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THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS UNDERLYING STRESS RESILIENCE

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Abstract. Stress resilience is increasingly recognized as one of the most important psychological resources for maintaining mental well-being and effective professional functioning in rapidly changing social and occupational environments. Among the factors influencing resilience, emotional intelligence has received considerable attention because it enables individuals to recognize, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize emotions in stressful situations. This article presents a theoretical analysis of the role of emotional intelligence in the psychological mechanisms underlying stress resilience. The paper reviews contemporary psychological theories and empirical findings concerning the relationship between emotional intelligence, emotion regulation, cognitive appraisal, coping strategies, and adaptive functioning. It argues that emotional intelligence contributes to stress resilience through several interconnected mechanisms, including accurate emotional perception, effective emotional regulation, constructive cognitive evaluation, adaptive coping behaviors, and enhanced social support utilization. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more capable of interpreting stressful events objectively, maintaining emotional stability, and selecting effective coping strategies that minimize psychological distress. The article further highlights the importance of emotional intelligence development within educational and professional settings, particularly for occupations characterized by high emotional demands. Strengthening emotional intelligence may enhance resilience, improve psychological health, and increase professional effectiveness. The findings provide a theoretical foundation for future empirical research and the development of intervention programs aimed at improving stress resilience through emotional intelligence training.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, stress resilience, psychological mechanisms, emotion regulation, coping strategies, cognitive appraisal, psychological adaptation, resilience.

Introduction. The increasing complexity of modern life has significantly intensified exposure to psychological stress across educational, occupational, and social contexts. Rapid technological advancement, organizational changes, increasing workload, and continuous social transformation require individuals to demonstrate not only professional competence but also psychological resilience. Consequently, understanding the psychological factors that promote successful adaptation to stressful circumstances has become an important direction of contemporary psychological research.

Stress resilience refers to an individual's capacity to maintain psychological stability and effective functioning despite experiencing adversity, uncertainty, or prolonged stress. Rather than representing a fixed personality trait, resilience is increasingly understood as a dynamic psychological process influenced by cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social resources. Numerous studies have demonstrated that resilient individuals recover more quickly from stressful experiences, exhibit lower levels of anxiety and depression, and maintain higher levels of psychological well-being.

Among the psychological variables associated with resilience, emotional intelligence has emerged as one of the strongest predictors of adaptive functioning. Emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize emotions in oneself

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and others. These abilities facilitate emotional balance, improve interpersonal communication, enhance decision-making under pressure, and promote constructive responses to challenging situations.

Contemporary theoretical models suggest that emotional intelligence contributes to stress resilience through multiple psychological mechanisms. These include cognitive appraisal of stressful events, emotional self-regulation, problem-focused coping strategies, psychological flexibility, optimism, self-efficacy, and social competence. Individuals possessing higher emotional intelligence tend to evaluate stressful situations more objectively, experience lower emotional reactivity, recover more rapidly from adversity, and maintain adaptive behavioral responses even under conditions of prolonged stress.

Recent empirical investigations conducted across educational, healthcare, organizational, and military settings consistently demonstrate positive associations between emotional intelligence and stress resilience. Higher emotional intelligence has been linked with reduced burnout, lower psychological distress, greater life satisfaction, improved occupational performance, and enhanced mental health outcomes. These findings indicate that emotional intelligence functions not merely as an emotional competency but also as an essential psychological resource supporting resilience.[7]

Despite the growing body of literature, the specific psychological mechanisms through which emotional intelligence enhances stress resilience remain insufficiently integrated within existing theoretical frameworks. A comprehensive theoretical synthesis is therefore necessary to clarify these mechanisms and identify potential directions for future empirical research.

Accordingly, the primary objective of this article is to examine the role of emotional intelligence in the psychological mechanisms underlying stress resilience by synthesizing contemporary psychological theories and empirical evidence. The paper further discusses the practical implications of emotional intelligence development for strengthening resilience in educational and professional environments.

Literature Review and Theoretical Analysis.

Emotional intelligence has become one of the most extensively studied psychological constructs in recent decades due to its significant contribution to psychological adaptation and mental well-being. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively. Goleman (1995) further emphasized that emotional intelligence plays a critical role in personal and professional success by enhancing self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills.[3]

Stress resilience is defined as an individual's capacity to maintain psychological stability and recover successfully from stressful or adverse life events. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress explains that an individual's cognitive appraisal of stressful situations determines emotional and behavioral responses. Similarly, Connor and Davidson (2003) argued that resilience represents a dynamic psychological resource that enables individuals to adapt effectively to challenging circumstances. [3].

Previous studies consistently demonstrate a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and stress resilience. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to regulate negative emotions more effectively, employ adaptive coping strategies, and maintain greater psychological well-being under stressful conditions. Emotional intelligence contributes to resilience by facilitating emotional regulation, improving cognitive appraisal, strengthening problem-solving abilities, and promoting effective interpersonal communication. [6]

From a theoretical perspective, emotional intelligence functions as an essential psychological mechanism underlying stress resilience. The ability to recognize and regulate emotions reduces emotional reactivity and enhances adaptive responses to stress. Consequently, emotionally intelligent

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individuals are better equipped to cope with occupational stress, prevent emotional exhaustion, and sustain effective performance in demanding professional environments.

Overall, the existing literature suggests that emotional intelligence is not only associated with stress resilience but also serves as one of its fundamental psychological determinants. However, further empirical research is required to clarify the specific mechanisms through which emotional intelligence influences resilience across different occupational and cultural contexts.

Conclusion

The present theoretical analysis demonstrates that emotional intelligence constitutes one of the most significant psychological resources underlying stress resilience. The reviewed literature indicates that the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize emotions enhances an individual's capacity to adapt to stressful situations, maintain psychological well-being, and preserve effective professional functioning under conditions of uncertainty and adversity.

The findings suggest that emotional intelligence influences stress resilience through several interconnected psychological mechanisms. These mechanisms include accurate cognitive appraisal of stressful events, adaptive emotion regulation, effective coping strategies, psychological flexibility, self-efficacy, optimism, and constructive interpersonal relationships. Individuals possessing higher levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to interpret stressful experiences as manageable challenges rather than overwhelming threats. Consequently, they demonstrate greater emotional stability, recover more rapidly from adverse experiences, and employ more adaptive behavioral responses.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence facilitates the development of adaptive coping strategies by reducing impulsive emotional reactions and encouraging rational decision-making during stressful circumstances. Effective management of negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration, fear, and anger enables individuals to preserve cognitive resources necessary for problem-solving and professional performance. In addition, emotionally intelligent individuals are generally more successful in seeking and utilizing social support, which further strengthens resilience and psychological adjustment.

From an educational and organizational perspective, the findings emphasize that emotional intelligence should not be regarded solely as an individual characteristic but also as a competency that can be systematically developed through psychological training and educational interventions. Programs designed to improve emotional awareness, emotion regulation, empathy, communication skills, and stress management may substantially enhance stress resilience among professionals working in emotionally demanding environments.

These conclusions are particularly relevant for educational professionals, including preschool teachers, whose occupational responsibilities involve continuous emotional interaction with children, parents, and colleagues. High emotional demands, excessive workload, and occupational stress increase the risk of burnout and reduced psychological well-being. Therefore, strengthening emotional intelligence may serve as an effective preventive strategy for maintaining professional effectiveness, psychological health, and long-term occupational sustainability.

Although the present article is based on theoretical analysis, it provides a comprehensive conceptual framework for future empirical investigations. Subsequent studies should examine the causal relationships between emotional intelligence and stress resilience across different occupational groups and cultural contexts using longitudinal and experimental research designs. Future research may also investigate the mediating and moderating roles of variables such as psychological flexibility, emotional regulation, coping strategies, mindfulness, and social support in explaining how emotional intelligence contributes to resilience.

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Overall, emotional intelligence should be considered a fundamental psychological mechanism that enhances stress resilience by promoting adaptive emotional functioning, effective cognitive processing, constructive behavioral responses, and healthy interpersonal relationships. Integrating emotional intelligence development into educational curricula, professional training programs, and psychological interventions may represent an effective evidence-based approach for strengthening resilience, preventing occupational burnout, and improving mental health and professional performance in contemporary society.

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