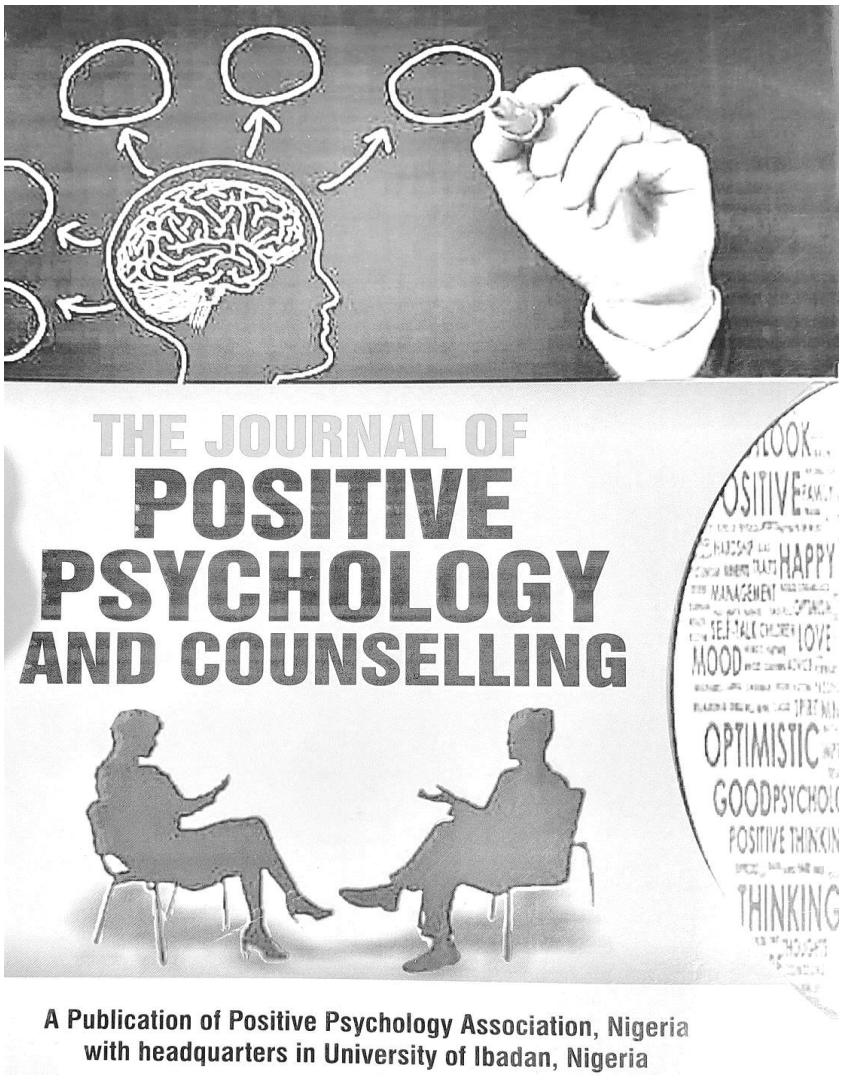


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The Journal of Positive Psychology and Counselling

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Assessment Of Pupils' Resilience Level In Osun State: Implications For Counselling Interventions

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Abstract

In the face of socio-economic challenges, family instability, educational stressors, and environmental disruptions, many pupils struggle to adapt effectively, which can impact their emotional and academic development. Understanding their resilience levels is therefore essential in identifying those at risk and designing appropriate interventions. Therefore, this study investigated pupils' level of resilience in Osun State, Nigeria. This study adopted descriptive research of correlation type. The population for the study comprised all pupils in 3,339 public primary schools in Osun State. Osun Central Senatorial District was selected out the three (3) Senatorial Districts in the State. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 10 Local Government Areas, 20 schools and eventually 487 pupils that participated in the study. Pupils Resilience Rating Scale (PRRS) with reliability coefficient of 0.76 was used for data collection. The findings of the study revealed that the level of pupils' resilience was moderate. The study also revealed no significant difference in the resilience of pupils based on their gender and parental education. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that parents should provide an accommodating and enabling environment for children to develop their resilience skills and role model resilient behaviours to their children to emulate. Also, counsellors and teachers should assist to develop resilience in pupils through regular talks, and life skills orientation to enable them acquire coping skills to face challenges and unfriendly situations that may disrupt their academic achievement.

Keywords: Resilience, Pupils' resilience levels

Introduction

Resilience is a crucial psychological trait that empowers individuals, especially children, to navigate stress, adversity, and difficult life situations with strength and adaptability. It equips them to manage emotions, adjust to changing environments, build positive relationships, and maintain a hopeful outlook despite challenges. In

Nigeria, where many children face harsh realities such as poverty, material deprivation, political instability, religious conflict, terrorism, abduction, and abuse, the need for resilience becomes even more critical. In the face of all these notable challenges, resilience serves as a protective factor for children. Without it, these adverse experiences may result in long-term damage to a child's mental and emotional well-being. Fostering resilience is therefore essential for healthy development and future success.

Literature showed that young children can experience many forms of adversity sometimes mild, like not being understood by adults when trying to express their needs; sometimes severe, like being exposed to poverty, domestic violence and war (Bruwer, Govender, Bishop, Williams, Stein, & Seedat 2013). In the school environment, pupils often encounter emotional, social, and academic stressors that may affect their overall development and academic success. Also, Oladeji, Makanjuola & Gureje (2010) submitted that childhood adversities may be in form of maltreatments like physical abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and maternal deprivation, broken home, single mother and early maternal death faced with heightened adversity.

According to Southwick, Bonanno, Masicn, Panter-Brick & Yehunda (2014), in all difficult experiences, some children will develop negative outcomes whereas other children will stay on a healthy course or bounce back and resume typical development. As noted by Santhosh & James (2013), most children experience more or less the same challenging or threatening circumstances, the more resilient learners' responses to the demands do not weaken their abilities, instead they improve with enhanced competencies and are able to make the best out of stressful events affect their overall personal growth and wellbeing. According to Miller, Fitch, and Marshall (2003), resilient children are noted to be active in problem solving, they constructively perceive their experiences, develop flexible strategies and skills to solve problems and are able to maintain optimism.

According to the American Psychological Association (2022), resilience is both a process and outcome of successful adaptation in the face of adversity, particularly through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility. Resilience is broadly understood as the ability to adapt positively and recover from adversity, trauma, or significant stress. Conway and McDonough (2006) describe emotional resilience as the capacity to generate positive emotions and quickly bounce back from negative experiences. Similarly, Roy et al. (2011) and Andrea Ovans (2015) highlight resilience as the strength to thrive despite hardship and to recover from setbacks. According to the American Psychological Association (2022), it involves mental, emotional, and behavioural flexibility in adjusting to challenges. Resilience in this study was categorized into five key domains. Emotional regulation gives children ability to manage and control emotions, especially during stressful or challenging situations. Adaptability empowers them with capacity to adjust to changing circumstances and bounce back from adversity or setbacks. Self-efficacy gives children confidence to belief in their ability to succeed and motivate them to fulfillment. Problem solving skills which enable them to tackle problems effectively set realistic goals, act independently and make wise decisions.

A review of empirical studies reveals a broad focus on resilience among adolescents and youths across different socio-cultural contexts. Afolabi and Olayemi (2023) explored the relationship between socioeconomic status, resilience, and academic performance among secondary school students in Nigeria, indicating how external conditions influence psychological endurance and scholastic outcomes. Similar works by Chung (2016), Kim and Lee (2020), and Gonzalez et al. (2021) highlighted the role of family and school environments in fostering resilience. Studies like those by Bahram et al. (2014), Mallick and Kaur (2016), and Martin and Marsh (2009) linked resilience to academic motivation, achievement goals, and educational aspirations, especially in secondary and tertiary education settings. Other scholars such as Garcia-Isquierdo (2015) and Edwin (2012) examined the mediating effect of resilience on academic burnout among nursing and medical students. Furthermore, psychological resilience has also been analyzed in terms of gender (Erik, 2008), creativity (Elvira & Sagone, 2014), and socio-emotional learning (Gonzalez et al., 2021).

Despite the extensive literature on adolescent and youth resilience, there is a notable scarcity of studies focusing specifically on pupils in primary education, particularly within the Nigerian context. Most research has centered on older students in secondary schools and universities, overlooking the foundational developmental stages of resilience in younger learners. Moreover, there is a dearth of empirical assessments of resilience in Osun State. The present study, filled this critical gap by focusing on the resilience levels of primary school pupils, a demographic often overshadowed in resilience research. By assessing resilience at an earlier developmental stage and within a specific Nigerian State, the study aims to provide data that can inform targeted counseling strategies and early interventions.

Research shows that resilience is not a fixed trait but a dynamic process influenced by personal attributes, family background, school environment, and community support. Understanding how different factors affect children's capacity to bounce back from difficulties is essential. As a result, moderating variables of gender and parental education were studied along pupils' resilience in this study. Being a male or female pupil could determine the extent to which one is able to be resilient. For instance, studies have indicated that there is higher resilience among the males than their female counterparts (Askari, 2010; Edwin, 2012; Lees, 2016). In a study conducted by Mallick and Kaur (2016) on academic resilience among senior secondary school students, the result revealed a significant gender difference in academic resilience of the students in favour of male students. On the opposite, Mwangi, Muriithilreri, Mwaniki and Wambugu (2018) found a significant difference in resilience and achievement for pupils in favour of girls. Bala (2019) found that female students are more resilient in their academics than male students. Susan (2015) investigated resiliency in school youth undergoing the transition to high school. Using the Child and Youth Resilience Measures, gender and cultural differences in resiliency were examined in senior level elementary school students. Gender differences were not found in global and community resilience scores. Cultural differences could not be investigated in this study because of low statistical power. High school concerns revealed three themes: a) academic concerns; b) social concerns; c) violence concerns

Also, Uche (2010) observed that parental educational background has also been identified to have greatly determined resilience of children. He also pointed out that parents with high educational background tend to gear their children towards studying courses that they are talented in, observing them to make sure that they do their assignment, stick to their time table by reading always which will help their children to perform better academically. When parents are interested in their children's education, the children tend to be more resilient academically. On the contrary, some literatures have indicated that parents' education level does not automatically hinder children from achieving (Amato & Fowler, 2002). In fact, the single parents or low level of parents' education had a higher rate of parental monitoring which yielded positive outcomes in adolescent functioning. Parental education or single parents do not automatically represent risk factors, but can be great role models of resiliency to encourage their children. In order to confirm further how these variables can influence pupils' resilience level, the researchers adopted gender and parental education as moderating variables. Particularly, to the best of researchers' knowledge, there is no study that has combined these variables in Osun State. This study, therefore was conducted to fill the existing gap created by other researchers in extant literature.

The theory that is relevant to this study is Selye's stress theory (Selye, 1950). This theory is based on the premise that stress is present in an individual including children throughout the entire period of exposure to a nonspecific demand. When children are exposed to a stressor, they are at first taken off guard, then attempt to maintain homeostasis by resisting the change, and eventually fall victim to exhaustion in countering the stressor. Stress is seen as any type of change that causes physical, emotional, or psychological strain (Nageishi, 2015). Selye's view in relation to this study stipulates that the best way to manage stress among children involves changing situation and feelings which can be realized by been resilient. If a child does not possess the required resilience, such child begins to feel inferior and doubt his ability in solving problem. The danger during this period is the potential for developing a sense of inadequacy and children thinking is dominated with incompetency, fear and host of others. The assumption of stress theory in relation to this study is that to enable the child attain some level of control over stress, they need to learn and develop new skills to respond to situations, time of storm, distress and threatening condition which can eventually lead them into a successful life.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, the need to assess and understand resilience among pupils has gained growing attention, especially within the field of counselling psychology. This is because early identification of low resilience levels can inform timely psychological support and intervention strategies. In the Nigerian context, especially in Osun State, factors such as economic instability, parental education levels, and social challenges may impact pupils' capacity to remain resilient. Despite these realities, there remains limited empirical data that explores the resilience levels of pupils within this specific socio-cultural environment. Also, many of the previous studies' on resilience used adolescents, secondary, nursing school and university students as samples; and could hardly find studies that used primary school pupils as respondents. Majority of these

studies were also conducted outside Nigeria and could not find evidence that such was carried out in Nigeria, particularly in Osun State. Also, most literature concerning children's resilience has focused on review of resilience scale, building resilience in people, factors and process contributing to resilience (Garmezy, 1991; Antonovsky, 2006; Mckenna & Dominey, 2014; Jensen, 2018). The available studies investigated variables like children's behaviour, mental health, well-being, academic burn out, attitude, and creative personality along with resilience but there is very scanty on children's (Edwin, 2012; Elvira & Sagone, 2014, Kleynhans, 2014; Lees, 2016; Jensen, 2018). Literature also showed that some studies conducted outside Nigeria which looked into resilience used moderating variables like parental socio-economic status, parenting style, school environmental factors (Bala, 2019; Mwangi, Muriithilreri, Mwaniki & Wambugu, 2018; Unachukwu, Anierobi, Nwosu & Okeke, 2020). Still, there is scanty research on resilience with variables like gender and parental education of the pupils which are of interest in this research. Therefore, this present study investigated pupils' resilience Osun State, Nigeria while the moderating variables of gender, and parental education were also examined alongside.

Methodology

Descriptive Survey of correlational study was adopted for this study. The target population of the study comprised pupils from all public primary school pupils in Osun Central Senatorial District. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two primary schools from each Local Government Area, making a total of 20 schools altogether that were involved in the study. In all, a total of 487 basic pupils were involved in the study. 221 of the respondents representing 45.4% were male while 266 of the respondents were female representing 54.6%. The age of the participants ranges between 10-13 years.

Pupils' Resilience Rating Scale (PRRS) was the instrument developed by the researchers and used for data collection in the study. PRRS was divided into two Sections. Section A contained demographic data asking about pupils' gender, and parental education. Section B of PRRS contained 20 items measuring the resilience of pupils. The items were structured along four-point Likert scale of Very Often (4), Often (3), Rarely (2), Never (1). The 20- items PRRS were rated on 4-point Likert scale. To establish the content validity of Pupils Resilience Rating Scale (PRRS), copies of the rating scale were given to experts in childhood education, psychology and evaluation. Their observations were used to make corrections. To establish the reliability of Pupils' Resilience Rating Scale (PRRS), twenty (20) PRRS were administered two times to the pupils in a school which was not part of the study sample. The two administrations were done at the interval of two weeks. Thereafter, data from the two administrations were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Co-efficient (PPMC), this yielded reliability coefficient of 0.74. This value was adjudged high and therefore, the instrument was considered reliable and appropriate for this study.

Data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The formulated research hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of independent

samples t-test, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The hypotheses were all tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

What is the level of pupils' resilience in Osun State?

Table 1: Table showing the level of pupils' resilience in primary schools in Osun State

Category	Item Description	Mean	SD
Emotional Regulation		**2.70**	
1	I am able to adjust emotionally when things change	3.00	0.92
2	I can manage stressful situations effectively	2.59	1.04
3	I can stay calm under pressure	2.72	1.04
4	I can handle unpleasant emotions like sadness or anger	2.64	1.05
5	I do not feel discouraged when things are not going well	2.53	1.24
Interpersonal skills		**2.74**	
6	I show empathy and understand how others feel	2.64	1.17
7	I can relate well with my classmates and teachers	2.84	1.12
8	I feel appreciated and accepted by others	2.95	1.08
9	I appropriately seek help when I need it	2.75	0.97
10	I can see the humorous side of problems	2.50	1.21
Self-Efficacy		**2.72**	
11	I believe I can handle whatever comes my way	2.38	1.26
12	I believe I am a strong and capable person	2.84	1.12
13	I am aware of both my weaknesses and strengths	2.90	1.14
14	I believe past success can help me succeed again	2.73	0.89
15	I am confident in my ability to handle new challenges	2.73	0.8
Problem Solving and Goal Setting		**2.88**	
16	I believe I can handle whatever comes my way	2.38	1.26
17	I believe I am a strong and capable person	2.84	1.12
18	I am aware of both my weaknesses and strengths	2.90	1.14
19	I believe past success can help me succeed again	2.73	0.89
20	I am confident in my ability to handle new challenges	2.73	0.8

Adaptability		**2.75**	
21	I adjust easily to new situations	3.00	0.92
22	I recover quickly after hard times	2.68	1.10
23	I bounce back quickly from setbacks	2.76	1.07
24	Coping with stress makes me stronger	2.59	1.04
25	I stay positive and persistent during difficult times	2.71	0.8
Overall weighted mean		**2.78**	

Rule: Low: 1.00-1.99 **Moderate: 2.00-2.99** **High: 3.00-4.00**

Table 1 presents an analysis of the level of resilience among primary school pupils in Osun State, categorized into five key domains: Emotional Regulation, Interpersonal Skills, Self-Efficacy, Problem Solving and Goal Setting, and Adaptability. Each category comprises five items rated on a 4-point Likert scale, with a scoring rule that defines levels of resilience as follows: Low (1.00–1.99), Moderate (2.00–2.99), and High (3.00–4.00). The overall weighted mean score of 2.76 indicates that the pupils generally demonstrate a moderate level of resilience. Problem Solving and Goal Setting recorded the highest mean score (2.88), suggesting that pupils are relatively strong in setting realistic goals, acting independently, making decisions, and overcoming challenges, adaptability also scored fairly well (2.75), implying that pupils can bounce back from setbacks and adjust to change, interpersonal skills and self-efficacy recorded mean scores of 2.74 and 2.72 respectively, showing moderate development in relating with others and maintaining belief in their capabilities. Emotional Regulation had the lowest mean score (2.70), though still within the moderate range, pointing to a need for further support in managing stress, discouragement, and emotional adjustment.

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the resilience of pupils in primary schools on the basis of gender

Table 2: Difference in the Resilience of Pupils in Primary Schools Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Male	221	55.49	7.91				
Female	266	55.70	7.88	-0.222	485	0.824	Not Significant

Table 2 shows the difference in the resilience of pupils in primary schools on the basis of gender. There was no significant difference in the resilience of pupils in primary schools on the basis of gender ($t = -0.222$; $df = 485$; $p > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (0.824) is greater than 0.05. This implies that gender had no significant influence on the pupils' resilience.

Research Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the resilience of primary school pupils in Osun State on the basis of parental education.

Table 3: Table showing difference in the resilience of primary school pupils in Osun State on the basis of parental education

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	341.498	3	113.833	1.713	.163
Within Groups	32093.209	483	66.446		
Total	32434.706	486			

Table 3 shows the difference in the resilience of primary school pupils in Osun State on the basis of parental education. The analysis showed that there was no statistically significant difference in pupils' resilience across different levels of parental education: $F(3, 483) = 1.713$, $p = 0.163$. The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05. This implies that parental education had no significant influence on the resilience of primary school pupils in Osun State.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the assessment of pupils' level of resilience in Osun State Nigeria. One of the findings revealed that the level of pupils' resilience was moderate. This study shows that the level of pupils' resilience in primary schools in Osun State was moderate with the weighted mean of 2.76. This finding is in line with Salleh et al (2015) who found that the level of resilience among international students in public higher education institution in Malaysia was moderate. The finding is not in consonance with Kumar and Dixit (2014) who reported low resilience level among pupils from India. So also, it contradicts McLafferty, Mallet and McCauley (2012) and Cassidy (2015) who reported low level of resilience.

The findings revealed no statistically significant difference in resilience based on gender, suggesting that both male and female pupils displayed relatively similar levels of resilience. This finding is in agreement with that of Susan (2015) who found out that there was no significant difference in the resilience of male and female students. He concluded that gender differences were not found in global and community resilience scores. This result also corroborates Mwangi, Muriithilreri, Mwaniki and Wambugu (2018) who reported significant difference in resilience and achievement for pupils in favour of girls and Bala (2019) who found that female students are more resilient in their academics than male students.

However, this finding stands in contrast to several existing studies which suggest that gender may influence resilience levels and coping mechanisms in response to adversity. For example, Virginie (2016), Askari (2010), Edwin (2012), and Lees (2016) documented cases where male pupils were found to be more resilient than their female counterparts. Mallick and Kaur (2016)'s study on academic resilience among senior secondary school students also revealed a significant gender difference in academic resilience of the students in favour of male students. Similarly, Mahati and Sundar

(2020) found significant differences in resilience between male and female undergraduate students, with females showing higher resilience scores. Cecilia and Anthony (2017) and Bala (2019) also found that female students demonstrated higher academic resilience than males.

Another finding revealed that there was no significant difference in the resilience of primary school pupils in Osun Central on the basis of parental education. This finding is in agreement with that of McFarland et al (2011) who found that parental education does not affect achievement score. The study shows that there was no significant difference in the resilience of pupils on the basis of parental education. The ANOVA results revealed no significant difference in resilience levels based on the educational background of parents. This finding suggests that, within the context of primary school pupils in Osun State, the educational attainment of parents may not directly influence the resilience disposition of their children. However, this outcome contrasts with some empirical findings. For instance, Hannu (2013) highlighted that parents' perceptions of their children's resilience were more pronounced among those with higher academic qualifications. Englund et al. (2004) and Chung (2016) also emphasized the indirect influence of parental behaviours and involvement—often shaped by educational background—on children's resilience and academic outcomes.

These conflicting findings underscore the complexity of resilience as a multidimensional construct. While factors such as gender and parental education have been found to influence resilience in some contexts, the current findings suggest that resilience among primary school pupils in Osun State may be shaped more by situational or school-based factors than by gender or parental education alone. This emphasizes the need for further investigation into other variables such as family dynamics, teacher support, peer relationships, and community structures that may foster or hinder resilience in young learners.

Conclusion

This study investigated the assessment of pupils' level of resilience in Osun State. The results of the study, revealed that there was no significant difference in the resilience of pupils on the basis of gender and that of parental education. In conclusion, resilience appeared to be correlated to pupils' academic achievement as revealed in this study.

Implication for Counselling

The findings of this study on resilience assessments hold far-reaching implications for counseling practice in schools and other child-centered environments. The results will allow early identification of pupils with low resilience, and appropriate intervention will be provided. With evidence-based data, there will be a basis for the integration of instructions on life skills into the curriculum, and there can be a shift from using generalized counselling strategies to targeted intervention that will foster coping skills, self-efficacy, problem-solving skills, and social competencies among children. Additionally, the findings will inspire collaboration between counselors, schools, and parents to create nurturing and thriving environments for the pupils and can encourage funding for psychosocial support services in schools. On the whole, these

interventions would improve students' capacity to handle difficulties, encourage academic achievement, and support the entire development of children, and continuous evaluation makes it possible for counselors to effectively monitor and assess the results of their services. The data also provide a strong basis for advocating for improved mental health regulations and gender-sensitive approaches and as well influence policy and development programmes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school counsellors should assist to develop resilience in pupils. This can be done through regular talks, and life skills orientation. Counsel them toward how they can acquire coping skills to face challenges and unfriendly situations.
2. Parents should provide an accommodating and enabling environment for children to develop their resilience skills. Parents should be more supportive, give them assurance of their love, role model resilience behaviours for their children to emulate.
3. Curriculum developers can also consider including little of topics on life challenges and resilience in basic curriculum to empower children to cope with life challenges that can have influence on their academic achievements.

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