

Family Resilience Factors Influencing Teenagers Adaptation Following Parental Divorce in Limpopo Province South Africa

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ABSTRACT The purpose of the study was to investigate family resilience factors that play a role in promoting teenagers ability to cope following parental divorce. Correlational and descriptive research was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between family resilience and teenagers' adaptation. Hundred and twenty participants consisting of teenagers who came from, divorced families (n=60) and their families (n=60), were selected from three schools in Capricorn district in the Limpopo Province, South Africa. Data was collected using family resilience scales and a coping scale. The data was analysed in line with ABCX-model to choose sub-scales that correlated significantly with adaptation scale of family resilience as potential resilience factors; and coping strategies using (WCS). The findings revealed that teenagers who cope use behavioural and cognitive strategies and less of avoidance strategies. Family resilience factors among the families of these teenagers were effective communication (Family Problem Solving and Communication-FPSC), family hardiness (Family Hardiness Index-FHI) and, the problem solving and behavioural strategies utilised by families in crisis situations (Family Crisis Oriented personal Evaluation Scales-F-COPES). Further research should focus on longitudinal and context-specific areas that track family and teenagers' adaptation to stressful events as well as the influence of culture and spirituality on teenagers' ways of coping.

INTRODUCTION

The transitional period of time following divorce is usually filled with dramatic changes in daily life with subsequent complexities where family members may experience extreme emotional upheaval as a result of being thrown at the deep end to try and adjust to life after divorce (Quinney and Fouts 2003). Different interpretations of divorce may increase stress levels and lower self esteem, feelings of failure, and sometimes guilt (Fisher and Alberti 2000); even reports of depression and dysphoria (Davila, 2000) are frequently noted emotions following divorce; although if it was an unhappy marriage, dissolution may bring about positive emotional experience (Wang and Amato 2000). Such experiences always hit everyone touched by divorce in the family; and the children, who often conclude that they are to blame for their parent's

divorce most often suffer in silence for a long period which may even complicate their own lives as adults in future.

Teenagers being at tender stage of development, sometimes become the hardest hit as parental separation may add more challenges to their already difficult identity development processes. The family decision to move on can bring about huge adjustment problems. Teenagers seen in clinical work by the researchers in this paper have reported to be more prone to rebellion to new arrangements post-divorce and often showed immense resistance to what most of them regarded as imposed change that comes with new order of discipline that evokes very aggressive reactions. In the case of remarriages, multiple parenting with complexities of step and or custodial fathers and mothers who have to work collaboratively with biological parents to make the family work have been reported (Gold 2010). Gold and Adeyemi (2013) alluded to the difficult adjustment stepfathers experience in that they have to work closely with an absent father whom they may never meet but whose connection is vital for their probability of successful stepfathering situation. Such situations are laden with the past grievance and pain that is bound to create couple conflicts time and again; with less support for the stepfather abili-

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ty to engage the family properly as the man in the house with subsequent unavoidable negative impact on the children. The teenagers growing in such situations will obviously become confused about the normal father role in the family and this is bound to create dysfunctional family setting and will impinge on discipline and parenting capacity of the couple and that may produce less fully grounded young adults.

Teenagers from divorced families are prone to develop behavioural, delinquent and moral order problems, and adding to their developmental crisis possibly leading to pathology (Bell 2001). Such traumatic stressors, if not attended to, can make teenagers in this situation become more prone to engaging in self-destructive behaviours such as drug abuse, school failure, unsafe sex, and violence.

To alleviate post-divorce anxiety and self-esteem issues, individuals utilize a variety of coping skills including denial, self-medication, and over-focusing in an area of life such as the workplace (Fisher & Alberti, 2000). The present study aims at identifying factors that make teenagers cope inspite of the complexities associated with adjustment following divorce of their parents. In 1999, there were 37,098 divorces officially recorded in South Africa – a rate of 83 per 100 000 of the population. Provincially, Gauteng had the highest crude rate for registered divorces, (181 per 100 000), while Limpopo had the lowest, (19 per 100 000). By 2003, the total number of divorces recorded throughout the country had dropped to 31,566, down from 37,098 in 1999 (Stats South Africa, 2002). In 2012/2013 there was 28% increase from 39 573 to 50 517 in new divorce matters in South Africa; and, during the year of review, the family courts disposed of more domestic violence matters than what had been received (Department of Justice Annual report 2012/2013).

These statistics indicate that divorce rate is increasing in South Africa and thus require close examination to assist those affected. Following the reports by Hetherington and Kelly (2002) that 75% of the children of divorce do not end up having serious psychological, social, or academic problems; but then 25% of the children from divorce families do develop such problems. Therefore the question is: which family factors contribute to the development of resilience in teenagers following parental divorce?

According to Family and Marriage Association of South Africa (FAMSA) divorce rates have

reached unprecedented high levels in South Africa, for example one in every two couples married ends up in divorce. Teenagers involved often emerge with behavioural problems. Divorce leads to changes in family composition, family roles, family relationships and economic circumstances that involve far-reaching implications and adaptations for family members and can have a significant impact on family functioning (Thompson and Rudolph 2000). Despite such situations, some teenagers seem to have the strength which allows them to overcome the negative effects of the impact of divorce. This research focuses on factors which may aid the development of resilience in the life of teenagers facing problems following parental divorce.

Family Resilience

Family resilience is defined as “the ability to withstand and rebound from adversity” (Walsh 2002: 130). Family resilience is described by the Family Resiliency Network as “the capacity of the family to cultivate strengths to positively meet the challenges of life” (Silliman 1994: 2). The term is further elucidated by Luthar et al. (2000) who stated that family resilience is the ability to make positive adaptation despite confronting adversity. It is apparent from examining the commonalities in the definitions above, that resilience does not exclude tensions and afflictions in life, but rather embraces them with the resources of competence and adaptability, resulting in a positive outcome.

Researchers have developed theories and models which assist in understanding family resilience by contributing to family stress literature and current knowledge on resilience (McCubbin and McCubbin 1996). One of these models was developed by McCubbin and McCubbin (1988) to give an explanation of why, when families are faced with the same stressor, some families prevail, while others fail. This concept was first proposed by Koos (1946) and labeled the “roller coaster mode”: aimed at providing an initial framework for tracing a family’s responses to stress.

The ABCX Model

Hill (1949) developed a similar model which focused on pre-crisis factors in families and examined the variability in families’ adaptation to

the stress which they experience. The ABCX Model takes an approach to conceptualizing family stressors and process of adjustment to crisis. It looks at the specific factors in the family and whether that directs it into crisis or not. An understanding of this model helps to trace the stressor through the processing in order to avoid a crisis.

The ABCX model (Hill 1949) is composed of the following components: A (the event) which interacts with B (the family's crisis-meeting resources) and C (The definition the family gives to the event), in order to produce X (the crisis). Adjustment to the crisis is the favourable outcome for families in crisis. This forms the final phase of Hill's ABCX Model of disorganisation.

Hill (1949) identified several factors within families that are conducive to good adjustment to crisis. These include family adaptability, family integration, affectionate relations among family members, good marital adjustment of both partners, companionable relationships between parents and children, and previous successful experience with crises (Brown-Baattjes et al. 2008).

Resilience is a complex disposition that is an integration of biological predispositions, psychological traits, and external support systems (Black and Lobo 2008). It is defined as an individual's overall ability and disposition to positively adjust in the face of a major adversity (Quinney and Fouts 2003). In relation to divorce, resilience is defined as the ability to 'bounce back' from sequelae and the process of divorce to a former state of positive adjustment yielding four common outcomes viz: succumbing, survival with impairment, recovery and thriving (experiencing growth beyond the previous level of adjustment); with the latter three being considered resilient (Quinney and Fouts 2003).

The concept of resilience has been the subject of a number of studies over the last few decades. Research by Ebersöhn (2012) on resilience among children in schools highlighted the relationships within a given environment or context as being very key to the development of resilience; the model used in the study 'RRR theory' highlights the intertwined relationship between relationships, resources and resilience; and how relationship is regarded as being the main resource in the context that would help the child become functional. Such resilience is explained as a function of the replacement of 'fight

and flight' in the event of a crisis with the concept of 'flocking together' for survival. The current study aims to identify which factors would be at the root of survival for teenagers in divorced families.

All families encounter problems or stressors at one time or another. Such stressors are seen as demands placed on the family and produces, or has the potential to produce, changes in the family system with the consequence to either weaken family functioning and relationships or, conversely, strengthen the family as the stressor is subdued with unified action and commitment (McCubbin and McCubbin 1993).

Inherent in family resilience models is a dual focus of building protective and recovery factors, alongside the reduction of ecological risks that threaten family functioning. All families get into a crisis time and again. This includes all families irrespective of whether they are high or low functioning. What is of essence is that some families emerge strong and the question is that how can we best understand what accounts for strong families? What are the family hallmarks of success enabling them to flourish with qualities that show warmth, support, and cohesion, even under immense stress, whilst others do not cope and succumb to crises? Many family scientists explain this phenomenon as a process of rising above challenges using the strength-based model of resilience; wherein positive coping factors are examined with less or no focus on deficits (Black and Lobo 2008).

Recovery factors tend to be the ones promoting the ability of the family to adapt, or rebound when the families are challenged following a crisis. Perceived severity of stressors, a "pile-up" of stressors can tax family protective and recovery factors, with the family relying on some more than others during various family cycle situations (McCubbin and McCubbin 1993).

Family resilience entails more than surviving a crisis, but also offers the potential for individual growth and even emerge more loving, stronger, and more resourceful in meeting future challenges (Walsh 1998; White et al. 2004). Some of the psychological traits noted about resilient individuals include optimism and internal locus of control (Jew et al. 1999; Kumpfer 1999; Park 1998); confidence in problem solving skills and flexibility (Carver 1998); determination (Werner 1989); and realistic self-appraisal, satisfaction

about their self-worth, and self-esteem (Hunter and Chandler 1999; Kumpfer 1999; Siebert 1996).

Researchers have focused on children of violent communities, as well as families in crises. However there is need for more conclusive findings and more thorough methodologies to be developed. In an attempt to contribute to existing literature on resilience, the present research aims to investigate the factors that play a role in promoting teenagers ability to cope following parental divorce.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the family resilience factors that play a role in promoting teenagers ability to cope following parental divorce

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

- ♦ To explore how teenagers manage to cope following parental divorce;
- ♦ To investigate which family qualities enable teenagers to function well following such divorce;
- ♦ To identify the specific resilience factors in families of teenagers who develop resilience following parental divorce;

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were proposed:

- ♦ Teenagers do cope following parental divorce.
- ♦ Teenage coping following parental divorce is influenced by certain family resilient practices.
- ♦ There is a relationship between family resilience factors and the adaptation of teenagers following parental divorce.
- ♦ Family resilience qualities that produce teenagers who develop adaptive coping strategies following parental divorce, differ according to certain demographics.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The design was correlational and exploratory in nature. The research explored factors in families which help teenagers cope following problems such as parental divorce in families.

This approach enabled the examination of differences between family qualities of coping and non-coping teenagers as they encountered crises. Existing instruments developed by McCubbin et al. (1996) and that developed by Billings and Moos (1981) were used.

Sampling

Participants were chosen from schools where English is the medium of communication within Polokwane in Limpopo Province. Three high schools were approached in Capricorn district and requested to allow for the administration of questionnaires to learners between the ages of 14 and 19 years. All but one school agreed to participate, and permission for the study was also obtained from the parents and the Limpopo Education Department. Some parents refused to consent, while others accepted. All children were also offered the opportunity to provide informed consent.

The screening for inclusion in the study was done under conditions that allowed anonymity of subjects with teachers not allowed to be present during data collection. The researchers got 100 teenagers from randomly selected institutions in the Capricorn district that were screened through the administration of a biographical questionnaire.

A sample of 60 high school learners was randomly selected from the screened group to participate in the study. This was done by listing the names of learners from the selected group on a paper and numbering them. Each learner was informed what number he/she was allocated. The final list had numbers only and the researcher pulled out (60) sixty numbers without the researcher seeing whose name he/she was picking. The same sampling procedure included an invitation of a parent for each learner participant. The parent of each sampled learner was invited to participate in the study. At the end of the sampling procedure there were two groups, one with 60 learners and the other with 60 parents who were selected to participate.

Measures

Biographical Questionnaire

The parent of each teenager completed a biographical questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to collect information on location of parent, marital status and duration of current

marriage, number of times married, family composition, employment, education, income and home language of parents. Teenagers' biographical questionnaire on the screening form included gender, age, location, who the teenager lives with, and the parent's marital status.

Instruments

The following questionnaires were used: Family Hardiness Index (FHI), Social Support Index (SSI), Relative and Friend Support (RFS), F-COPES, Family Time and Routine Index (FTRI), Family Problem Solving Communication (FPSC) and the FACI8. All these instruments had been used in various study populations in South Africa (Walters 2009).

The coping scale used is the ways of coping scale (WCS) developed by Billings and Moos (1981).

Procedure

Ethics clearance was sought from the University of Limpopo ethics committee as well as clearance for access into the schools from the Provincial Department of Education of Limpopo and the school principals for access on site. Screening of teenagers between the ages of 14-19 and all from divorced families was done. Biographical questions were asked to identify the appropriate group. The convenient sampling method was used to choose the sample that fitted the criteria for inclusion.

Consent forms were given to the participants to complete. Learners were expected to give forms to their parents to grant permission for participation in the study. After four days, the parents' consent forms were collected by the researcher. Those who agreed to participate were given the Family Resilience Scales and WCS. The parents were requested to take part in the qualitative part of the study. Children who wanted to seek help for any matter raised by the questionnaire were invited to remain behind after completing the questionnaire, so that the researcher could explain issues which were not clear to them.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed using SPSS (version 22.0) to do Pearson's *r* correlations. The Correlation

coefficients were calculated in order to identify possible relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable (Family Adaptation). Potential associations were shown in the form of descriptive tables and tables that demonstrated significance of variables on various statistical tests conducted.

FINDINGS

Demographic Information

Demographic factors of the participants are presented in this section (Table 1). Frequencies and percentages about participants' gender, age and others are presented.

Table 1: Demographic information of participants

Variable	Category	Freq	%
<i>Gender</i>			
Gender of teenagers	Male	30	50
	Female	30	50
Gender of parents	Male	20	33
	Female	40	67
<i>Age</i>			
Age of teenagers	14-16	40	67
	17-19	20	33
Age of parents	40-49	44	75
	50-59	15	25
<i>Location</i>			
	City	21	42
	Township	31	52
	Village	4	6
<i>Home Language</i>			
	Sepedi	20	33
	Tsonga	5	8
	Venda	12	20
	English	4	7
	Zulu	3	5
	Afrikaans	7	12
	Other	9	15
<i>Annual Income</i>			
	R41 000-R60 000	6	10
	R61 000-R80 000	7	12
	R81 000-R100 000	17	28
	R101 000-or more	30	50
<i>Parent's No of Times Married</i>			
	Once	24	41
	Twice	33	56
	Three or more	2	3
		59	100

Table 1 outlines the demographic details for the study. The participants included 60 teenagers and 60 parents consisting of 30 male teenagers (50%) and 30 female teenagers (50%). The parents included 40 female (67%) and 20 males (33%). Age groups included for teenagers

were 14-16 (67%) and 17-19(33%). The parent age ranged from 40-49(75%) and 50-59(25%). Most participants (n=31) (52%) came from the township; n=21(42%) came from the city and (n=4)(6%) came from the village. Most participants spoke Sepedi (n=20)(33%); followed by Venda speaking group (n=12)(20%); Afrikaans speaking (n=7)(12%) Tsonga (n=5) (8%); English(n=4) (7%) and Zulu(n=3)(5%) and other (n=9)(15%). Most participants are in the highest annual income bracket of R101 000+ (n=30)(50%); followed by those in the R81 000 –R100 000 band (n=17)(28%); with R61 000 –R80 000 band (n=7)(12%)and for the lowest band of R41 000–R60 000 band (n=6)(10%). The number of times the parents got married ranged from (n=24)(41%) for those who were married once; and (n=33)(56%) for those who were married twice and for those who were married three times (n=2)(3%).

The findings are organised into three sections, namely teenage coping following divorce, resilience factors in the families of teenagers from divorced families, and comparison of resilience factors for coping and non-coping teenagers.

Teenagers' Coping Following Divorce

The participants' level of coping was measured using Ways of Coping (WCS) which has three subscales that indicate strategies of coping viz, Cognitive, Behavioural and Avoidance. Table 2 outlines the descriptive statistics focusing on the participants' ways of coping.

In Table 2, ways of coping for the coping and non-coping categories of teenagers in divorced families indicated that fifty participants (83%) coped, whilst ten participants (17%) failed to cope with their situation. This means that more participants (83%) in the study cope with their situation following the divorce of their parents.

Indications further show that for the coping participants, there was more use of Behavioural

coping strategies (83%), followed by Cognitive strategies for coping (82%) and lastly the Avoidance method of coping (22%).

For the non-coping teenagers there was more use of the Avoidance strategy of coping (78%) followed by the Cognitive strategy (18%) and lastly the Behavioural strategy of coping (17%).

These results suggest that more teenagers cope following divorce in families. Those teenagers categorised as coping use Behavioural and Cognitive coping strategies more than the Avoidance strategies for coping. Teenagers that are categorised as non-coping use more Avoidance strategies of coping than the other two strategies of coping.

Potential Resilience Factors in the Families of Teenagers from Divorced Families

According to the ABCX model, resilient factors are those factors that correlate significantly with adaptation scales (FAC18). In finding out the potential resilience factors to make teenagers cope or not cope with the situation within divorced families, the Pearson moment correlation was applied using the ABCX model. The significant factors following the correlation between resilience and the FAC18, were for the coping teenagers, found to be F-Copes, FPSC and FHI; and for the non-coping teenagers SSI and FPSC.

Potential Resilience Factors for Coping Teenagers

a) F-COPES (Family Crises Oriented Personal Evaluation Scales)

Pearson's product moment correlation was used and the results of F-COPES and its items listed below indicated a significant relationship between the teenagers' coping and family resil-

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of coping and non-coping teenagers within divorced families and their coping strategies on the WCS (Ways of Coping Scale)

	Cognitive		Behavioural		Avoidance		WCS	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Coping	50	83	13	22	50	83	49	82
Non-coping	11	18	10	17	47	78	10	17
Total	60	100	60	100	60	100	60	100

ience for teenagers that are found to be coping. F-COPES scale has shown a positive correlation with FACI8 ($r=0.444$, $p<0.005$) in relation to teenagers found to be coping as measured by WCS. F-Copes consist of 32 items. Items which showed significant correlation within the scale were items 3, 7, 11, 14, 19, 23 and 30 listed below (See Table 3).

Item 3: 'Knowing we have the power to solve major problems.' ($r=0.362$, $p=0.022$).

Item 7: 'Knowing that we have the strength within our own family to resolve our problems.' ($r=0.496$, $p<0.001$).

Item 11: 'Facing the problems "head-on" and trying to get a solution right away.' ($r=0.383$, $P=0.015$).

Item 14: 'Attending church services.' ($r=0.324$, $p=0.041$).

Item 19: 'Accepting that difficulties occur unexpectedly.' (0.385 , $p=0.014$).

Item 23: 'Participating in church activities.' (0.395 , $p=0.012$).

Item 30: 'Having faith in God.' ($r=0.321$, $p=0.044$).

Table 3 shows that divorced families with teenagers found to be coping use problem-solving strategies, as a way to help them bounce back or cope following parental divorce. Divorced families with teenagers who are found not to be coping fail to use problem-solving strategies. This could be as a result of the teenagers' failure to cope following parental divorce.

Table 3 shows that teenagers who cope come from families marked by a presence of possible resilience factors: F-COPES and some of its items as noted above. F-COPES is a scale that identifies the family's ability to engage in problem-solving and use behavioural strategies when in a crisis situation. This scale is focused on two levels of interaction. First is the Individual role

within the Family system, which is the way in which the family manages crises internally amongst family members. Second is the Family relationship to social environment, which indicates the way the family manages problems outside family boundaries, but still have an influence on the family as a unit. The result suggests that teenagers who cope are backed by their families' potential to deal with the environment as indicated by what F-COPES stand for viz, the power to solve problems, accepting that challenges can be unpredictable.

b) FHI (Family Hardiness Index)

Pearson's product moment correlation indicated a significant relationship between FHI and FACI8. The FHI scale showed a positive correlation with FACI8 ($r=0.489$, $p<0.05$) in relation to teenagers found to be coping as measured by WCS. FHI consists of 20 items and the items that showed significant correlation included three FHI item viz. 10, 17 and 18 (See Table 4).

Item 10: 'Life seems dull and meaningless' ($r=0.336$, $p=0.037$).

Item 17: 'Being active and learning new things are encouraged.' ($r=0.354$, $p<0.05$).

Item 18: 'We work together to solve problems.' ($r=0.370$, $p<0.05$).

Table 4 shows that divorced families with teenagers found to be coping use hardiness. As a resource to mediate the effects of stress in families and in turn facilitate family adjustment and coping as a way to help them bounce back or cope following parental divorce. Divorced families with teenagers who were found not to be coping failed to use hardiness as a resource to mediate the effects of stress in families and in turn facilitate family adjustment and coping as a

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation between facI8 and /items on F-COPES and F-COPES total

Potential resilience items	Coping	
	r	p value
3. Knowing we have the power to solve major problems.	0.362	0.022*
7. Knowing that we have the strength within our own family to resolve our problems.	0.496	0.001**
11. Facing the problems "head-on" and trying to get a solution right away.	0.383	0.015**
14. Attending church services.	0.325	0.041*
19. Accepting that difficulties occur unexpectedly.	0.385	0.014**
23. Participating in church activities.	0.395	0.012**
30. Having faith in God.	0.321	0.044*
F-COPES total	0.444	0.005*

**Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) * Significant at the 0.05 level (One tailed)

way to help them bounce back or cope. This could result in failure to cope following parental divorce.

FHI as a resilience factor possessed by the families of teenagers has been used to indicate its relevance to the coping on these teenagers. Table 4 shows that teenagers who cope came from resilient families as marked by a presence of possible resilience factors and items of FHI. The FHI and its items measure how hardiness is used as a resource to mediate the effects of stress in families and in turn facilitate family adjustment and coping. The result suggests that the teenagers who cope are backed by their families' potential to deal with the environment as indicated by what FHI stands for, viz, the power of hardiness to solve problems and working together to solve problems.

c) FPSC (Family Problem Solving and Communication)

FPSC 's items listed in Table 5 indicated a significant relationship between the teenagers' coping and family resilience for teenagers found to be coping. The significant

FPSC positively correlated with FACI8 ($r=0.492$, $p<0.002$) in relation to teenagers found to be coping. FPSC consist of 10 items. Items that showed significant correlation were items 2 and 9 (See Table 5).

Item 2: 'We are respectful of each other's feelings' ($r=0.493$, $p=0.002$).

Item 7: 'We make matters more difficult by fighting and bringing up old matters.' ($r=0.346$, $p=0.033$).

Item 9: 'We work to be calm and talk things through.' ($r=0.430$, $p=0.007$).

Table 5 shows that divorced families with teenagers found to be coping use support and calmness in communication, as a way to help them bounce back. This might be helping their teenagers to cope.

FPSC as a resilience factor possessed by the families of teenagers has been used to indicate its relevance to the coping of these teenagers. Table 5 shows that teenagers who are found to be coping and those found not to be coping came from resilient families as marked by the presence of FPSC and its items as a possible resilience factor. The FPSC assesses communication patterns in families during hardships and catastrophes. The patterns of communication are incendiary and affirming. The result suggests that teenagers who cope are backed by the potential of their families to deal with the environment as indicated by what FPSC stands for, that is, the use of affirmation and incendiary communication which implies ability to solve problems, whilst demonstrating calmness and talking things through.

Table 4: Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and/ FHI Total and FHI items

Potential resilience items	Coping	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p value</i>
10. Life seems dull and meaningless.	0.336	0.037*
17. Being active and learning new things are encouraged.	0.354	0.025*
18. We work together to solve problems.	0.370	0.019*
FHI total	0.489	0.002**

**Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) *Significant at the 0.05 level (One-tailed)

Table 5: Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and/ FPSC Total and FPSC Items for coping teenagers

Potential resilience items	Coping	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p value</i>
2. We are respectful of each other's feelings.	0.493	0.002**
7. We make matters more difficult by fighting and bring up old matters.	0.346	0.033*
9. We work to be calm and talk things through.	0.430	0.007**
FPSC total	0.492	0.002*

**Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). *Significant at the 0.05 level (One -tailed).

Potential Resilience Factor for Non-coping Teenagers

a) FPSC (Family Problem Solving and Communication)

FPSC items listed in Table 6 indicated a significant relationship between teenagers' coping and family resilience for teenagers found not to be coping.

FPSC as a factor showed a positive correlation with FACI8 ($r=0.670$, $p=0.034$) in relation to teenagers found not to be coping.

Divorced families with teenagers who are found not to be coping use support and calmness in communication as a way to help them bounce back and in turn facilitate family adjustment and coping. The absence of specific significant items may explain why the teenagers fail to adapt although their families are resilient.

The result suggests that teenagers who are not coping are backed by their families' potential to deal with the environment as indicated by what FPSC stands for, namely, the use of affirming and incendiary communication to solve problems, calmness and talking things through.

Table 6: Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 AND/ FPSC total and FPSC items for non-coping teenagers

Potential resilience factors	Non coping	P-value
FPSC total	0.670	0.034**

**Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

b) SSI (Social Support Index)

The SSI items listed in Table 7 indicate a significant relationship between the teenagers' coping and family resilience for teenagers found to be coping. However, the SSI results and its items indicate an insignificant relationship between teenagers' coping and family resilience for non-coping teenagers.

The SSI scale showed a positive correlation with FACI8 ($r=0.645$, $p=0.044$) in relation to the failure to cope by teenagers. SSI consists of 17 items. Item 9 in the scale showed significant correlation (See Table 6).

Item 9: 'There are times when the family members do things that make other members unhappy.' ($r=0.638$, $p=0.047$) (see Table 7).

Table 7 shows that divorced families with teenagers found to be coping use community as a provider of emotional support (recognition and affirmation), esteem support (affection), and network support (relationships with relatives), as a way to help them bounce back. This might be what help the teenagers cope.

SSI was indicated among families of non-coping teenagers. Table 7 shows that teenagers who were unable to cope came from resilient families as marked by a presence of SSI and its items as a possible resilience factor. The SSI is used to evaluate the degree to which families are integrated into the community and view the community as a source of support, in that the community can provide emotional support such as recognition and affirmation, esteem support (affection), and network support (relationships with relatives). Divorced families with teenagers who are found not to be coping fail to use the community as a provider of emotional support, esteem support, and network support to help them bounce back or adapt. This may result in the teenagers' failure to cope following parental divorce. This absence of more specific significant SSI items may explain why although their families are resilient, teenagers in those families still fail to adapt.

DISCUSSION

The factors that emerged for teenagers that cope with parental divorce were F-COPES, FPSC and FHI. Resilience factors associated with teenagers within divorced families who fail to cope with the situation were SSI and FPSC. FPSC was

Table 7: Pearson product moment correlation between FACI8 and /SSI Total and SSI items

Potential resilience items	Non-coping	
	r	p value
9. There are times when the family members do things that make other members unhappy.	0.638	0.047*
SSI Total	0.645	0.044**

**Significant at the 0.05 (2-tailed) *Significant at the 0.05 (one -tailed)

the only family resilience factor which was present in both groups. If applied to the present study, the notion 'poverty breeds poverty' could suggest that a family that is not resilient when faced with parental divorce will produce teenagers who lack resilience. The study by Hetherington and Kelly (2002) that 75% of teenagers in divorce families show no psychological and social problems, brings a different perspective and is supported by the results of this study, in that a significantly high number of teenagers from the participating divorced families still manage to cope.

In a study by Quinney and Fouts (2003) in determining the impact of intervention following divorce on couples, it was found that the premorbid functioning with regards to resilience would contribute to their benefiting from the intervention, that is, the more resilient they were initially, the greater the divorce adjustment post-intervention. This was based on three rationales which indicated that resilient individuals have a variety of personal characteristics (for example: self-esteem, determination, optimism and spirituality) that promote self-actualizing and growth tendencies; and that they have some minimal or adequate level of adaptational skills (for example: flexibility, problem identification and reframing) that help them benefit from the discussions and specific exercises available in divorce intervention. Individuals with low levels of resiliency may have lower levels of self-awareness (for example: lower in emotional intelligence, and being their adaptability following divorce. This is in line with the findings in the present study that families need to have certain qualities to help them bounce back from crises.

Coping Strategies for Teenagers in Divorced Family

Teenagers use different ways of coping to deal with their stressful situations. The most interesting finding in this study is that teenagers do cope following parental divorce. These results substantiate the hypothesis in this study that "Teenagers do cope following parental divorce."

The results in this study indicate that teenagers use behavioural and cognitive strategies mostly for coping and avoidance strategies the least. Cognitive-behavioural approaches have been found to help people cope through emo-

tion and problem focused techniques when faced with adversity (Singer et al. 2007).

There was no significant difference between the teenagers' demographic backgrounds and their choice of coping strategy. This is an indication that the method of coping chosen is universal among teenagers and such choice does not differ among teenagers with different backgrounds.

The Behavioural coping strategy is in line with what could be expected of teenagers. Using behavioural methods could be associated with "acting out" behaviour that is typical of teenagers' way of dealing with challenges. Such choice of strategy could be used in an effort to master, tolerate and reduce the external and internal demands caused by the divorce of their parents. Teenagers are known to 'act out' when faced with problems.

More functional families would have the needed qualities to assist teenagers to develop self-sufficiency as they work through discovering who they are and acting out to deal with the challenges brought by the divorce of their parents. The Behavioural strategy for coping, if controlled by the environment in which the teenager finds him/herself, can help teenagers adapt in the long run. The problem comes with acting out that happens within a family that lacks strong qualities. The argument is that with strong qualities, teenagers that tend to "act out" can be cushioned and, thus, still manage to cope in adverse situations.

Non-coping teenagers, in this study, mostly used avoidance coping strategies in dealing with the problems of parental divorce. Such choice of a coping strategy is characterised by fear and engaging defence mechanisms of avoidance (Freud 1966; Brewin and Andrews 2000). This might have an indirect relationship to strong family qualities associated with resilience.

Influential Impact of Family Qualities on Member's Ability to Cope

Researchers and clinical practitioners have long sought to understand why it is that some individuals and families, faced with serious threats and challenges to their well-being, manage to cope well, while others faced with similar circumstances do not manage to do so (Kalil 2003). Resilient families have specific qualities that enable them to bounce back from adversity,

thus providing greater chances for their children to cope. This study was in line with Gardiner and Larocci (2012) suggestion that it is crucial to determine specific factors which facilitate families to maintain resilience when faced with adversity. Family qualities do have an influence on the way the family bounces back following crises. Relationships within the families has become a resource in that family's ways of communication, its hardiness and how the amount of cohesion among members, puts the family at an advantage to become able to bounce back to survive challenges. This is in line with Ebersöhn's (2012) proposition that Relationship-Resourced Resilience (RRR) theory is key to help families to bounce back. The theory holds that resilience occurs as a collective, and not as an individual and subjective process and that when such a quality exists, during crises, members flock together instead of the use of a panic reaction of 'fight or flight'; and this entails individuals who experience shared and persistent challenges connecting them to one another, sharing, mobilising and looking at sustained use of resources. The unique quality to be able to 'flock together' enhances members ability to cope with a characteristic that is unique to some families.

Family Communication and Coping Ability

a) Findings with Regards to Coping Teenagers

Communication is characterised by being open and honest, thus allowing for affection and collaborative problem-solving (Grochowski and Karraker 2006). Teenagers who were found to be coping came from families characterised by the ability to engage in effective communication, hardiness and problem-solving. These factors were identified through the resilient factors of F-COPES, FHI and FPSC. This means that such families use some form of hardiness (FHI), effective communication patterns (FPSC), problem-solving and behavioural strategies during crises. Effective communication entails that clear and appropriate messages are passed from one person to another which results in effective problem solving (Walsh 2010). Communication is seen as central to the adaptive functioning of a family and helps towards successful adaptation through shared meaning, gained through the family message system (Brommel et al. 2004).

Families of teenagers found to be coping in this study used the following items to be able to communicate better; First one is that they 'are respectful of each other's feelings.' Second is that they, 'work to be calm and talk things through.' These results substantiate the hypothesis that 'Teenage coping following parental divorce is influenced by certain family resilient practices.' In this case, effective communication comes out as a practice that contributes to family resilience.

The result that coping is related to effective communication is consistent with the findings in other studies that highlighted diminishing conflict between parents and timely appropriate parenting by the non-custodial parent as protective factors enhancing resilience (Kelly and Emery 2003; Eldar-Avidan et al. 2008). Among families with individuals affected by schizophrenia for example, close affirmative relationships through effective communication have been identified by Rutter et al. (2001) as part of factors that protect the child from developing maladaptive behavioural patterns.

The amount of organisation in the family is the product of communication patterns in family systems. Effective communication assists families to learn to define stressors in new ways which make them less vulnerable. Families that perceive stressors as challenges get courage from such a perception to face and deal with them. This kind of perception strengthens the family's ability to meet the demands of given stressors (Hill 1958). Effective communication also assists people to shift attention from their problems and talk about other issues, thereby reducing the pressure of the stressor.

b) Findings with Regards to Non-coping Teenagers

Contrary to the coping participants in this study, families of non-coping teenagers indicated adaptability with regards to the subscale FPSC (total) and showed no significant correlation of FPSC items with the scale of adaptability. This could mean that teenagers who were found not to be coping were unable to benefit from the communication used in the families or that the way the family communicated was inadequate; or that communication was of a nature that did not bring full family functionality as it is the case with the classification of families that in-

hibit communication of members in schizophrenic families where double bind messages are the main pattern of communication (Haley 1963; Gibney 2006). In such situations, although families are resilient, poor or inadequate communication patterns may inhibit growth in the teenagers which would have afforded them the opportunity to be strong and independent to cope with the demands of their environment.

Communication is seen as central to the adaptive functioning of families and it helps towards successful adaptation. Failure to have shared meaning, because of poor family message system could affect the way children in that family cope. Lack of effective communication also affects problem-solving skills which could impact on the development of coping strategies among teenagers exposed to such environments.

The non-coping teenagers came from families which indicated FPSC and SSI as family qualities that enhance family resilience. This suggests that the families had some communication patterns (FPSC) which they could use during crises although these may not have been strong enough to sustain the teenagers. It is clear that the greater association with communication resilient factor for this non-coping group was found in the family and this comes as a result of the use of support by significant others and not as a result of being self-reliant. Such coping strategies are bound to be controlled by the continuous availability of that support. It is interesting to note that mere presence of social support does not enhance "toughness" as protective unless it is good social relations (Yu and Zhang 2005).

Family Coherence and Coping

Some families perceive that strength from within the family can help them look inward; with the belief that solution to their problems can only come by if they work together. This is an indication of belief in high family coherence.

Family Hardiness Index (FHI) is the internal strength and durability of the family unit which makes families become more self-reliant and dependent on their family members, thus forming a very coherent family unit. Such commitment to family members strengthens resilience, and thus allowing families to adjust to hardships and work together towards confronting challenges as a united front (McCubbin and McCubbin 1996). This means that increasing family hardiness

leads to reduction in stress as identified by Plumb (2011) among parents of children with ASD.

In this study, FHI indicated a strong statistically significant positive correlation between internal strengths and the durability of the family unit and adaptation.

Families that manage to nurture a spirit of togetherness and support are able to become self-sufficient as they deal with crises. They encourage members to express their own fears and feelings and allow them to have a voice in family decision-making and problem-solving processes. This allows them to show confidence in resolving their problems and depending on each other. The results of this study are consistent with Olson's (1993) argument, which posits that balanced families can simultaneously support connections between family members and autonomy of individual family members. This simultaneity factor facilitates healthy family functioning.

Coherence enhances self-confidence and self-reliance and also serves as a means of optimism to bring significant changes in improving oneself and one's world (Silliman 1995). Families can thus be helped to gain a sense of coherence by recasting a crisis as a shared challenge that is comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful to tackle (Antonovsky and Sourani 1988). Family processes in dealing with adversity are crucial for coping and adaptation. In times of crises, one family may be disabled, whereas in similar life challenges another family may rally around the vulnerable family member.

The way a family confronts and manages a threatening or disruptive experience, determines its ability to buffer stress, effectively reorganise, and reinvest in life pursuits which will influence adaptation for all members and their relationships (McCubbin et al. 1998; McCubbin et al. 1998). The cornerstone of this discussion therefore is that it takes a certain type of family to prevail following divorce. The qualities of the families that children are born in, determines how they can bounce back following divorce. Cohesion of families seems to play a very important role in helping teenagers survive the adversity of divorce. Ebersöhn (2012) described the importance of relationship as a resource to create resilience in her 'RRR theory' in which she argues that grounded relationships make it possible for family to survive wherein 'fight and flight' reaction to crises will be replaced by 'flocking together' to form a unit of strength to bounce back.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings that families with a strong sense of coherence adapt more readily after a crisis and achieve better reorganisation after the crisis period (McCubbin and McCubbin 1993; Hawley 2000). The re-organisation and adaptation would mean that teenagers who come from families with such a strong sense of coherence are expected to cope well and move on with their lives post-divorce.

Family and the Use of Social Support

Social support has been seen to enhance the family's well-being and alleviation of stress to allow for successful family adaptation (Aguirre et al. 2002). In their study McCubbin and McCubbin (1996) described social support and economic stability, among others, as crucial parts of family resilience.

Research in the past has indicated that the use of social support especially in the case of mental illness as well as the case of family crisis following natural disaster such as floods makes individuals and families less vulnerable to crisis (Freedy and Smith 2000). Social support has a role in promoting family recovery from a crisis which has been evidenced in the case of divorce and multi-problem families (Burns and Freedman 1976; Colletta 1979; Desrochers and Hilton 2000). Social support such as community forums has a role in enhancing recovery from various forms of disaster (Walsh, 2007). The importance of social support has led to the development of programs in collaboration with community-based organizations to address challenges such as serious mental illness (Walsh 2011).

In this study, social support was not a strong family resilient factor in determining teenagers' coping in this study. This could be mainly because resilient families develop self-sufficiency which results in less reliance on social support.

The non-coping teenagers, however, seemed to come from families that still depended on social support. These results are consistent with studies that found that an increase in self-reliance was associated with a decrease in dependency on support by significant others (McCubbin and McCubbin 1996; Walsh 2003; Walters 2009). Rutter (1987) elaborated on the interactive quality of protective factors, arguing that their impact is evident only in combination with a risk factor and only when the supportive

resource is actually engaged. The mere presence or availability of a protective factor therefore is not enough.

In the case of non-coping teenagers, the opposite occurs as social support is needed at a time when an individual is still growing towards self-sufficiency. Support is important during times when an individual is still growing and needs others to depend upon. The presence of support from the community helps the family to be resilient as they depend on social support to function well. Social support has been seen to enhance family well-being and alleviation of stress to enable successful family adaptation (Aguirre et al. 2002).

CONCLUSION

The study showed qualities in FPSC, FHI and F-COPES associated with family adaptation or resilience and teenagers' coping. FPSC and SSI were family qualities which were associated with family resilience among non-coping teenagers.

The differences and similarities which were found in these two groups indicate the unique qualities that help families to adapt and remain functional during and following crises.

The similarities indicate the universality of those factors in helping families adapt and remain functional during crises. The qualities which were identified could be integrated into family and individual therapy to assist families to develop smooth functioning and a sense of well-being.

The importance of family communication in conveying support and care constitute what can be regarded as a protective factor during crises situations. Such a factor and its impact could be discussed within families and be further adopted to strengthen positive patterns in families. Strategies from these studies could be used to assist single parents and individual family members to adapt and improve their level of functioning.

The study revealed the way teenagers cope following parental divorce. These included cognitive behavioural and limited use of avoidance strategies. Teenagers who cope use more of the former than their non-coping counterparts who use more avoidance. The differences and similarities noted for coping/non-coping teenagers along different languages groups indicate the uniqueness of individuals, while on the oth-

er hand that may indicate the universality of those strategies mentioned above in assisting people to adapt in the middle of a crisis such as parental divorce. Strategies from these formulations could be used to assist teenagers from divorced parents to help them adapt and improve their level of functioning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The current study focused on a once-off family responses with a limitation to assess the impact of divorce over a long extended period. The cultural aspects and other context related variables were not sufficiently highlighted in the study to demonstrate the dynamic impact of such issues in the adaptability of families following divorce. Longitudinal and context-specific research, that tracks family adaptation to stressful events as a process that unfolds over time and that can recognise bi-directional, transactional influences among family members is indicated. There is a need for further research in this area to learn how to best foster adaptation in teenagers. Research in the field of family resilience also needs a stronger focus on the dynamic and developmental aspects of family life and would benefit from more longitudinal and experimental evaluations. Finally the influence of culture and spirituality on teenagers' ways of coping and how those factors interplay within intervention following parental divorce is also crucial and recommended as focus for future research

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