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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Resilience, Subjective Well-Being, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Parents and Children	This study explores the relationship between resilience and subjective well-being (SWB) among parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It was hypothesized that (1) resilience would be significant predictor of SWB in these parents and (2) mothers and fathers would differ in their resilience levels. In order to conduct the study and comprehending desired outcomes, purposive sample of 130 parents (M=52; F=78), aged 25 to 55 years, was selected from rehabilitation centers in Hyderabad and Karachi, Pakistan. The data were collected using the Urdu versions of the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale and the ICP-Subjective Well-Being Scale. In this regard, regression analysis confirmed a strong predictive association between resilience and subjective well-being. However, contrary to the hypothesis, t-test results indicated no significant difference in resilience between mothers and fathers. These results of study, based upon statistical outcomes, highlight the crucial role of resilience in shaping the well-being of parents of children with autism spectrum disorder, emphasizing the dire need for interventions that strengthen resilience to enhance their overall quality of life.
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INTRODUCTION

Having a child with ASD is a very challenging task for the parents. This task may require a number of resources (like, adaptive, emotional and psychological) for the parents. This disorder is compound neurodevelopmental problem, causes persistent problems in verbal & non-verbal communication and social interactions (Wu, Yirong & Peilin, 2023). ASD children exhibit limited and monotonous range of behaviors and interests. They have stubborn observance to routines and difficulty handling

behavioral and emotional issues. Likewise, they cannot form and sustain relationships and cannot understand gestures. The ASD children show the symptoms like no eye contact, echolalia, odd body movements, staring/gazing and hypo and hyper-reactivity to sensory stimuli in the environment (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Taking care of ASD children poses complicated demands for parents. The studies have emphasized the significant pressure and possibly harmful effects on the family due to the complex nature of care for an ASD child (Dumas, Wolf, Fisman & Culligan, 1991; Ingersoll & Hambrick, 2010). Mental health of the parent can be very much impacted by numerous facets of ASD, like deficits in communication, which can make understanding the needs of the child very difficult (Crowell, Keluskar & Gorecki, 2019). The number of researches indicate problems in the behaviors as primary symptom of stress among the parents of ASD children (Baker, Brookman & Stahmer, 2005).

Some longitudinal researches show reciprocal relationship between parental stress and behavior difficulties in the households of ASD children (Lecavalier, Leone & Wiltz, 2006). The tolerance of parent and their energy levels maybe very much exhausted while dealing with their child's temper tantrums and meltdowns. This led to judgment from others and feelings of helplessness (Montague, Dallos, McKenzie, 2018). Many researches are conducted in the context of degree of resilience of the parents and difference in maternal and paternal level of resilience. In research (Jones et al., 2013) higher degree of distress was found in mothers of ASD children as compared to fathers. According to Totsika, Hastings, Emerson, Lancaster and Berridge (2011) psychological hitches are more common in the mothers of ASD children, which can impact their resilience. Garriot et al. (2014) reported that mothers' perception of their psychological well-being falls, as the degree of severity of symptoms of increases. Current study aims to investigate how resilience is associated with sustaining SWB and managing psychological distress for parents of ASD children. It aims to evaluate gender difference differences in resilience of parents. Studying strategies of resilience may help families cope better with the pressure and the responsibility that is a part of parenting ASD children (Bekhet, Johnson, Zauszniewski, 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The meta-analysis was conducted by Hayes and Watson (2013), examined the impact of parenting pressure of parents of children with ASD as compared to parents of non-ASD children. The research carefully reviewed existing articles that studied pressure of parenting for parents of ASD children. The research concluded that stress of parenting is aggravated in parents of ASD children. Resilience is person's skill to flourish and prosper beyond what is naturally anticipated despite facing hardship (Brooks, 1994). Aslam and Rohail (2023) conducted a study that investigated degree of resilience in households with the ASD children. They found that the families of ASD children who were having resilience at advanced degree, were merely 4%. This indicates the scarcity of resilience in families that face the burden of raising ASD children. Ghanouni and Hood (2021) found that parents of ASD children face unique stressors and adopt different coping approaches that may be shaped by care and resilience of their partners. Positive thinking can help mitigate the challenges of nurturing an ASD child. Also, the severity of child's symptoms significantly affects the mother's well-being. Thus, knowing and using resilience as coping tool can be crucial in enhancing parents' overall quality of life and well-being.

Frequently, parents of ASD children are continuously alert due to the potential harm and intensity that is associated with their child's stereotypic movements and nonfunctioning tasks. The journey of raising an ASD child often requires crossing numerous hurdles, likewise dealing with the behavioral challenges, finding suitable interventions and enduring with uncertainties about the child's future and development. All this drive, it makes parent's well-being a grave concern, as it has meaningful impact on their capability to give ideal care and sustenance to their ASD children. Among parents of ASD children, subjective well-being (SWB) not only shapes the family's overall functioning and the parent-child relationship but also affects their own quality of life and mental health. In this era, studies have been gradually drawn towards subject of parents' SWB. It refers to contentment of an individual with the life and encompasses overall life satisfaction, efficacy in functioning and feeling good (Diener, 1999). It is a multi-layered concept which includes a person's affective and cognitive evaluations of their happiness, emotional experiences and life satisfaction. The SWB doesn't suggest continues contentment; rather it admits that feeling adverse emotions likewise the disappointment, sadness, regret, grief, and failure is a normal part of life. Successful management of these emotions is vital for lasting SWB.

The pressure of parenting can lead to a variety of harmful results, that include, physical exhaustion (Weiss et al, 2012) and psychological issues such as depression or anxiety (Benson & Karlof, 2009). The parents of ASD children face various factors that may heighten stress, like financial challenges and time demands associated with participating in therapeutic interventions (behavioral therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy). As a result, they often have less time to focus upon other essential aspects of life (Sawyer, Pfeiffer, Spence, Bond, Graetz, Kay, Patton & Sheffield, 2010). The well-being of the parent or family can have a negative impact on child's symptoms and may even reduce effectiveness of interventions (Jeffrey, 2012). In this challenging scenario, resilience emerges as vital protective factors for families facing difficulties related to psychological health, especially those raising ASD children (Weiss et al, 2012). The resilience is connected to the positive outcomes in households with ASD children, including life satisfaction, psychological well-being and enhanced family mental health (Ekas, Lickenbrock, Whitman, 2010). The emerging focus on a strength-based model has emphasized the significance of resilience at both the family and individual levels. In this context, family resilience centers upon the strengths that help families navigate and manage crises (Walsh, 2003).

Research Hypotheses

1. Resilience would be significant predictor of SWB (life satisfaction, positive affect & negative affect) in parents of ASD children.
2. The mothers and fathers of autism spectrum disorder children would differ in their resilience levels in diverse situations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses survey method for obtaining data. It evaluates the predictive relationship between resilience and SWB among parents of ASD children. This research also investigates the difference in

the variable of resilience for the mothers and fathers of ASD children in order to reach the desired research outcomes.

Population and Sample

This study utilizes as purposive sample of 130 parents (M=52; F=78) of children with ASD. The age of the sample ranged between 25-55 years. Data was collected from different rehabilitation centers of Karachi and Hyderabad. The inclusion criteria required parents of children diagnosed with ASD meeting DSM-5 TR criteria with mild to modest severity level, aged 3-13 years, and having only one or two ASD children.

Research Measures

1. Demographic datasheet: It contained questions related towards demographic individualities.
2. ICP-Subjective Well-being Scale (Moghal & Khanam, 2015)
This 29-item scale is a reliable and valid tool of SWB. It measures life satisfaction, negative and positive affect (Moghal & Khanam, 2015).
3. Conner Davidson Resilience Scale (Conner & Davidson, 2003)
It is tool that measures resilience or in other words how well person bounces back after events that are stressful, tragic, or traumatic. It is a reliable and valid tool of resilience (Conner & Davidson, 2003).

Procedure & Ethical Considerations

The parents of ASD children were recruited. The sample consisted of 130 participants from autism rehab centers of Hyderabad and Karachi divisions. The data collection was initiated with obtaining consent individually from participants and then tools were administered. Ethical principles were followed for this study. The participants' consent was taken and they were assured that the data will be used only for research purpose and no names of identifying the details of any participant will be mentioned in research.

RESULTS OF STUDY

Table 1 Demographics of Parents of ASD Children

Variables	Parents of ASD children N=130			
	Mother: n= 78		Father: n= 52	
	f	%	f	%
Age (years)				
25-35	38	49	13	25
36-45	35	45	30	58
46-55	5	6	9	17

Table 1A Demographics of Parents of ASD Children

Education				
Matric	5	6	2	4
Intermediate	14	18	3	6
Graduation	56	72	38	73
Post-Graduation	3	4	9	17

Table 1B Demographics of Parents of ASD Children

Socioeconomic status	F	%
Lower-Middle	15	12
Middle-Middle	103	79
Upper-Middle	12	9

Table 2 Linear Regression: Resilience and Positive Affect

Predictor	B	SE	β	R ²	F	Sig.
Constant	28.03	2.31				.000
Resilience	.077	.02	.27	.07	10.06	.002

Dependent variable: Positive Affect, * $p \leq 0.05$

Table 3 Linear Regression: Resilience and Negative Affect

Predictor	B	SE	β	R ²	F	Sig.
Constant	31.65	2.36				.000
Resilience	.04	.02	.16	.02	3.73	.056

Dependent variable: Negative Affect, * $p \geq 0.05$

Table 4 Linear Regression: Resilience and Life Satisfaction

Predictor	B	SE	β	R ²	F	Sig.
Constant	8.76	1.86				.000
Resilience	.07	.02	.32	.10	14.84	.000

Dependent variable: Life Satisfaction, * $p \leq 0.05$

Table 5 Independent Sample t-test of Resilience for Mothers and Fathers sample (N=130)

	Mothers (n=78)		Fathers (n=52)		T	P	df
	M	SD	M	SD			
Resilience	91.41	16.39	96.00	15.62	1.593	.114	128

* $p \geq 0.05$

The results given in the table show a slight difference on the variable of resilience between mothers and fathers. Interpreting these scores, Fathers (M=96), Mothers (M=91.41) fathers slightly scored high compared to mothers. Nevertheless, there's no statistically significant difference ($p=.114$) between males and females.

DISCUSSION

The current study explored the relationship between the SWB and resilience and thus based on the literature review of previous researches, this study aimed to increase the insight of the multifaceted association between resilience and SWB as parents experience it. The first hypothesis is as resilience be a significant predictor of SWB in parents of ASD children. This research studied three dimensions of SWB, that are,

1. Life Satisfaction (LS)
2. Positive Affect (PA)
3. Negative Affect (NA).

The results for PA were statistically significant, showing that resilience is a key predictor of SWB (PA) in parents of ASD children (Table 2). However, results for NA were not statistically significant, suggesting that resilience does not predict NA in these parents (see Table 3). On the other hand, the findings for LS were statistically significant, showing that resilience is a strong predictor of SWB (LS) in parents of children with the ASD (see Table 4). These findings align with [Zhao et al.'s \(2021\)](#) study, which found that higher degrees of resilience in parents of ASD children are linked to greater SWB, resulting in more positive emotions that affects their own quality of life and mental health. Thus, an integrative review conducted by [Bekhet, Johnson, and Zauszniewski \(2012\)](#) analyzed 22 studies involving parents of ASD children. The review concluded that parents who demonstrate resilience are more capable of managing the problems and demands that are linked to taking care of children with ASD. Additionally, the resilience is positively associated with experiencing positive emotions despite stressors ([Aburn, Gott & Hoare, 2016](#)). Current research shows that the parents who display the higher degrees of resilience incline to experience more positive affect, such as feelings of joy, pleasure and happiness.

Parents of ASD children often feel higher degrees of negative affect, including depression and anxiety, compared to parents of children without ASD ([Karst & Van Hecke, 2012](#)). Also, previous research indicates that long-term care of children with ASD lead to emotional exhaustion, which in turn reduces resilience over time ([Gray, 2006](#)). According to [Bekhet, Johnson, and Zauszniewski \(2012\)](#), parents who have developed resilience are better equipped to manage negative emotions related with the challenges of caregiving for an ASD child. The findings of the current study align with these previous results, showing that resilience doesn't predict negative affect in parents of ASD children. Resilience has a critical part in stimulating happiness and life satisfaction, as it allows a person to positively adapt to the challenges of life and have a sense of SWB ([Bonanno & Mancini, 2008](#)). Higher degree of life satisfaction in the parents leads to an increased quality of family life that fosters a supportive and positive atmosphere ([Hayes & Watson, 2013](#)). Current research also suggests that parents that are resilient feel satisfaction with their role as parent, which contributes to their positive affect life satisfaction. It indicates the impact of life satisfaction on the parents of children with ASD.

It indicates that they manage the problems in a better way, which in turn, affect positively both the parents' and child development and well-being. Second hypothesis stated that mothers and fathers of ASD children would differ in resilience levels. The results do not indicate a significant difference in resilience of mothers and fathers in given sample. Though, prevailing researches have provided inconsistent evidence of differences in resilience of mothers and fathers. One of the studies indicates that mother's experience more caregiving burden that's why they demonstrate strong emotional coping strategies consequently leads to higher levels of resilience ([Hartley, 2011](#)). Though, a recent study has indicated that fathers of ASD children can demonstrate high positive emotions in their experiences of parenting ([Riany & Ihsana, 2021](#)). The gender differences in resilience amid parents

may be shaped by the expectations by culture, the norms of a society, and the allocation of errands of caregiving, all of which can affect emotional well-being (Zhao, Fu & Ai, 2021). Based on the thorough literature review and results of the current study, further research into gender differences in resilience is needed.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights crucial role of resilience in safeguarding and enhancing the SWB of parents raising ASD children. It is clear that in order for parents to thrive personally and in meeting their children's unique needs they must have access to wide range of resources, external and internal. The resilience, acting as internal resource that is powerful, empowers parents to effectively navigate the challenges and pressures associated with parenting ASD child. Research shows that lack of internal resources can increase the risk of developing psychological issues. Given the profound impact of resilience, it is essential to implement strategies that not only foster resilience but also enhance our understanding of it. By doing so, we can help prevent serious mental health consequences that may also affect physical well-being. Supporting resilience in parents enables them to better manage the difficulties of raising an ASD child, ultimately promoting better overall well-being for both parents and their children.

Recommendations & Limitations

1. The sample size of this study was restricted to the Hyderabad and Karachi and was small so increased generalizability a large-scale study should be conducted in various other regions or cities of Pakistan.
2. The sample was drawn from rehabilitation centers that indicates that children are receiving some help, future study should also include the families that are not sending their children to any rehabilitation center.
3. The sample comprised of parents just belonging to middle socioeconomic class. These further decreases generalizability of results, any future studies should include lower and upper socio-economic class also.

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