

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE IN THE CONTRIBUTION OF EXTRAVERSION TRAIT TO RESILIENCE

Dewi Sri Mustikasari¹, Ziadatul Hikmiah²

dewisrim@ub.ac.id

Department of Psychology, Universitas Brawijaya^{1,2}

Abstract. Adolescents and young adults in the current era are often considered a vulnerable generation with low levels of resilience. This generation encounters various challenges in education, employment, and social interactions. Resilience is influenced by multiple factors, including extraversion and socio-emotional competence. Socio-emotional competence is regarded as a crucial element in fostering resilience. This study aims to explore the role of socio-emotional competence as a mediator in the relationship between extraversion trait and resilience. The research involved 139 participants aged 18-24 years, categorized as late adolescents to young adults in Indonesia. The findings reveal that socio-emotional competence does not mediate the relationship between extraversion trait and resilience. However, extraversion independently contributes significantly to resilience.

Keywords: socio-emotional competence, resilience, extraversion traits, big five personality, Z generation

INTRODUCTION

Resilience refers to the ability to adapt and remain steadfast in challenging situations (Bluth, Campo, Futch, and Gaylord, 2016). The process of resilience in adolescents is characterized by positive adaptation to life experiences. It can be said that adolescents turn their difficult life experiences into challenges to achieve success, combining them with a positive mindset (or eliminating negative mentalities), which allows them to become healthier individuals (Maten, 2007). Resilience has the capacity for recovery, both physically and psychologically, by mitigating the negative consequences of challenging times (Conor and Rensvold, 2003), thereby enhancing psychological well-being (Ryff and Singer, 2000). Resilient individuals are capable of leading happier lives. Previous findings suggest a positive relationship between resilience and happiness (Lü, Wang, and Ya Liu, 2014).

In daily life, everyone inevitably faces problems, stressors, or even adverse life experiences. Some of these experiences create difficult periods for individuals. Such adverse experiences demand that individuals persist and navigate through them effectively; otherwise, they may lead to additional problems, including an increased risk of developing mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Davydov, Stewart, and Chaudieu, 2010). A study indicates that resilient individuals are better equipped to maintain or restore their physical and psychological health by minimizing the negative consequences of their hardships (Conor and Davidson, 2003).

Resilience is a process that demonstrates positive adaptation to stress or traumatic experiences (Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006). Therefore, resilience is highly beneficial for mental health. The more resilient a person is, the better they are at reducing risk factors that could negatively impact their mental health (Davydov, Stewart, & Chaudieu, 2010). Several factors contribute to shaping resilience, including personal competence, trust in one's instincts and tolerance of negative emotions, a positive acceptance of change, control, and spiritual influence (Conor & Davidson, 2003). This ability is not exclusive to adults but can also occur in children. One of the benefits of resilience is its ability to reduce anxiety (Shi, Liu, Wang, & Wang, 2015). Additionally, resilience

influences positive affect and reduces negative affect, thereby fostering happiness (Lü, Wang, Liu, & Zhang, 2014). Resilience also enhances life satisfaction, enabling individuals to hope for subjective well-being in their lives (Satici, 2016).

The resilience observed in Generation Z, currently entering adolescence and early adulthood, has drawn attention due to their perceived lower resilience levels. (Harari et al., 2023) reveals that Generation Z exhibits relatively lower resilience compared to Generation X, who are now in adulthood. This conclusion is based on characteristics attributed to Generation Z, such as their openness to change but comparatively lower levels of stability and conservatism than Generation X. These traits were notably evident during the pandemic, a period requiring significant resilience to endure. However, resilience is not only necessary during pandemics but also for navigating the many societal and technological changes ahead.

Various factors influence resilience, with personality being a key determinant. Different personality types result in diverse approaches to building resilience. Traits associated with resilience include a sense of humor, responsibility in social interactions, adaptability, tolerance, self-esteem, self-discipline, self-control, planning, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills (Garcia and Mendieta, 2014).

Personality serves as a protective factor in the development of resilience, categorized into personal strength (“I am”), personal abilities (“I can”), and social support (“I have”) (Grothberg, 1995). “I am” refers to internal strengths, representing personal attributes of resilient individuals, which can be linked to personality traits (McCrae & Costa, 1986). One widely recognized personality theory is the Big Five Factors model by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa. This model encompasses extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (McCrae and Costa, 1986). Schultz & Schultz (2009) further describe these factors: (1) neuroticism: characterized by anxiety, insecurity, and emotional instability; (2) extraversion: includes sociability, talkativeness, cheerfulness, warmth, and affection.; (3) openness: signifies originality, independence, creativity, and courage; (4) agreeableness: denotes kindness, trustworthiness, and politeness; and (5) conscientiousness: reflects diligence, reliability, organization, and hard work.

Most personality studies, including those on resilience, use the Big Five Personality Model. Research consistently finds a positive correlation between extraversion and resilience (Lu, Wei et al., 2014; Sarubin et al., 2015). This suggests that individuals with high extraversion are more resilient. Traits like sociability help extroverts seek and receive support from others during difficult times, alleviating psychological burdens. Extroverts’ warmth and openness encourage others to assist them in overcoming challenges.

Resilience mediates the relationship between extraversion and happiness or positive affect (Lü et al., 2014). This implies that extraversion not only enhances resilience but also fosters positivity and happiness for those who endure challenging times. Another study comparing personality traits of students (also social workers in training) and professional social workers found that students scored higher in extraversion than professional social workers (Garcia and Mendieta, 2014). Balancing multiple social roles requires students to adapt to various challenges, often demanding high extraversion and resilience.

Generation Z adolescents and young adults are flexible and open to change but demonstrate lower resilience compared to previous generations (Harari et al., 2023). This contrasts with earlier findings suggesting that openness correlates positively with resilience. Hapsari’s research highlights the need for Generation Z to develop social and emotional competencies to adapt to changing societal conditions effectively.

Socio-emotional competence refers to the ability to understand, manage, and express social and emotional aspects of life, facilitating relationships, problem-solving, and adaptation to developmental demands (Elias et al., 1997). It enables individuals, from childhood to adulthood, to acquire knowledge and skills applicable across social contexts (Zhou and Ee, 2012). Kress and Elias

outline five socio-emotional competence aspects: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These aspects can equip Generation Z with the tools to manage themselves and become more resilient (Kress and Elias, 2006).

Adolescents and young adults in Generation Z need socio-emotional competence to enhance the relationship between extraversion and resilience. Extroverted individuals with social awareness, empathy, and self-management skills are more likely to adapt and recover from challenges. Thus, this study examines the role of socio-emotional competence as a mediator in the relationship between extraversion and resilience.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted using a quantitative method. Extraversion personality serves as the independent variable, resilience as the dependent variable, and socio-emotional competence as the mediator variable in the relationship between extraversion personality and resilience. The study involved 139 participants aged 18–24 years, who fall within the adolescent and early adulthood developmental stages, representing Generation Z.

Extraversion personality was measured using the NEO-FFI (McCrae & Costa, 2004) in its Indonesian version, which has been widely utilized in research conducted in Indonesia (Alhad & Turnip, 2018). Resilience was assessed using the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) with 25 items (Connor & Davidson, 2003). The CD-RISC comprises five factors: (1) personal competence, high standards, and tenacity; (2) trust in one's instincts, tolerance of negative affect, and strengthening effects of stress; (3) positive acceptance of change and secure relationships; (4) control; and (5) spiritual influence. The version of the CD-RISC used in this study was translated into Indonesian (Anggraheni, 2017) and demonstrated an internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.766$). Socio-emotional competence was measured using the Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ), adapted from Zhou and Ee (2012). This instrument consists of 25 items and covers five aspects: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.909.

Data collection was conducted through an online form containing the three measurement scales used in this study. Information about the online form was disseminated via social media and through university lecture classes. The hypotheses were tested using mediation analysis with JASP 0.19.1.0. version.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

1.1. Result

1.1.1 Data description

Resilience had an average score of 3.743 (on a scale of 1–5), indicating that the resilience experienced by the participants falls within the moderate category ($SD = 0.443$). Socio-emotional competence had an average score of 4.095 (on a scale of 1–6), suggesting that the participants' socio-emotional competence is in the moderate category ($SD = 0.523$). Extraversion personality had an average score of 2.691 (on a scale of 1–4), indicating that the participants' extraversion personality also falls within the moderate category ($SD = 0.566$).

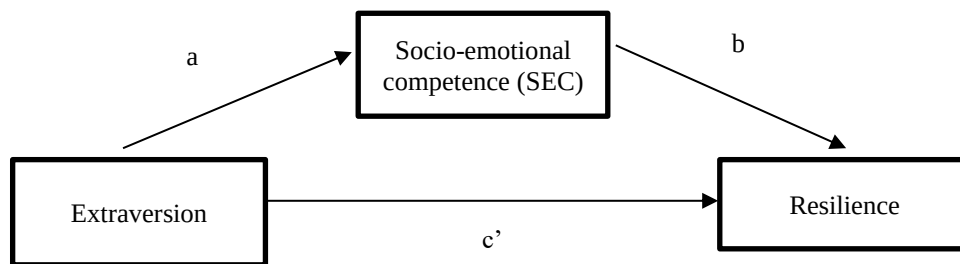


Fig. 1. Mediation model of Socio-emotional Competence in The Relationship of Extraversion and Resilience

1.1.2 Hypothesis test

The relationship between extraversion and resilience, without considering the mediator's role (total effect), demonstrated a significant association ($p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that extraversion contributes to resilience. The mediation analysis of socio-emotional competence (SEC) in the relationship between extraversion and resilience can be assessed through the following paths: direct effect ("c' path"), "a path," "b path," and indirect effect ("a*b path").

The direct effect, or "c' path," examines the relationship between extraversion and resilience within the mediation model. Results indicated a significant contribution in the "c' path," suggesting that extraversion significantly contributes to resilience in the mediation model ($p < 0.001$). The "a path" assesses the relationship between extraversion and the mediator variable, socio-emotional competence. Data analysis revealed that the significance value for this path was greater than 0.05, indicating that extraversion does not significantly contribute to socio-emotional competence. A similar result was found for the "b path," which evaluates the relationship between socio-emotional competence and resilience. This path also showed a significance value greater than 0.05, suggesting that socio-emotional competence does not significantly contribute to resilience. The "a*b path," which represents the indirect effect in the mediation model, also had a significance value greater than 0.05. This indicates that socio-emotional competence does not mediate the relationship between extraversion and resilience.

Given the significant findings for the "c' path," which shows a direct effect of extraversion on resilience, it can be concluded that the contribution of extraversion to resilience is best explained directly, without mediation by socio-emotional competence.

Table 1. Mediation Analysis of Hypothesis Test Results

Variable's relationships	Z-value	R ²
Indirrect effect: 'a*b' path (SEC as a mediation)	0.039	
Dirrect effect: c'path (Extraversion to Resilience)	7.357**	0.283
„a“ path (extraversion to SEC)	0.039	0.1096x10 ⁻⁶
„b“ path (SEC to resilience)	0.756	
Total effect:c path without mediation model (Extraversion to Resilience)	7,345**	

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$

1.2 Analysis and Discussion

Extraversion and resilience exhibit a strong direct relationship, making socio-emotional competence unnecessary as a mediator in this connection. The primary traits of extraversion include high energy in social interactions, positive energy, and active efforts to build social support (Feist et al., 2018). These characteristics serve as essential modalities in developing aspects of resilience, such as personal competence and positive acceptance of change (Connor and Davidson, 2003). Research by Oshio highlights that individuals with extraverted personalities are more adaptive to various conditions and changes, as they tend to embrace and foster social support from their surroundings through personal competence and positive acceptance of change (Oshio et al., 2018). The positive emotions of extraverted individuals help protect them and assist in managing stress, thus enhancing resilience (Sobowale et al., 2019). Additionally, the strong relational tendencies of extraverts provide them with social support to face stress and challenges (van der Aa et al., 2010). This is further supported by the positive correlation between extraversion and adaptive coping mechanisms focused on problem-solving, which aids in self-management and bolsters resilience (Carver and Connor-Smith, 2010). These various characteristics of extraversion suggest that the relationship between extraversion and resilience does not require socio-emotional competence as a mediator.

The aspects of socio-emotional competence are sufficiently represented within the dimensions of both resilience and extraversion, making socio-emotional competence redundant as a mediator. Extraverted individuals are capable of building interpersonal relationships, displaying good social sensitivity, and demonstrating empathy (Soto and John, 2017). These traits overlap significantly with the social awareness and relationship skills aspects of socio-emotional competence (Kress and Elias, 2006). Individuals with strong resilience often excel in regulating emotions, empathizing, and adapting to various interpersonal relationships (Masten, 2014). These traits overlap with the self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills dimensions of socio-emotional competence. Therefore, the relationship between extraversion and resilience sufficiently encompasses aspects of socio-emotional competence without requiring it as a mediator.

Social and cultural contexts also help explain why socio-emotional competence does not act as a mediator in this study. The collectivist culture prevalent in Indonesia provides a robust social support system. Extraverted individuals readily absorb and utilize this social support to build relationships and manage emotions, particularly when facing challenging situations (Triandis, 2018). Extended families, communities, work teams, and other social networks serve as primary resources for enhancing resilience (Chen et al., 2019). This diminishes the necessity of socio-emotional competence in boosting resilience among extraverted individuals.

Significant social changes in recent years have created unique dynamics that require good adaptation and appropriate attitudes to meet resilience needs, rendering the role of socio-emotional competence as a mediator less relevant. One notable example is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on socio-emotional competence among adolescents. Research by Martinsone reports a significant decline in SEC in several countries, attributed to the limitations of direct social interaction during the pandemic (Martinsone et al., 2022). However, in the post-pandemic era, Gen Z adolescents and young adults have readjusted to interacting with their social environments. Martinsone noted that the most significant decline in SEC during the pandemic was in self-management, largely due to the shift to remote learning (Martinsone et al., 2022). This adjustment was challenging during the pandemic but became less of an issue as in-person education resumed, allowing for stronger social support systems to aid in self-management.

Future research should further explore attitudes in the workplace and educational contexts, as well as the values and adaptive processes of Gen Z individuals, who are now in adolescence and early adulthood, to gain deeper insights into their resilience development.

CONCLUSION

Socio-emotional competence does not serve as a mediator in the relationship between extraversion and resilience. Several factors explain this finding. First, there is a strong direct relationship between extraversion and resilience. Additionally, there is an overlap of socio-emotional competence aspects already present within the connection between extraversion and resilience. The social environment, characterized by a collectivist culture, further strengthens social support, enhancing extraversion traits and increasing resilience. It is also essential to consider the changing social conditions and adaptive processes of the subjects (Gen Z) in recent years. Future research on Gen Z resilience should account for factors such as their attitudes, values, and adaptive processes.

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