

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

The comparison of psychological hardiness and resilience against educational stressors among veterans and non-veterans students

Jafar Bahadorikhosroshahi^{*1} , Ramin Habibi-Kaleybar²

1. *Ph.D. Student of Educational Psychology, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Faculty of Education & Psychology, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran*
2. *Ph.D. of Educational Psychology, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Faculty of Education & Psychology, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran*

**Corresponding Author:*

Department of Education, Faculty of Education & Psychology, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran. Tel: (+98) 9141016425 Email: Jafar.b2010@yahoo.com

Date Received: May, 2017

Date Accepted: August, 2017

Online Publication: December 28, 2017

Background and Aim: Martyrs and veterans students have unique status due to their special life condition comparing with non-veteran students. The aim of this study is to compare the psychological hardiness and resilience against educational stressors in veterans and normal students.

Materials and Methods: Causal-comparative research method was utilized for this study. Sample population included all veterans and non-veterans high school students of Ilkhechi (Tabriz) in the academic year of 2016 and 2017. Sample of 80 students (40 veterans and 40 normal students) were randomly selected using Cochran formula. Data collection tools included Kobasa Hardiness Scale and Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale. For data analysis, MANOVA were performed, using SPSS version 19. The significance level was considered to be 0.05.

Results: Results showed that there are significant differences in the psychological hardiness and resilience variables between veteran and non-veteran students ($P < 0.001$). Based on the results, veteran students are less than average in psychological hardiness and resilience variables.

Conclusion: Our results, consistent with previous findings, indicate that students with high levels of psychological hardiness and resilience are able to maintain their psychological health in stressful and tough situations and are more prone psychological adaptation.

Keywords: Psychological hardiness and resilience, Veteran students

Introduction

Lack of responsible organs including parents toward children leads many problems in the field of education and training and creates a variety of behavioral, adaptability, and personality problems in childhood and adolescence. In justification of this harms, it can be concluded that the presence of the father in the family will affect the sense of security in children directly and it will promote self-concept, self-esteem and various form of positive psychological and emotional exchange. Relying on authoritative presence of father in family, will enable children to tolerate the hardships and utilize the emotional and psychological support of their fathers for problem solving [1].

On the other hand, some personality theorists have argued that absence of father in the family to may lead to the formation of vulnerable personalities among families [2]. According to their perspective's, people in the face of same stressors may respond differently. In this regard, some people may easily give up against stressful situations, while others may be resistant against stressors [3]. In this regard, resistant individuals due to their strong personality characteristics are able to resist against stressors. High commitment, internal control, and psychological health are the most important characteristic of these individuals. In another word, resistant people have high commitment to their responsibilities and duties. Therefore, they do not shrink their responsibilities and do their best to achieve their goals [4].

Birhof have emphasized that in the systems of family, considering the position of fathers, we can expect that the regulatory and monitoring functions of the fathers in family have special importance. Since fathers are great sources of authority and decision making processes that will provide the conditions for development of commitment and responsibility in the children. Hence, they have concluded that due to absence of the father in the family, children will be more vulnerable and the foundation of resistance and hardiness against stressors of life will be destructed [5].

Jon & Douglas [6] have proposed that controversial and challenging topics and phenomena out of family are so wide that without confrontation with it, the possibility of realizing the challenging characteristics and the

development psychological hardiness characteristic in children will be limited. In terms of gender roles, fathers are mostly faced with the challenges of the family, so the presence of the father in the family can provide the conditions for children to face with challenging situations, leading to increased challenge of children when facing with stressors. On the other hand, absence of fathers among children may have negative effects on forming psychological characteristics [7].

On the other hand, one of the most important human abilities causing effective adaptations to risk factors in children is resilience. Resilience is a factor that causes flexibility and effectively coping with stressful situations. Resilience is the process of successful adaptation and change despite the risks and miserable feelings. Based on this explanation, Richardson comparative study has shown that children of single parents in the same condition compared to normal children are more resistant to stress and in solving interpersonal problems they show high competence and they have high resistance [8]. Study conducted by Hallbreg has shown that children who are victims of war are vulnerable against stressors and their ability to cope with stressors declines significantly and they give up easily against challenges they face in life. On the other hand, current studies have found conflicting results regarding the psychological and educational state of children of martyrs [9]. In this regard, we can refer to the study conducted by Davison [10] and Donaldson [1] who proposed that absence of the father in the family could cause serious harms to children. However, the study conducted by Hamilton [11] and Rabertson [12] have shown that the absence of father could lead into positive psychological consequences in children. Accordingly, resolving these conflicting results requires new research to clarify the psychological states of children of martyrs in educational and coping situations. On the other hand, findings of this study can provide reliable information for organizations and institutions responsible for children of martyrs (Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs) to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of their services and make appropriate decision by modifying the current procedures. Thus, research findings can be applied for this organization. The objective of this study is to compare the psychological hardiness and resilience against

educational stressors in veterans and normal students.

Materials and Methods

The research method was causal-comparative and statistical population included all veterans and normal high school students in Ilkhechi (Tabriz) between the academic years of 2016 and 2017. Sample of 80 students (40 veterans and 40 normal students) were randomly selected using Cochran formula. The statistical sample veterans and normal groups of in terms of age, course and grade were matched.

The data collection tools included a Kobasa Hardiness Scale and Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale.

Kobasa's and et al. [13] third generation of hardiness questionnaire contains 50 questions, including 17 questions about challenge, 16 questions about commitment and 17 questions about control that have been formed based on the Likert scale (4 options) which had an amplitude range from zero (incorrect) to 3 (correct). The scores of 39 acts of the test are scored reversely and to each three subscales scores are presented separately and the non-weighted mean of these three subscales are

accounted for the total score of the hardiness. Kobasa's hardiness test has been translated by Ghorbani [14] and an acceptable content has been reported to it. Hardiness constituents as control, commitment and challenge have a reliability coefficient of 7%, 78%, 72% respectively and the reliability for total hardiness was 15% [15].

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale: The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003) is a 25-item scale that measures the ability to cope with adversity. Respondent's rate items are on a scale from 0 (not true at all) to 4 (true nearly all the time). A preliminary study of the psychometric properties of the CD-RISC in general population and patient samples supported its internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and convergent and divergent validity [16].

For data analysis, MANOVA were performed, using SPSS version 19. The significance level was considered to be 0.05.

Results

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of psychological hardiness and resilience in two veterans and normal groups.

Table1: Means and standard deviation (SD) of psychological hardiness and resilience in the veterans and normal groups

Variables	Veterans group		Normal group	
	M	SD	M	SD
Challenge	53.97	5.99	56.57	4.56
Commitment	55.27	5.80	57.65	3.35
Control	56.45	5.09	58.52	3.22
Hardiness	165.70	9.45	172.75	6.31
Resilience	57.12	4.88	60.45	5.48

Before using parametric tests, Manova was implemented; in accordance with Table 2 Levene tests were used as well. According to Levene test non-significant for all variables, the condition of equality between group variances was not met.

Table 3 Wilks Lambda results showed that the studied groups at posttest at least one of the dependent variables have significant

differences (Wilks' Lambda = 0.002 > P, 0.798 = F, 4.737).

Also, according to the Chi Eta, it was found that the difference between the two groups was significant with respect to the dependent variables. The difference in two groups and the Wilks Lambda test is 20% (Partial Eta Squared = 0.202), i.e. 20% of the variance of the difference between the two groups. The effect is dependent variables.

Table 2: Levine's test of equality of error variances

Variables	F	df ₁	df ₂	Sig
Challenge	3.594	1	78	0.062
Commitment	2.701	1	78	0.104
Control	3.635	1	78	0.060
Hardiness	4.767	1	78	0.050
Resilience	0.481	1	78	0.490

Table 3: Result of Manova for the groups in all the variables

Variables	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig
Pillais Trace	0.202	4.737	4.000	75.000	0.002
Wilks Lambda	0.798	4.737	4.000	75.000	0.002
Hotellings Trace	0.253	4.737	4.000	75.000	0.002
Roy's Largest Root	0.253	4.737	4.000	75.000	0.002

As Table 4 shows the results are in terms of the mean scores of challenge ($F = 4.76$), commitment ($F=5.02$), control ($F=4.73$) and resilience ($F=8.18$) between groups have a significant difference ($P < 0.05$).

Table 4: Results of Manova analysis of mean scores of psychological hardiness and resilience in veterans and normal group

Dependent Variable		SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Group	Challenge	135.20	1	135.20	4.76	0.03
	Commitment	112.81	1	112.81	5.02	0.02
	Control	86.11	1	86.11	4.73	0.03
	Resilience	221.11	1	221.11	8.18	0.005

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to compare the psychological hardiness and resilience against educational stressors in veterans and normal students. The findings showed that hardiness and its components differ significantly in the veterans and normal students. It was found that students of martyr families have lower mean psychological hardiness and resilience compared to control group. This finding is consistent with results of Goldnberg & Goldnberg [17], Birhof [5] and Cobasa [3]. In his view, people in the face of same stressors may show different answers. In this regard, some people give up easily against these resources, while others may be resistant against stressors [3]. In this regard, resistant individuals due to having some important characteristics are able to resist against stressors that high commitment, internal control, and psychological health are the most important

characteristic of these individuals in this regard, so that resistant people have high commitment to their responsibilities and duties. Therefore, they do not shrink their responsibilities and make their best to achieve the goals [4]. Psychological hardiness directs the person to use coping strategies leading to solving the problem. Coping with life events, instead of using regressive coping strategies, they are coping with them directly. This characteristic creates an attitude affecting the way of coping with various life issues. People who have high hardiness understand live events well and consider them with diversity. In contrast, people who have low hardiness feel disability, alienation, and are threaded to events and have less control on them [18].

Students whose family interacts and communicates with their children frequently

and freely parents have complete freedom in expressing their thoughts and feelings, in other words, in families where parents have monitoring and supervisory role with their children use internal control source and high commitment coping with stressful life situations. On the other hand, the lack of communication between parent and father in the family makes the children show emotional behavior coping with the stresses and pressures of life and they discharge their emotions by crying, yelling, and similar behaviors, leading to reduced psychological hardiness [19]. Birhof stresses that in the systems of family, considering the position of fathers, we can expect that the regulatory and monitoring functions of the fathers in family have special importance, because the fathers as a source of authority and making decision provide the conditions for development of commitment and responsibility in the children. Hence, he concluded that due to absence of the father in the family, children will be vulnerable and the foundation of resistance and hardiness against stressors of life will be destructed [5]. In this regard, the study conducted by Donaldson [1] shows that psychological hardiness in children without a parent is less than that in children without a mother. On the other hand, psychological hardiness in children living with their fathers is higher compared with children living with their mothers. In addition, Samadian sarbangoli study showed that children living with their mothers after divorce are greatly vulnerable in terms of psychological hardiness and they tend to avoid challenging situations and their attributive styles tend toward externalization, and their responsibilities declines. Hence, the lack of a father in the family leaves adverse effects on psychological hardiness of children [20].

Other result showed that there is a significant difference between normal and control students. In other words, students of martyr families have lower resilience compared to normal students. This finding is consistent with studies of Masten [21] and Fitzpatrick [22]. In explaining these findings, it can be said that the family can create solutions that increase protective factors and resilience. By providing an environment that is facilitating enough, people will gain the ability for constructive change and grow of at least some of the characteristics of resilience in their lives.

Attachment and receiving support at least from one adult, especially father, is considered a main protection factor. Providing the opportunity for meaningful participation, such as decision making, giving valuable responsibilities, and using talents of young people will increase the resilience. However, in the absence of the father causes children do not gain these characteristics from father and its resilience in adulthood decreases. Additionally, it can be said that the combination of factors causes the formation of resilience that one of the factors in this type of relationship and interactions between children and parents is in childhood. Family studies nowadays focus more on this issue that how people cope with stressful factors and how family affects this ability in people [22]. Therefore, due to the absence of the father in the family, the children have lower resilience.

Resilient individuals tend to be more committed and engaged in everyday activities; they enjoy challenging activities and believe that change is natural and acceptable in life. Hence, they view problems of life and illnesses as an opportunity to increase skills and the abilities. Hardiness and resilience are interpersonal resources that can moderate the level of disability against accidents and adverse conditions and reduce the negative effects of stress and pressure. On the other hand, resilient personality in normal group through a sense of control and a sense of competence makes people feel dominant on situations and have necessary competence against life problems. As a result, such a person is actually able to control and correct his problems appropriately [23].

In this regard, Khazaeli Parsa believes that resilient people have higher sense of confidence and self-efficacy allowing them to cope with life challenges successfully. These people feel less lonely and despair and have the skill to tolerate the problems. Therefore, students who have high resilience and hardiness can overcome adverse effects maintain their mental health. In General, it could be stated that the resilience and hardiness by using more adaptive strategies such as problem-oriented strategies and increasing understanding their abilities in facing with stressors increase mental health of students [24].

This study had some limitations. This study has been done on students of high school Ilkhechi (Tabriz) to generalize the findings to other

students, and other cities should be handled with care. Also, according to the tools that were used in the study, were self-report instruments, which could affect the results and pose as a constraint. It is recommended that families, especially spouses of veterans of sensitive and influence more sons than the absence of the father and the remarriage aware of training in order to be with their sons in a way that less feel his absence. Therefore, resilience as a

mediating mechanism leads to positive adaptation, so this psychological characteristic especially in difficult and stressful conditions and in the absence of father helps people cope with hardships better and keep their mental health.

Conflict of interests

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

1. Donaldson B. War and its potentive effects. *J Am Psychol.* 2014; 12(4): 391-402.
2. Ingram RE, Price JM. The role of vulnerability in understanding psychopathology. In R. E. Ingram, & J. M. Price (Eds.), *Vulnerability to psychopathology: risk across the lifespan* (pp. 3-19). New York: The Guilford Press; 2001.
3. Cobasa S. *Hardiness person and stress*. New York: Mc Grows Hill press; 1995.
4. Yarali Kh. Simple and multiple relationships of psychological hardiness and social support with female teachers' mental and physical health in Shushtar, a Master's thesis in General Psychology, Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz; 2010. [In Persian]
5. Birhof HW. Social behavior desirable from the viewpoint of social psychology. Translation: Rezvan Sedginezhad. Tehran: Golazin; 2015. [Persian]
6. Jon KM, Douglas TK. When Adaptations go awry: Functional and dysfunctional aspects of social Anxiety. *Soc Issues Policy Rev.* 2010; 4(1): 111– 142.
7. Hetherington EM, Cox M, Cox R. Effects of divorce on parents and children. In: M. Lamb, (Ed.), *Nontraditional families*, Laurence Erlbaum, Hillsdale NJ; 1982.
8. Richardson GE. The metatheory of resilience and resiliency. *J Clin Psychol.* 2002; 58(3): 307-321.
9. Hallberg S. Psychological effects of war. *J Mil Psychol.* 2001; 91: 119-183.
10. Davison H. *Stress and coping*. Newyork: mcerow High press; 1984.
11. Hamilton D. The war and family reflection. *J Health Psychol;* 2008; 13: 288-299.
12. Rabertson D. Psychological effects of war in family structur. *J Personal.* 2009; 33 (1): 112 -119.
13. Kobassa SC, Maddi SR, Puccetti MC. Personality and exercise as buffers in the stress-illness relationship. *J Behav Med.* 1982; 5(4): 391-404.
14. Ghorbani N. Existential structure of personality hardiness. *Journal of Psychological Research.* 1995; 3(4): 76-92. [In Persian]
15. Besharat MA. Hardiness and Coping with Stress. *Journal of Psychological Studies* 2007; 3(2): 109-129. [In Persian]
16. Conner KM, Davidson JR. Development of a new resilience scale: The Conner-Davidson Resilience scale (CD-RISC). *Depress Anxiety.* 2003; 18(2):76-82.
17. Goldnberg I, Goldnberg H. *Family Therapy*. Translation: Hamid Reza Hosin Shahi, Siamak Naghbandi, Elham Arjmand. Tehran: Nashre Ravan; 2013. [Persian]
18. Maddi SR. The effectiveness of hardiness training. *J Consult Psychol.* 1998; 13: 89 – 96.
19. Taheri R. Relationship between family communication patterns and self-concept with coping styles in Eram academic students of higher education institution. *Counseling M.A Thesis of Islamic Azad University of Marvdasht;* 2012. [Persian]
20. Samadian sarbangoli G. Compare hardiness, coping styles and resilience in student's veteran and control. *M.A Thesis of Islamic Azad University of Tabriz;* 2013. [In Persian]
21. Masten AS. Ordinary majic: Resilience processes in development. *Am Psychol.* 2001; 56: 227-238.
22. Fitzpatrick MA. The Family communication patterns theory observations on its development and application. *J Fam Comm.* 2004; 4: 167-79.
23. Earls F. The fathers not the mothers. Their importance and influence with infant and young children. *J Psychiatry.* 2014; 29: 209-220.

24. Khazaeli Parsa F. Resilience, capacity to overcome difficulties persisted stubbornly self Improvement student counseling center. Student and Cultural; 2008. [In Persian]