



Correlational study of Sociocultural Adaptation, Resilience and Self Compassion among Tibetan Youth in Exile in India

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Abstract: This study aimed to explore the relationships between sociocultural adaptation, self-compassion, and resilience among Tibetan youth living in exile. Due to the displacement from their homeland, it has created difficulties for the youth in exile in the aspects of social and cultural adaptations which includes cultural identity, language and unique psychological difficulties. In this study, it examined how the resources such as internal and external resources can affect their overall well-being and adjustment. The research design used was correlational research design with a total sample of 221 Tibetan youth aged from 18 to 30 years ($M = 22.0$) residing in India. The data was collected using standardized instruments. The result showed that there is a significant positive correlation between resilience and sociocultural adaptation ($r = .482, p < .001$), and between resilience and self-compassion ($r = .420, p < .001$). In contrast, there is a weak and non-significant correlation between sociocultural adaptation and self-compassion ($r = .116, p > .05$). Regression analysis interpreted that resilience is significantly predicted by both the sociocultural adaptation and self-compassion by explaining 21.9% and 14.9% of the variance, respectively. Based on theoretical understanding, sociocultural adaptation and self-compassion were interpreted as external and internal factors contributing to resilience. However, due to the correlational design, no causal inference was made.

Keywords: *Sociocultural Adaptation, Self-Compassion, Resilience, Tibetan Youth in Exile, Psychological Well-being*

1. Introduction

As Tibet lost its country in 1959 which led to the occupation by China, Tibetan people came into exile in India and other countries which made them face difficulties such as cultural displacement, adaptation and identity confusion. As they have to preserve their Tibetan cultural identity, while adjusting to a new sociocultural environment which can led them to tension and impact their psychological wellbeing and development. In this framework, this study focuses on three significant constructs which includes sociocultural adaptation, self-compassion and resilience to understand how the Tibetan youth adjust and adapt their life in exile in India.

In the previous research, it was shown that refugee populations frequently experience psychological distress due to identity confusion, loss of homeland and marginalization (Fazel et al., 2012). According to Ward & Kennedy (1999), the definition of sociocultural adaptation is the ability to function effectively in a new cultural context, which plays an important role in reducing acculturative stress and enhancing social functioning. In the study, Neff (2003) found that self-compassion involves self-kindness, mindfulness and a sense of shared humanity helps or supports emotional regulation and lower psychological distress. Research by Phillips et al. (2019) further supports the role of self-compassion in improving physical health and adaptive coping. Likewise, resilience (Masten, 2014) helps individuals to adapt positively to difficulties and sustain hope which often helps in strengthening the Tibetan communities through social support, cultural values and spirituality. Collectively, these findings show that in a challenging environment, self-compassion and resilience are crucial psychological resources that can help individuals manage stress and adapt effectively.

Research highlights the complex interaction of cultural identity, sociocultural adaptation and psychosocial challenges within the context of Tibetan youth in exile. Studies done by Yeh (2007) shows how much language and cultural practices are important and crucial in shaping identity and adaptation, whereas the study done by Sapam and Jijina (2020) and Nair and Pandit (2017) challenges the identity struggles, isolation, and increased risk of anxiety and depression. Simultaneously, some studies show the strength-based perspective, explaining how resilience among Tibetan youth is supported by strong community ties, religious faith, and adherence to cultural traditions (Cronley & Evans, 2017; Lewis, 2013; Ruwanpura et al., 2006). As discussed by McConnell (2013), the issues of identity complex and sociopolitical status make it difficult and

more complicated in their adaptation process. Even when they face these challenges, Tibetan youth showed adaptive coping through faith, collective identity, and cultural continuity. Yet there is limited research explaining how these three variables which sociocultural adaptation, self-compassion and resilience are interact among Tibetan youth in exile.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationships between the three variables. It tries to know how self-compassion and resilience facilitate better adaptation outcomes and if resilience plays a mediating role. The study is guided by the research questions regarding the relationships among these variables.

1.1 Hypotheses

H₀₁: Self-compassion and social adaptability are significantly positively correlated.

H₀₂: Resilience and sociocultural adaptability are significantly positively correlated.

H₀₃: Self-compassion and resilience are significantly positively correlated.

2. Method

2.1 Sample size

The study included a total of 221 Tibetan youth aged 18 to 30 years ($M = 22.0$, $SD = 2.71$) recruited from India. Among them, the majority were female (64.1%), while 35.9% were male. In terms of educational qualification, the largest group of participants were undergraduates (54.4%), followed by postgraduates (23%) and Class 12th students (17.1%). A smaller proportion of participants (5.5%) reported having other educational qualifications, while none were pursuing or had completed a PhD.

2.2 Inclusion criteria:

- a) Tibetan youth aged 18–30 years
- b) Individuals born in exile or relocated from Tibet
- c) Ability to understand English or Tibetan (based on language of tools)

2.3 Exclusion criteria:

- a) Individuals diagnosed with severe mental health conditions

2.4 Measures/Instrument

Revised Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS-R) by Wilson (2013) is used to measure Sociocultural Adaptation. It includes 21 items which are rated with 5-point Likert scale. The scale

shows good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.80$) and strong construct validity in assessing cross-cultural adjustment.

Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) by Neff (2003) is used for assessing Self-Compassion which consists of 26 items with six subscales. Responses are rated on a 5-point scale, with reverse scoring for negative items. The SCS shows high reliability ($\alpha \approx 0.90$) and strong validity, including good convergent and discriminant validity.

Resilience is measured using the Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ), a 12-item scale rated on a 5-point Likert format. It has good internal reliability ($\alpha > 0.80$) and satisfactory construct validity.

2.5 Procedure

To explore the relationships between sociocultural adaptation, self-compassion, and resilience among Tibetan youth in exile, the study has used correlational research design. The participants were collected by giving informed consent through social media and academic settings, they completed an online questionnaire with standardized scales.

Jamovi (2.6.44) was used to conduct a data analysis, which includes descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and correlation analysis to explore the relationships and predictive effects among the variables.

The study has followed strict ethical guidelines by considering voluntary participation, confidentiality, informed consent, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any time, by making sure there is no harm to the participants.

3. Result

Table 1: *Descriptive statistics of age of the sample*

Descriptives	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age	221	22.0	22	22.0	2.71	18	30

Note. N = 221. Participants were on average 22.0 years old

Table 2: *Frequencies of gender and education*

Frequencies	Gender				Education Qualification			
	Female	Male	Others	Prefer not to say	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	PhD	Others
Counts	141	80	0	0	120	52	0	12
% of total	64.1	35.9	0	0	54.4	23	0	5.5

Table 3: *Correlations between variables*

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Sociocultural Adaptation	221	65.5	13.6	—		
2. Self Compassion	221	80.5	10.8	0.116	—	
3. Resilience	221	38.1	6.97	0.482***	0.420***	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4: *Linear Regression between Resilience and Sociocultural Adaptation*

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
1	0.468	0.219	0.216	61.5	<.001

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=221

Table 5: *Coefficients Table for linear regression of Resilience and Sociocultural Adaptation*

						95% CI	
Predictor	B	SE	t	p	β	Lower	Upper
Intercept	22.446	2.0407	11.00	<.001			
Sociocultural Adaptation	0.239	0.0305	7.84	<.001	0.468	0.350	0.586

Table 6: *Linear Regression between Resilience and Self Compassion*

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
1	0.385	0.149	0.145	38.2	<.001

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=221

Table 7: *Coefficients Table for linear regression of Resilience and Sociocultural Adaptation*

						95% C	
Predictor	B	SE	t	p	β	Lower	Upper
Intercept	18.032	3.2761	5.50	<.001			
Self-Compassion	0.249	0.0403	6.18	<.001	0.385	0.263	0.508

3.1 Statistical Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

221 participants of the sample ranging from 18 to 30 years with a mean age of 22 years (2.71) indicates low variability and mostly were a young adult group. In terms of gender, 64.1% were female and 35.9% were male. In the context of education, most of the participants were undergraduates (54.4%), with postgraduates (23%), class 12th (17.1%), and others (5.5%).

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis showed that sociocultural adaptation had a small, non-significant positive relationship with self-compassion ($r = 0.116$, $p > .05$). However, resilience was positively and significantly correlated with both sociocultural adaptation ($r = 0.482$, $p < .001$) and self-compassion ($r = 0.420$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher resilience is associated with better adaptation and greater self-compassion.

Regression Analysis

Linear regression analysis revealed that resilience significantly predicted sociocultural adaptation ($R = 0.468$, $R^2 = 0.219$, $p < .001$), explaining 21.9% of the variance. Also, sociocultural adaptation was a significant predictor of resilience ($B = 0.239$, $p > .001$). Similarly, regression analysis showed that self-compassion significantly predicted resilience ($R = 0.385$, R^2

= 0.149, $p > .001$), accounting for 14.9% of the variance. Self-compassion was a significant positive predictor of resilience ($B = 0.249$, $p > .001$).

Overall, the analyses indicate that resilience plays a key role and is strongly associated with both sociocultural adaptation and self-compassion.

4. Discussion

Statistical Findings

This current study aimed to examine the relationships between sociocultural adaptation, self-compassion, and resilience among Tibetan youth in exile, based on the proposed hypotheses. The findings provide partial support for the hypotheses.

H₀₁: It was hypothesized that there would be a significant positive relationship between self-compassion and sociocultural adaptation. However, the results showed a weak and non-significant relationship between these variables. Therefore, H₀₁ is not supported. This suggests that self-compassion, as an internal emotional resource, may not directly influence an individual's ability to adapt behaviorally to a new cultural environment. This finding aligns with theoretical perspectives (Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Berry, 1997) that distinguish between psychological and sociocultural adaptation as separate processes.

H₀₂: It was hypothesized that resilience and sociocultural adaptation would be positively correlated with each other. The results examined a strong and significant positive relationship which supports H₀₂. This shows that individuals have higher resilience who are better in adapting to sociocultural adaptation. These findings are connecting with previous research and Resilience Theory (Masten, 2001), which focuses on the role of adaptive functioning in overcoming challenges.

H₀₃: It was hypothesized that self-compassion and resilience would be positively correlated with each other. H₀₃ has been supported by the revelation of findings which showed a moderate and significant positive relationship. This suggests that individuals who are more self-compassionate are better in coping with stress and recover from challenges. This result is related with Self-Compassion Theory (Neff, 2003) and prior research showing self-compassion as a key psychological resource.

Overall, the findings reveal resilience as a central factor that is linked with both sociocultural adaptation and self-compassion. Where self-compassion plays a role in internal emotional strength, sociocultural adaptation indicates external adjustment, and together they influence resilience. These results have significant implications for developing interventions which focused on strengthening emotional well-being and resilience among Tibetan youth in exile.

4.1 Interpretation of Findings

The current study showed the relationships between sociocultural adaptation, self-compassion, and resilience among Tibetan youth in exile. The findings are interpreted across the three main variables.

Sociocultural Adaptation and Resilience

In the study, it was found that there is a significant positive relationship between sociocultural adaptation and resilience which supports the Sociocultural Adaptation Theory (Ward & Kennedy, 1999), study has found. This tells that having a better adjustment to a new cultural environment improves confidence and coping ability. These findings are aligned with Resilience Theory (Masten, 2001), which highlights adaptation as a key factor in building resilience.

Self-Compassion and Resilience

As there is a moderate positive relationship between self-compassion and resilience, it supports Self-Compassion Theory (Neff, 2003). This shows that individuals who are accepting and kind toward themselves can cope better with stress and recover from distress. The findings are consistent with prior study (Smeets et al., 2014), which reinforces self-compassion as a significant internal resource for resilience.

Self-Compassion and Sociocultural Adaptation

There is a weak and non-significant relationship between self-compassion and sociocultural adaptation. This shows that internal emotional processes and external cultural adjustment act as distinct but complementary aspects of adaptation.

The relationship between self-compassion and sociocultural adaptation was weak and non-significant. This suggests that internal emotional processes and external cultural adjustment function as distinct but complementary aspects of adaptation. This distinction is supported by theories of adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1999), which distinguish between psychological and sociocultural adjustment.

4.2 Integrated Interpretation

Overall, the findings shows that resilience is a holistic construct shaped by both internal (self-compassion) and external (sociocultural adaptation) factors. While adaptation strengthens social functioning and belonging, self-compassion supports emotional regulation. These factors work collectively with resilience, aligning with previous research (Schweitzer et al., 2007) and highlighting the combined role of personal and environmental resources in the adjustment of Tibetan youth in exile.

4.3 Limitations

- a) The study used a convenience sampling technique, which may limit the generalizability of the results to the broader population of Tibetan youth living in exile.
- b) There could be a bias or subjective interpretation of items due to the reliance on self-report instruments.
- c) The study did not explain the contextual factors which might influence the outcomes such as duration of exile, social support networks, or cultural identification,
- d) The solely use of quantitative measures may overlook the deeper emotional and experiential understanding that qualitative methods, such as focus groups or interviews, could have revealed.

4.4 Recommendations for Future Research

- a) In future, the studies should adopt a longitudinal design to track changes in sociocultural
- b) adaptation, self-compassion, and resilience from time to time, which will provide stronger evidence for causal relationships.
- c) Applying mixed-method or qualitative approaches could offer a better understanding of the lived experiences of Tibetan youth by capturing the social and emotional challenges of life in exile.
- d) Researchers may explore the mediating or moderating roles of variables to understand how the factors influence resilience.
- e) Comparative studies among Tibetan communities across different geographic and sociocultural contexts (e.g., India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Western nations) would help understand how environmental and cultural conditions affect adaptation and emotional well-being.

5. Conclusion

The current study highlighted the relationships between sociocultural adaptation, self-compassion, and resilience among Tibetan youth in exile. The findings showed that both sociocultural adaptation and self-compassion are positively and significantly associated with resilience. Whereas the relationship between self-compassion and sociocultural adaptation was weak and not significant. These results indicated resilience as a key factor in the psychosocial adjustment of Tibetan youth.

The study highlights the significance of both internal emotional resources like self-compassion, and external adaptive processes like sociocultural adaptation, in enhancing resilience. It emphasizes that while these factors operate differently, they collectively contribute to the well-being and adjustment of individuals in exile.

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