Exploring The Interplay: Sense Of Belongingness And Resilience In Single Mothers And Mothers In Nuclear Families

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of

Bachelor of Science in Psychology

By:
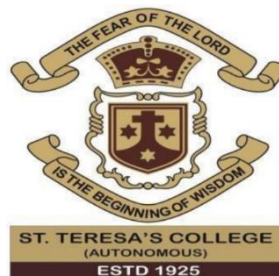
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Certificate

This is to certify that the project report entitled, "Exploring the interplay: sense of belongingness and resilience in single mothers and mothers in nuclear families", is a bonafide record submitted by Ms. Alleena Susan Reni, Reg.no. SB21PSY036, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Psychology during the academic year 2021-2024.
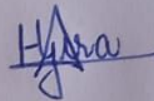
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Declaration

I, Alleena Susan Reni, hereby declare that the study presented in the dissertation entitled, "Exploring The Interplay: Sense Of Belongingness And Resilience In Single Mothers And Mothers In Nuclear Families", which is submitted to the Department of Psychology, St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam is a bonafide record of the research work carried out by me, under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Hajira K M, Assistant Professor of the Department of Psychology, St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science in Psychology and has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship, title or recognition before.

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Acknowledgement

It is not possible to prepare project report without the assistance and encouragement of other people. This one is certainly no exception. I would like to express my deep heartfelt gratitude to the Department of Psychology, St. Teresa's college, Ernakulam for providing me with the opportunity to undertake the research.

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I extend my sincere thanks to my parents, teachers and my friends who all have supported me throughout the time. I am grateful to each and every one who has given me guidance, encouragement, suggestions and constructive criticisms which has contributed immensely for this project.

Above all, I thank God Almighty for blessing me in all the stages of the project and for helping me complete the project successfully.

Thanking you

Alleena Susan Reni

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Abstract

A sense of belonging occurs when people feel like they are an integral part of a system or environment. Resilience is the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to significant challenges that threaten its function, viability, or development. The current study investigates the relationship between a sense of belonging and resilience among single mothers and mothers in nuclear families. The study consisted a sample of mothers aged 25-45 years old, with sample size of 160 participants from Ernakulam. Among them, 82 were mothers in nuclear families, while 78 were either single, divorced, separated, or widowed mothers. The data was collected using the Sense of Belonging Instrument – Psychological State and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale. Spearman Rank Correlation and Mann Whitney U- test was used for data analysis. The study did not reveal a significant correlation between sense of belonging and resilience, implying that while a sense of belonging plays a crucial role in maternal well-being, it may not necessarily lead to increased resilience. However, a significant discrepancy based on marital status was observed, as single mothers reported lower levels of belonging compared to mothers in nuclear families. There was no significant difference in resilience levels between the two groups, implying the presence of other contributing factors. This indicates that maternal resilience may be influenced by variables beyond just the sense of belonging, underscoring the intricate nature of maternal well-being.

Keywords: *Sense of belonging, Resilience,* **Single mothers, Mothers, Nuclear families**

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it's less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you've lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that's good." (Elizabeth Edwards,2010)

As societal norms evolve, the traditional family structure undergoes a transformative shift, adopting diverse configurations that challenge conventional ideas and warrant a reevaluation of factors influencing maternal resilience. Single motherhood emerges as a distinct path with unique challenges and triumphs (Karst, 2000). A single parent family consisting of a mother and her biological children is the most common type of single parent family in India. About 70% of the single parents are women. Being a single parent, can be hard and lonely. There is often no other adult with whom to share decision making, discipline and financial responsibilities. The full burden of child care, earning a living and parenting falls on one individual (Kotwal et al, 2009), while mothers in nuclear families deal with familial concerns within a more traditional framework.

Resilience is generally described in terms of wellness rather than pathology. Strengths rather than deficits are emphasized and are viewed as the resources that allow individuals to overcome adversity (Hawley, 2000). Recent literature is placing more emphasis on resilience as a dynamic process (e.g., Stainton et al., 2018), with the understanding that it involves the interplay between perceived risk and various protective, mitigating, and recovery factors. These factors enable individuals to effectively adjust to challenges and not only survive but also flourish. Personal, relational, and environmental life domains can provide resilience resources (Ilias et al., 2019).

People who live in a collectivistic culture tend to be more interdependent on each other (Kitayama et al., 2009; Selin, 2013). Their focus on relationships within their own group and the

importance of maintaining harmony can also impact how they interpret and navigate through various experiences and challenges. This, in turn, affects their coping mechanisms and utilization of available resources (Dyches et al., 2004; Lam and Zane, 2004). Central to this exploration is the concept of "sense of belonging," a psychological construct encompassing the degree to which individuals feel connected, accepted, and supported within their social and familial contexts. The significance of a robust sense of belonging is underscored by its potential impact on mental well-being, coping mechanisms, and overall resilience, especially in the face of adversities that are an inherent part of the maternal journey (Budds, 2021).

Hagerty and Williams (1999) noted that a lack of sense of belonging corresponds to loneliness or depression. A low sense of belonging was strongly linked to higher levels of depression, while a high level of conflict in relationships was connected to a low sense of belonging. Consequently, a lack of belonging or the absence of it can result in hopelessness, which in turn becomes a risk factor for depression and suicide (Hagerty & Williams, 1999). Modifying a negative self-view is essential in addressing depressive symptoms. Positive feedback in a trusted setting can help decrease the risk of depression. Conversely, lonely individuals tend to perceive higher levels of stress, more serious challenges, and fewer uplifting moments compared to non-lonely individuals (Rhodewalt & Zone,1989). Rhodewalt and Zone (1989) also highlighted a significant relationship between loneliness and resilience, showing that people can differ dramatically in both the number of events they appraise as negative and the average amount of adjustment required for each event, depending on their resilience.

While existing literature recognizes the influence of social support on maternal well-being (Budds, 2021), the specific examination of sense of belonging in relation to resilience among single mothers and those in nuclear families remains a critical gap. This study aims to fill

this void by conducting a comprehensive analysis, examining not only the correlation between sense of belonging and resilience but also identifying potential differences in this relationship based on family structure.

Resilience

The capacity of a system to adapt successfully to significant challenges that threaten its function, viability, or development (Masten, 2018). The developable capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, and failure or even positive events, progress, and increased responsibility (Luthans, 2002). A stable trajectory of healthy functioning after a highly adverse event (Bonanno, 2004). The ability to thrive in the face of adversity (Connor and Davidson,2003). An interactive concept that is concerned with the combination of serious risk experiences and a relatively positive psychological outcome despite those experiences (Rutter, 2006).

Theories of Resilience

Seligman's 3Ps Model of Resilience: Seligman proposed that the ability to deal with setbacks is largely determined by three p's: personalization, pervasiveness, and permanence these refer to three emotional reactions that individuals tend to have to adversity. Personalization is a cognitive distortion that's best described as the internalization of problems or failure.

Pervasiveness is assuming negative situations spread across different areas of one's life; for example, losing a contest and assuming that all is doom and gloom in general. Permanence is believing that bad experiences or events last forever, rather than being transient or one-off events. Permanence prevents individuals from putting effort into improving the situation, often making them feel overwhelmed and as though they can't recover. By addressing these three,

often automatic, responses, individuals can build resilience and grow, developing adaptability and learning to cope better with challenges. (Seligman, 1990)

Michael Rutter's Theory of Resilience: Rutter has established several principles for resilience theory based on his extensive research (Rutter, 2006, Rutter, 2007, Rutter, 2012, Rutter, 2013). One of the principles Rutter adheres to is that resilience is not related to individual psychological traits or superior functioning, but rather it is an ordinary adaptation given the right resources. One of the key discussion points in each of Rutter's papers is the protective factor of mental features/operations (planning, self-control, self-reflection, sense of agency, self-confidence, determination). A second protective factor emphasized by Rutter is the importance of social relationships. He indicates factors such as maternal warmth, sibling warmth and a positive atmosphere in the family as protective against emotional and behavioral disturbances. Finally, Rutter highlights the significance of "turning point experiences". Turning point experiences are moments in an adult's life where there is a "discontinuity with the past that removes disadvantageous past options and provides new options for constructive change" (Rutter, 2013). At turning points, individuals can show resilience despite having non-resilient outcomes throughout childhood and youth.

Norman Garmezy's Theory of Resilience: Dr. Norman Garmezy was one of the most respected experts in psychology and was well-known for his work in developmental psychopathology. According to Dr. Garmezy, resilience is not the quality of being brave in the face of adversity.

Models that resilience developed through Garmezy's research are compensatory model which is an additive model, where stressors lower competence and personal attributes improve adjustment. Stress factors and attributes combine together in predicting competence. For

example, a child may experience a high-conflict home environment and a warm, close relationship with a grandparent. If the child is resilient, it may be because the grandparent relationship compensates for the home environment. Second model is protective vs. vulnerability model (Immunity vs. vulnerability, this is an interactive relationship between stressors and personal attributes, whereby the association of stress with the outcome varies depending on the level of the attribute under consideration. For example, a child in high poverty may have a cohesive home environment which interacts with the poverty to decrease risk. The third model involves challenge model which is a curvilinear relationship, where stressors enhance adjustment but not at very low or very high levels. Very high levels of stress lower competence. The basis of the challenge model is that some stress is helpful for young people as it can develop coping skills and encourage them to mobilize internal and external resources. (Garmezy et al.,1984)

Emmy Werner's Theory of Resilience: Werner held an ecological view of resilience, focusing on protective factors that promoted resilience at the individual, family and community level (Werner, 1989). These protective factors included dispositional attributes of the individual (sociability, activity level), affectional ties within the family that provide emotional support, and external support systems (church, work). Werner noted that the more stress one experiences, the more protective processes are needed (Werner, 1982). She also believed that protective factors operate both directly and indirectly (Werner, 1989). For example, external support systems (e.g. church) may support the mother, which then increases her capacity to provide support for the child. Werner stated that despite the development of knowledge of possible protective processes, there still needs to be a greater understanding of protective factors and their effect.

Types of resilience

Types of resilience include psychological resilience, emotional resilience, physical resilience, community resilience. Researchers define psychological resilience as the ability to mentally cope with or adapt to uncertainty, challenges, and adversity. It is sometimes referred to as "mental fortitude."(Whitson et al, 2016). Emotionally resilient people understand what they're feeling and why. They tap into realistic optimism, even when dealing with a crisis, and are proactive in using both internal and external resources to get through. They are able to manage external stressors and their own emotions in a healthy, positive way. Physical resilience refers to the body's ability to adapt to challenges, maintain stamina and strength, and recover quickly and efficiently. Community resilience refers to the ability of groups of people to respond to and recover from adverse situations, such as natural disasters, acts of violence, economic hardship, and other challenges to the group as a whole.

Factors affecting resilience

Individual factors that help build resilience include Personality traits such as Conscientiousness, optimism, and emotional stability are associated with higher resilience (Bonanno, 2004; Duckworth et al., 2007; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007). Cognitive skills such as Problem-solving, decision-making, and coping skills contribute to effective adaptation (Holahan et al., 2006; Southwick et al., 2011). Social and Environmental Factors include having strong social networks and supportive relationships can buffer against stress and offer resources for coping (Cohen & Willis, 1985; Thoits, 2011) and adequate access to financial resources, healthcare, and education can promote resilience in the face of challenges (Galea et al., 2015; Luthar et al., 2000). Cultural values and beliefs can also shape coping strategies and influence resilience (Kim & Omura, 2012; Ungar, 2015).

Sense of belonging

According to Hagerty et al. (1992), a sense of belonging occurs when people feel like they are an integral part of a system or environment. The extend to which an individual feels accepted, respected and supported in their social environment (Goodenow 1993). Maslow (1968) defines belongingness as a basic human need, and when disparity occurs the individual becomes exposed to maladjustment and emotional illness.

Theories of Sense of belongingness

Social Identity Theory: Social identity theory was proposed in social psychology by Tajfel and his colleagues (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identity refers to the ways that people's self-concepts are based on their membership in social groups. According to Turner (1999), self-categorization becomes fully operational as a social identity only once an individual has identified with her/his social category. By such, one's worth is influenced by the number of possible social groups in which one belongs. If belongingness has been obtained through allocation with a group of similar others, one will prioritize one's group simply because oneself is a belonging member of that group. Thus, the need to belong is created through a cognitive process where one's self-worth is dependent on a similarity of Self and Others' as represented by a group-membership (Tajfel, 1978; Turner et al., 1987).

Attachment Theory: Attachment theory developed by John Bowlby, hypothesizes that early caregiver relationships establish social–emotional developmental foundations, but change remains possible across the lifespan due to interpersonal relationships during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. When a child's immediate need for a secure attachment bond is not met, the child feels threatened and will react accordingly, such as by crying or calling out for their caregiver. Moreover, if the need for a stable bond is not met consistently, the infant can

develop social, emotional, and even cognitive problems. Distinct behaviors characterize attachment in children and adults, such as seeking closeness with the attachment figure when distressed or threatened (Bowlby, 1969).

Ecological Systems Theory: The sense of belonging is influenced by interactions within these systems. A sense of belonging is attached to the influences of the environment one is interacting with. This theory considers the impact of various systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem) on an individual's development. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework posits that human experiences and development tie themselves to the interactions of individuals and the events of their environment as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Thus, belongingness based on "environmental-satisfaction" is interconnected to how one centers or attaches oneself with the overall satisfaction of an experience within their environment. This consequently motivates one's need for participation and the influence of self-perception of belongingness, as this feeling of emotional connection within a setting can accordingly result in the feeling of rejection if unsatisfactory, or belonging if satisfactory (e.g., Lynch, 1976; Relph, 1976; Canter, 1977).

Self-Determination Theory: Self-Determination Theory, or SDT, developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, links personality, human motivation, and optimal functioning. this theory suggests that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are highly influential determinants of behavior and both drive individuals to meet the three basic psychological needs identified by the SDT model are autonomy in which people have a need to feel that they are the masters of their own destiny and that they have at least some controls over their lives. Competence is another need that concerns achievements, knowledge, and skills as well as have a need to build their competence and develop mastery over tasks that are important to them. Relatedness (also called

connection) in which people need to have a sense of belonging and connectedness with others (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: According to Maslow (1943, 1954), human needs were arranged in a hierarchy, with physiological (survival) needs at the bottom, and the more creative and intellectually oriented 'self-actualization' needs at the top. At the foundation lie physiological needs for survival (food, water, shelter). Once met, safety and security needs emerge (personal safety, health, stability). Next come love and belonging needs (love, friendship, intimacy). Love and belongingness needs refers to a human emotional need for interpersonal relationships, affiliating, connectedness, and being part of a group. Humans are social creatures that crave interaction with others. Humans have the need to give and receive love, to feel like they belong in a group. Examples of belongingness needs include friendship, intimacy, trust, acceptance, receiving and giving affection, and love. Esteem needs for achievement, recognition, and respect follow. Finally, at the pinnacle reside self-actualization needs for personal growth, creativity, and realizing one's full potential.

Factors affected Sense of belonging

Factors such as shared beliefs or ideals, a supportive environment, self-esteem, and opportunities for interaction can influence the development of sense of belonging in an individual (Winter-Collins & McDaniel, 2000; Ma, 2003). Positive and supportive relationships within a group are crucial for belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Feeling valued, cared for, and respected by others fosters a sense of security and acceptance, contributing to belonging (Van den Akker, Cacioppo, & Hawkley, 2002). Individuals with higher levels of agreeableness, extraversion, and conscientiousness tend to report stronger feelings of belonging

(Leach et al., 2007). Secure attachment styles, characterized by trust and confidence in relationships, are associated with stronger feelings of belonging (Bowlby, 1982).

Statement

Single mothers and mothers in nuclear families may experience differing levels of sense of belonging and resilience due to variations in social support networks and family structures.

Rationale of the study:

This research aims to understand how a strong sense of belonging contributes to maternal resilience in facing and overcoming challenges. Previous studies have found that quality of life negatively correlates with depressive symptoms and hopelessness, while positively correlating with resilience and sense of belonging in Palestinian context (Mahamid et al., 2022). Another study's findings indicate that course belonging serves as a valuable social asset for resilience among refugee students during their study preparation (Grüttner, 2019). In a study, results revealed that when social support, sense of belonging, and self-efficacy when examined in combination significantly predicted resilience in adolescents, with social support being the sole significant predictor when examined independently (Nowicki, 2008). Many studies of resilience rely on the presence of risks or threats (Fergus & Zimmennan, 2005; Masten, 2001). In such cases individuals are usually not considered resilient unless there has been a significant threat to their development. However, life stressors such as daily hassles can also become risks when appropriate coping strategies are not applied (Jackson, 1992).

Hence, it is essential to recognize that daily hassles, the minor challenges and stressors of everyday life, can also contribute to the overall resilience of an individual. While major life events may be more visible and attention-grabbing, daily hassles can accumulate and impact an individual's well-being over time. These daily stressors, such as work-related challenges,

interpersonal conflicts, or financial pressures, can be persistent and may gradually erode a person's psychological resources if not effectively managed. By exploring these mechanisms, the study provides insights that could empower mothers to navigate difficulties effectively and fostering a sense of community, thereby contributing valuable perspectives to the broader discussion on factors influencing maternal well-being and family dynamics. This study can shed light on how the mothers' sense of belonging and resilience which may translate to their children's emotional, social, and cognitive well-being. By understanding the factors influencing mothers' well-being, this study can inform the development of targeted interventions and support programs to enhance their sense of belonging, resilience, and ultimately, their parenting effectiveness.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review is a written overview of major writings and other sources on a selected topic. Sources covered in the review may include scholarly journal articles, books, government reports, Web sites, etc. The literature review provides a description, summary and evaluation of each source.

The study, "War-related quality of life is associated with depressive symptoms and hopelessness among Palestinians: sense of belonging and resilience as mediating variables" (Mahamid.F, Veronese, & Dana Bdier , 2022) explores the connections between quality of life, depressive symptoms, and hopelessness in a Palestinian context marked by political violence. The research finds that quality of life negatively correlates with depressive symptoms and hopelessness, while positively correlating with resilience and sense of belonging.

A study on "Associations Among Resilience, Hope, Social Support, Belongingness, Life Satisfaction, and Flourishing Among Syrian Minority Refugees" (Yıldırım, Ahmad Aziz, N. Hassan, 2022) was done among minority Syrian refugees residing in Iraq. Males demonstrated significantly higher levels of resilience, belongingness, and flourishing compared to females. Correlation analysis revealed positive associations among resilience, hope, belongingness, satisfaction with life, and flourishing.

A study, titled "Relationship between College Students' Sense of Belonging and Academic Resilience" (Hasan.N and Channa.M, 2021), intended to investigate the relationship between college students' sense of belonging and academic resilience. The research found that students' sense of belonging positively correlated with academic resilience. It shows that the higher the sense of belonging of college students, the stronger the academic resilience of college students. Additionally, demographic variables such as gender and grade showed differences in both sense of belonging and academic resilience.

A study, the roles of resilience and belonging in mediating the association between positivity and anxiety among underrepresented college students was conducted (Wright, Whyne, Lehrer, Woom, & Steinhardt, 2021), the findings revealed that positivity directly associated with reduced anxiety and indirectly through resilience, but not through belonging. While positivity was linked with belonging, the latter didn't significantly impact anxiety.

In a research (PickeringDonna & LamTimothy, 2020) sought to determine how a sense of belonging to a reserve unit, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and the local community relates to army reservists' overall well-being. The results indicated that reservists who felt a greater sense of belonging to their communities reported higher levels of overall well-being (i.e., direct effect). This relationship was partially due to their higher levels of social support and resilience (i.e., indirect effects). Similar results were not obtained in the case of belonging to one's reserve unit and the CAF.

A study in 2019 conducted by Grüttner, M. investigates the psychological wellbeing of refugee students compared to international peers in study preparation. Findings indicate that while experiencing social exclusion diminishes wellbeing, course belonging serves as a valuable social asset for resilience among refugee students during their study preparation.

Zahra M and Hatami.H conducted a study on the prediction of Academic Resilience based on Sense of Belonging to School and Academic Engagement in female students in 2019. Results indicated a positive and significant correlation between academic resilience, sense of belonging to school, and academic engagement. Regression analysis demonstrated that 65.2% of the variance in academic resilience was explained by sense of belonging to school and academic engagement.

In a study titled "Resilience and sense of belonging among medical students in a Malaysian public university" (Ali.S, Amat.S, Mahmud.M, Hakimie.M, Subhan.M, Yazid, 2018).The purpose of this study is to examine the level of resilience and sense of belonging among medical students. Two sets of questionnaires were used in this study; Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) and Sense of Belonging Instrument-Psychological (SOBI-P). The findings from this research show the level of resilience among medical students is considered as moderately high while sense of belonging level is high. It also found a positive correlation between resilience and sense of belonging among medical students.

The study "Promoting Strengths and Resilience in Single-Mother Families" (Zoe E.,Taylor and Conger, 2017), discusses the challenges faced by single mothers and the impact on their children's well-being. It highlights two key resilience factors that contribute to the well-being of single mothers and, in turn, their parenting: perceived social support and specific internal resources.

This study "The Relationship between Resilience with Self- Compassion, Social Support and Sense of Belonging in Women with Breast Cancer" (Alizadeh S, Khanahmadi S, Vedadhir S & Barjasteh S,2016) investigates the associations among resilience, self-compassion, social support, and sense of belonging in Iranian women with breast cancer. Results revealed significant positive correlations among self-compassion, social support, sense of belonging, and resilience. It clarified the self-compassion, social support and Sense of belonging are effective on the resilience.

A study on Family Dynamics and Resilience among Adolescents: Role of Mother's Working Status and Family Type (Azam A.A.S Shaikh F.A, 2016). Results showed that adolescents with working mothers from joint families had the lowest resilience scores, while

those from nuclear families with working mothers scored higher. This highlights the impact of family dynamics on adolescents' coping strategies.

The study conducted by Scarf et al. (2016) investigate whether participating in an adventure education programme (AEP) increased adolescents' resilience and elucidate how social connectedness contributes to any increase. Findings suggest that adolescents in the AEP showed increased resilience from the start to the end of the 10-day voyage, while the control group did not. Further, the increase in resilience was related to the adolescents' sense of belonging, and this effect held when controlling for perceived social support.

"Relationships among parental alcoholism, sense of belonging, resilience and depressive symptoms in korean people" (Lee.H ,2010). Measures used in the study are Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), Sense of Belonging Instrument-Psychological (SOBI-P), Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), and Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ-6).The study highlighted the importance of sense of belonging and resilience as key factors in protecting Adult Children of alcoholics from depression.

"Resilience among very old men and women", a study by (Lena Aléx , 2010). The objective of this study was to investigate how elderly individuals with perceived high resilience discuss their experiences of aging and to analyze their narratives based on the fundamental concepts outlined in the Resilience Scale (RS). The following themes were identified: feeling connected, feeling independent and creating meaning. Women described connectedness with others as caring for parents and husbands when they were ill and at the end of life. The results showed that not only receiving support from others but also caring for others and giving social support are important to increase the individuals' resilience.

The research titled "Predictors of Resilience in Adolescents: Exploring the Relationships among Self-Efficacy, Sense of Belonging, and Social Support, (Anna Nowicki, 2008), delves into the correlation between self-efficacy, sense of belonging, social support, and resilience in adolescents. The key findings indicated that when examined in combination, social support, sense of belonging, and self-efficacy significantly predicted resilience in adolescents. However, independently, only social support was identified as a statistically significant predictor of resilience.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the aim, objectives, hypothesis, study design, sample and sampling design, tools, and statistical analysis of the study.

Aim:

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between sense of belongingness and resilience among single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Objectives:

- To study the relationship between sense of belongingness and resilience among single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

- To find out whether there are differences in sense of belongingness between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

- To find out whether there are differences in resilience levels between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant correlation between sense of belongingness and resilience.

H2: There is a significant difference in sense of belongingness between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

H3: There is a significant difference in resilience levels between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Operational Definitions of the variables:

Sense of Belongingness: Sense of Belongingness is operationally defined as the sum total of scores assessed in 18 item Sense of Belonging Instrument – Psychological State (SOBI-P) developed by Hagerty and Patusky.

Resilience: Resilience is operationally defined as the sum total of scores assessed in 25 item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) developed by Connor and Davidson (2003).

Research Design:

Correlational research design was opted for the study. A correlational research design investigates relationships between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them. A correlation reflects the strength and/or direction of the relationship between two (or more) variables. The direction of a correlation can be either positive or negative. Mann-Whitney U test was also done to compare between the single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Sample:

The study involved a sample of mothers aged 25-45 years old, with sample size of 160 participants from Ernakulam. Among them, 82 were mothers in nuclear families, while 78 were either single, divorced, separated, or widowed mothers.

Population

The population of the study was single mothers and mothers in nuclear families in Ernakulam.

Sample design:

The study utilized purposive sampling method to recruit participants. In purposive sampling, researchers aim to identify members of the population who are anticipated to possess specific characteristics or experiences. This enables them to selectively choose individuals or cases that align with their study.

Inclusion Criteria:

Participants should fall within the age range of 25 to 45 years old. Participants must self-identify as the primary caregiver or co-caregiver of at least one child.

Exclusion Criteria:

Participants with severe mental health conditions that may significantly impact their sense of belongingness and resilience will be excluded to ensure the study's focus remains on the general population.

Tools Used:

Informed consent was provided and sociodemographic data was collected to gather the details of the participants with respect to their age and marital status.

In the present study, two questionnaires were used.

Sense of Belonging Instrument – Psychological State (SOBI-P) Hagerty & Patusky, (1995):

The Sense of Belonging Instrument – Psychological State (SOBI-P) is an 18-item subscale of the Sense of Belonging Instrument. The SOBI-P measures the psychological perception and experience of belonging. Responses are on a four-point Likert-style scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The overall score is calculated by summing the items after reverse scoring all items except item 4 so that higher scores indicate a greater sense of belonging. Possible SOBI-P scores range from 18 to 72. Hagerty and Patusky (1995) examined the two types of reliability; internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Internal consistency reliability of SOBI-P was acceptable with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93, 0.76 for depressed clients, and 0.76 for nuns. For a randomly selected 100 students, the test-retest reliability coefficients for the instrument have been measured as r = 0.84 over an 8-week period. Construct validity of

SOBI-P was supported by observed associations with loneliness, reciprocity, and social support (Hagerty & Patusky).

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (Connor & Davidson, 2003):

The CD-RISC (Connor & Davidson, 2003) was used to measure resilience among the respondents. Connor and Davidson (2003) developed this instrument with a wider range of respondents, including community samples, primary care outpatients, and two clinical trials of PTSD and reported evidence of construct validity through factor analysis. CD-RISC contains 25 items, which are rated on a five-point Likert scale and range from 0 ("Not true at all") to 4 ("True nearly all the time"). Possible scores thus range from 0 to 100. The CD-RISC has sound psychometric properties with good internal consistency and test-retest reliability (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Coefficient alpha for the total scale was 0.89 with a community sample and test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.87 with generalized anxiety disorder and PTSD samples (Connor & Davidson, 2003).

Procedure

The data in the present study has been collected from the population by giving out questionnaires. An informed consent form was provided at the beginning of the questionnaire to make sure that the confidentiality of the participants data will be maintained. This was followed by a few questions that collected the demographic details of the participant. The Sense of Belonging Instrument – Psychological State (SOBI-P) was followed by Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). The questionnaires were scored according to the scoring guidelines given in them and the final results was obtained using SPSS software version 29.02.0.

Ethical considerations

- Research participants were not subjected to harm in any ways whatsoever.

- Respect for the dignity of research participants was prioritized.

- Full consent was obtained from the participants prior to the study.

- Confidentiality of research participants was ensured.

- Anonymity of individuals and organisations participating in the research was ensured.

- Any deception or exaggeration about the aims and objectives of the research was avoided.

- Any type of communication in relation to the research was done with honesty and transparency.

- Any type of misleading information, as well as representation of primary data findings in a biased way were avoided

Statistical Analysis

The data collected from the participants was analysed using SPSS software (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 29.0.2.0. As the population is non parametric distribution the correlation of the data was measured using spearman's correlation coefficient. Spearman's correlations were used to analyse the connection between sense of belonginess and resilience. Mann-Whitney U test was done to compare between the single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Normality test:

Table 1

Summary of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of Normality of sense of belonging and resilience

Variables	sig
Sense of Belonging	<.001
Resilience	.027

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of Normality of sense of belonging and resilience shows that the variables are not normally distributed in the sample ($p < 0.05$).

CHAPTER IV

RESULT DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to understand examine the relationship between sense of belonging and resilience among single mothers and mothers in nuclear families. The research comprised 160 participants, all mothers aged between 25 and 45 years. Among them, 82 were mothers in nuclear families, while 78 were either single, divorced, separated, or widowed mothers. The data collected from the participants was analysed using SPSS software version 29.0.2.0. As the population is non parametric distribution the correlation of the data was measured using spearman's correlation coefficient. Mann-Whitney U test was done to compare between the single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2

Mean and standard deviation of sense of belonging and resilience

	Mean	Std.Deviation	N
Sense of Belonging	46.78	8.239	160
Resilience	63.42	12.883	160

From the given table; the mean and standard deviation of sense of belonging is found to be 46.78 and 8.239 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of resilience is found to be 63.42 and 12.883 respectively.

Correlation Analysis

H1: There is significant positive correlation between sense of belonging and resilience among both single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Table 3

Indicates the Spearman Rank correlation between sense of belonging and resilience

	Resilience
Sense of Belonging	0.048

The p-value (p = 0.547) associated with the correlation coefficient is above 0.05, which suggests that the correlations are not statistically significant. The value 0.048 is the positive correlation coefficient and it suggests a weak positive correlation between sense of belonging and resilience. This implies that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant relationship between Sense of belonging and Resilience in this sample. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected.

There could be other reasons that influence the correlation making it weak. In a study research titled "Predictors of Resilience in Adolescents: Exploring the Relationships among Self-Efficacy, Sense of Belonging, and Social Support (Anna Nowicki, 2008), the results indicated that in combination, sense of belonging, social support and self-efficacy did significantly predicted resilience. However, independently adolescent's sense of belonging did not significantly predict resilience. Single mothers may face unique stressors related to financial strain, lack of social support, and stigma, which could affect their resilience differently compared to mothers in nuclear families (Davies et al,1997). Research by Robinson (2007) in "Resilience in Remarried Families" suggests that family structure and socioeconomic status can influence the

development of resilience in children. Similar dynamics could be at play among single mothers and mothers in nuclear families, leading to variations in the relationship between sense of belonging and resilience. Sense of belonging and resilience are multifaceted constructs influenced by various factors. Research by Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker (2000) in "The Construct of Resilience: A Critical Evaluation and Guidelines for Future Work" highlights the complexity of resilience, suggesting that it is influenced by individual, familial, and contextual factors. Similarly, studies such as Hagerty et al. (1992) emphasize the multidimensional nature of sense of belonging, which can be influenced by social, familial, and cultural factors. The interaction among these intricate elements may lead to a correlation between the two constructs that is both weak and statistically insignificant.

Mann- Whitney U test

H2: There is a significant difference in sense of belonging between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Table 4

The table shows the result of Mann-Whitney U Test comparing difference in sense of belonging between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Variable	Mean Rank		*U*	*z*	*p*
	Mothers in nuclear families	Single Mothers			
Sense of Belonging	112.51	46.85	573.500	-8.972	<.001

Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to analyse the significant difference in sense of belonging between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families. From the above table, the mean rank of the mothers in nuclear families group is 112.51, while the mean rank of the single mother group is 46.85. This shows that there is difference in sense of belonging between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families. The p-value obtained is less than 0.001 indicates that the difference between the two groups is statistically significant. Hence, the hypothesis 2 is not rejected.

Social support from friends is less often examined or is measured as part of an encompassing variable of support from all sources. However, Luthar and Ciciolla (2015) found that friend support was positively linked with life satisfaction and fulfillment, and negatively with stress, emptiness, depression, anxiety, and loneliness, using a sample of over 2,000 educated single and married mothers. In contrast, partner support was only significantly associated with higher life satisfaction and lower stress and emptiness. This suggests that spousal relationships are important but that meaningful support can come from other sources. These findings are relevant to single mothers whom lack the benefits provided by a supportive spouse and suggest that boosting friend support could have far reaching implications for their well-being, especially because friend support may involve less emotional costs than family support (Murry et al., 2001).

Mann- Whitney U test

H3: There is a significant difference in resilience levels between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Table 5

The table shows the result of Mann-Whitney U Test comparing difference in resilience levels between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Variable	Mean rank		U	z	p
	Mothers in nuclear families	Single Mothers			
Resilience	77.46	83.69	2949.000	-.850	.395

Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to analyse the significant difference in resilience levels between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families. From the above table, the mean rank of the mothers in nuclear families group is 77.46, while the mean rank of the single mothers group is 83.69. This shows that there is difference in resilience levels between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families. The p-value obtained from the table is 0.395 which is greater than 0.05 which means there is no statistically significant difference. Hence, the hypothesis 3 is rejected.

In a study (Grzankowska et al., 2018) conducted to clarify whether resilience as an attribute and resiliently coping with difficult situations in mothers are significant resources for their job satisfaction, considering single motherhood as a difficult situation. The study partially confirmed the hypothesis of a significant difference in job satisfaction, resilient coping with difficult situations, and resilience attributes between single mothers and mothers in relationships.

However, the research outcomes indicated that participants were relatively similar in these

attributes regardless of marital status.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The study was done to understand the relationship between sense of belongingness and resilience among single mothers and mothers in nuclear families. While the current study did not establish a significant relationship between sense of belongingness and resilience. A significant difference was found in sense of belongingness based on marital status, with single mothers experiencing lower levels of sense of belonging. It also did not establish a significant difference in resilience based on marital status. Hence, hypothesis 2 was accepted and hypothesis 1 and 3 was rejected. Understanding these dynamics can inform interventions aimed at promoting resilience and sense of belonging among single mothers and mothers in nuclear families, emphasizing the importance of fostering supportive environments and social connections. However, further longitudinal research is warranted to better elucidate the causal relationships and long-term effects.

Findings

- There is an insignificant relationship between sense of belonginess and resilience.
- There is a significant difference in sense of belongingness between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.
- There is no significant difference in resilience levels between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families.

Limitations

- The study's findings may not generalize to other populations due to the specific demographic and cultural background of the sample.
- It cannot determine cause-and-effect relationships between variables.

- The use of self-report measures introduces the risk of response bias, as participants may provide socially desirable responses or inaccurately recall their experiences.

- The study might have lacked the necessary power to identify minor or moderate effects due to constraints in sample size or variability in the measures utilized.

- The findings lack generalizability due to the study's focus on specific demographic groups or cultural contexts, potentially limiting applicability to broader populations.

- Relevant variables, such as socioeconomic status and support networks, which could influence the observed outcomes, have been overlooked.

Implications

- The study highlights potential differences in sense of belongingness between single mothers and mothers in nuclear families, indicating the need for tailored support interventions.

- It signifies the independent nature of resilience from sense of belongingness, urging interventions to encompass broader factors beyond social connections for both groups.

- It also emphasizes the importance of strengthening social support networks for both single mothers and mothers in nuclear families to promote well-being.

- It also advocates for tailored support strategies that recognize the distinct challenges faced by each group, addressing their specific social, economic, and emotional needs effectively.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Informed Consent

Title of the study: Exploring the Interplay: Sense of Belongingness and Resilience in Single

Mothers and Mothers in Nuclear Families

I hereby consent to taking part in the research study titled "Exploring the Interplay: Sense of

Belongingness and Resilience in Single mothers and Mothers in Nuclear Families". I understand

that my involvement is voluntary, and I can withdraw at any point without facing any

consequences. I acknowledge that all the information gathered will remain confidential and will

be used exclusively for research purposes. I have read and understood the information provided

in this form, and I agree to participate in the study.

I agree_____

Appendix B

Sociodemographic Data:

Name (Initials only)

Age

Gender

    a) Single

    b) Separated

    c) Divorced

    d) Widowed

    e) Married

Appendix C

Sense of Belonging Instrument-Psychological (SOBI-P) Instrument

Please select one that most closely reflects your feelings about each statement.

(1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree)

1) I often wonder if there is anyplace on earth where I really fit in.

2) I am just not sure if I fit in with my friends.

3) I would describe myself as a misfit in most social situations.

4) I generally feel that people accept me.

5) I feel like a piece of a jig-saw puzzle that doesn't fit into the puzzle.

6) I would like to make a difference to people or things around me, but I don't feel that

what I have to offer is valued.

7) I feel like an outsider in most situations.

8) I am troubled by feeling like I have no place in this world.

9) I could disappear for days and it wouldn't matter to my family.

10) In general, I don't feel a part of the mainstream of society.

11) I feel like I observe life rather than participate in it.

12) If I died tomorrow, very few people would come to my funeral.

13) I feel like a square peg trying to fit into a round hole.

14) I don't feel that there is anyplace where I really fit in this world.

15) I am uncomfortable knowing that my background and experiences are so different

from those who are usually around me.

16) I could not see or call my friends for days and it wouldn't matter to them.

17) I feel left out of things.

18) I am not valued by or important to my friends.

Appendix D

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements as they apply to you over the last month. If a particular situation has not occurred recently, answer according to how you think you would have felt.

(0=Not true at all, 1=Rarely true, 2=Sometimes true, 3=Often true, 4=True nearly all the time)

1) I am able to adapt when changes occur.

2) I have at least one close and secure relationship that helps me when I am stressed.

3) When there are no clear solutions to my problems, sometimes fate or God can help.

4) I can deal with whatever comes my way.

5) Past successes give me confidence in dealing with new challenges and difficulties.

6) I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems.

7) Having to cope with stress can make me stronger.

8) I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardships.

9) Good or bad, I believe that most things happen for a reason.

10) I give my best effort no matter what the outcome may be.

11) I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles.

12) Even when things look hopeless, I don't give up.

13) During times of stress/crisis, I know where to turn for help.

14) Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly.

15) I prefer to take the lead in solving problems rather than letting others make all the decisions.

16) I am not easily discouraged by failure.

17) I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life's challenges and difficulties.

18) I can make unpopular or difficult decisions that affect other people, if it is necessary.

19) I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear and anger.

20) In dealing with life's problems, sometimes you have to act on a hunch without knowing why.

21) I have a strong sense of purpose in life.

22) I feel in control of my life.

23) I like challenges.

24) I work to attain my goals no matter what roadblocks I encounter along the way.

25) I take pride in my achievements.