pain and serious problems</i>	-.324	.227	-.316	-1.425	.158
39. <i>Our family can adapt to changes when it is necessary</i>	.301	.312	.162	.964	.338
40. <i>Members of our family like to spend part of their free time together</i>	-.280	.208	-.229	-1.347	.181
41. <i>In our family, we share house chores</i>	-.201	.143	-.179	-1.407	.163
42. <i>Although our family members have their personal interests, they take part in family activities, too</i>	.331	.193	.271	1.712	.090
43. <i>The rules and roles in our family are clearly set</i>	-.216	.146	-.167	-1.479	.143
44. <i>When problems occur in our family, we are ready to compromise</i>	-.411	.199	-.032	-.221	.825
45. <i>Religious/spiritual rituals/activities are an important part of our life</i>	.217	.197	.056	.316	.753

\* $p < .05$ 

The standard regression coefficient (Table 3) is the highest and statistically significant for both *We discuss problems until we find the solution (item 9)* and *In our family there is a pleasant atmosphere (item 19)*. The other predictor items also participate in defining the latent criterion, but are not statistically significant predictors of the criterion item. Thus, the items *We discuss problems until we find the solution (item 9)* and *In our family there is a pleasant atmosphere (item 19)* mostly contribute to the criterion item of progression, while the other items do not significantly anticipate progression.



## 5. Conclusion

The scientific value of the obtained results is manifested through indicators discussing problems until finding the solution and pleasant family atmosphere are important for a proper satisfaction with own peer relationships. Similar data were also obtained during other studies (Cohen, 2004; Horwitz, Reynolds & Charles, 2014). Authors point that emotional support from family and peers is associated with lower psychological distress. Bad developmental outcomes of the young, but also good ones, have to be observed through a wider prism of outcomes and as a characteristic of the specific interaction between an individual and the environment, especially peers and family (Radetić-Paić, 2018). In this context, it is especially important for each family to develop, preserve and improve its capacity for resilience and thus directly or indirectly affect the satisfaction with own peer relationships.

In our context, considering all of the above, the main role in phase of adaptation to the university students' life and in prevention in the cases of various peer problems, is given to Students' associations and centers and Psychological counsel working at Juraj Dobrila University in Pula because if a peer problem occurs, the positive influence of the family should be compensated.

The limitations created by a relatively small sample size may affect the outcome and are certainly worthy of this study. Although special attention has to be paid to reaching conclusions and looking for a direct correlation family resilience factors and the satisfaction with own peer relationships, it can be deduced that this occurrence has many causes, which means that a larger number of variables can be used in the interpretation. Consequently, it is necessary to conduct further research.

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