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Research Notes

# The Role of Social Intelligence and Resilience in Explaining Students' Distress Tolerance: A Study during Covid-19 Pandemic

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## IL RUOLO DELL'INTELLIGENZA SOCIALE E DELLA RESILIENZA NELLO SPIEGARE LA TOLLERANZA AL DISAGIO DEGLI STUDENTI: UNO STUDIO DURANTE LA PANDEMIA DI COVID-19

## Abstract

*Understanding the factors that influence or correlate with distress tolerance is very important. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the role of social intelligence and resilience in explaining college students' distress tolerance. A descriptive correlational study was carried out on 260 male college students of Farhangian University*

*of Birjand, Iran in 2020/21. They completed Social Intelligence Scale, Resilience Scale, and Distress Tolerance Questionnaire. The results showed that there was a direct and significant relationship between social intelligence and distress tolerance (r = 0.473; p < 0.001), as well as resilience and distress tolerance (r = 0.608; p = 0.008). Also, the coefficient of determination showed that the components of social intelligence and resilience up to 65% can explain the variance of students' distress tolerance. Psychological interventions such as promoting social intelligence and effective resilience can be used to prevent and control the college students' distress especially during Covid-19 pandemic.*

*Keywords:* College students; Distress tolerance; Resilience; Social intelligence.

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## 1. Introduction

Outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19) is a challenge for healthcare systems around the world. Findings show that 15% of the people suffered from Covid-19 are faced with serious health consequences and about 5 to 10% require care due to severe symptoms and high risk of death (Alipour *et al.*, 2020; Baghcheghi, Mesri, *et al.*, 2022). One of the factors influencing how people respond to the pressures and anxieties of Coronavirus is the level of capacity they have in distress tolerance (Baghcheghi, Koohestani, *et al.*, 2022; Safara *et al.*, 2023), which Simmons and Gaher define it as the individuals' capacity to cope with negative emotions (Simons & Gaher, 2005), while other perspectives consider how information is processed (Houseinzadeh *et al.*, 2020). Distress tolerance means the individual's ability to understand a situation without wanting to change it, as well as to observe thoughts and actions, without trying to suppress and control them. Distress tolerance refers to the ability to be consistent in goal-orientation when experiencing psychological stress (Moschak *et al.*, 2018). In general, distress tolerance is multidimensional in nature and consist of several dimensions, including (1) the ability to tolerate emotional distress, (2) assessment and capacity to accept emotional state, (3) the way of the emotion regulation by the individual and the regulation of efforts to relieve distress, and (4) the rate of drawing attention by negative emotions and its contribution in creating functional disorder (Leyro *et al.*, 2010). Distress tolerance is increasingly playing a role in shaping the development of new insights into the onset and persistence of various psychological disorders as well as in the prevention and treatment of injuries (Kaiser *et al.*, 2012).

In addition, resilience as a psychological capacity to deal with stress can have a two-way relationship with distress tolerance and people with high

resilience have better distress tolerance than others (Nila *et al.*, 2016; Mesri *et al.*, 2022). Resilience is the process of coping positively and effectively and successfully adapting to unpleasant and stressful life experiences (Baghcheghi & Koohestani, 2021). It also promotes positive adjustment to adverse conditions and is a dynamic concept; because the positive adjustment to life can be a consequence of resilience, and it also considered an introduction to growth and higher levels of resilience (Delgado *et al.*, 2017; Koohestani & Baghcheghi, 2021). Studies have shown the relationship between resilience and adult distress tolerance (Cano *et al.*, 2020), the role of resilience in students' distress tolerance (Arici-Ozcan *et al.*, 2019), and the role of resilience in promoting nurses' distress tolerance (Falavarjani & Yeh, 2019).

Another factor that can help achieve social capital and increase adaptation and tolerance of people in the environment is social intelligence. Social intelligence refers to the ability to understand and manage others and to behave wisely in interaction with others (Frankovský & Birknerová, 2014). According to Silvera *et al.*, social intelligence consists of dimensions of social information processing (that emphasize on understanding and explaining behaviors and emotions, as well as verbal and non-verbal messages in human relations, assess the perception of hidden and overt messages), social skills (emphasize behavioral aspects such as the ability to enter and adapt to new situations, and measures communication skills), and social awareness (emphasizes the tendency to be unaware or surprised by events in social situations and measures the ability to actively act according to situation, time and place) (Silvera *et al.*, 2001). In researches, the role of social intelligence in promoting men's distress tolerance (Simons & Gaher, 2005), the relationship between social and emotional intelligence with distress tolerance of students with Internet addiction (Hsieh *et al.*, 2019), positive and significant relationship of spiritual intelligence with students' distress tolerance (Rigi *et al.*, 2019; Hazrat Beigi *et al.*, 2020), the relationship between moral intelligence and distress tolerance in employees (Moghadas & Khaleghi, 2013) have been confirmed. Therefore, a review of the research background indicates a research gap in the relationship between social intelligence and students' distress tolerance.

With the outbreak of the new coronavirus, various aspects of human life have been affected. Students of various disciplines, including student-teachers of Farhangian universities, who in the near future should serve as the pioneers of the country's education system in schools, severely need to receive proper in-person training. Also, observing social distance has caused a great part of courses for these students is done electronically, and this in turn causes problems that affect their psychological state. On the other hand, in recent years, distress tolerance has been studied by some

psychologists for various reasons; so, the role and importance of distress tolerance are so much that today it is considered as an important element in prevalence and persistence of mental injures as well as in prevention and treatment of them (Zvolemky *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, understanding the factors influencing or related to distress tolerance is very important. Hence, considering the effects of Covid-19 on the psychological status of student teachers (Koohestani & Baghcheghi, 2022), including distress tolerance and the role of factors such as social intelligence and resilience and the lack of research on the relationship between these variables in the target population, the present study was conducted to investigate the role of social intelligence and resilience in explaining students' distress tolerance. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the question of whether social intelligence and resilience play any role in explaining students' distress tolerance?

## 2. Materials and methods

The present study was descriptive correlational study. The participants of the study consisted of all male students studying at Farhangian University of Birjand in the academic year 2020/21. Inclusion criteria included studying at Farhangian University, being male, informed consent and volunteering to participate in the research; and exclusion criteria included inaccurate or incomplete questionnaires. The participants were selected from volunteers interested in participation using convenience sampling in the academic year 2020/21. An online questionnaire was developed and sent to students. Students' emails were provided to the researchers by the university's office. Finally, 260 students entered the study.

Data collection instruments included the following questionnaires:

- Social Intelligence Scale: Silvera *et al.* (2001) developed a 21-item Social Intelligence Scale that has three components that measures social skills (regarding social performance e.g. «I often feel uncertain around new people who I don't know»), social awareness (e.g. «I often feel that it is difficult to understand others choices») and social information processing (e.g. «I can predict other people's behaviour») using 7 items each, on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*), but 11 items are scored inversely. The latter two are factors of social perception. Scoring this scale involves summing the item scores for each factor and dividing the sum by the number of items to produce a factor score, with a high score indicating that the participant believes that they have a high ability on that skill set. Silvera *et al.*, also confirmed its content validity

and reported the reliability coefficients for the subscales of social information processing, social skills and social awareness, by Cronbach's alpha method, equal to 0.81, 0.86 and 0.79 respectively (Silvera *et al.*, 2001). In this study, the Persian version of the tool was used. In Rezaei's study in Iran, its face validity was confirmed and the reliability coefficients were obtained for the subscales of social information processing, social skills and social awareness, by Cronbach's alpha method, equal to 0.73, 0.64 and 0.66 respectively (Rezaei, 2010).

- Resilience Scale: Connor and Davidson (2003) developed the 25-item Resilience Scale, which measures five components of competence/personal strength (8 items e.g. «I make my best effort, no matter what»), trust in personal instincts/tolerance of negative emotions (7 items e.g. «I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems»), positive acceptance of change/secure relationships (5 items e.g. «I am able to adapt when changes occur»), restriction or control (3 items e.g. «In times of stress, I know where to find help»), and spiritual effects (2 items e.g. «Sometimes fate or God helps me») on a Likert scale from 0 (*Completely incorrect*) to 4 (*Always true*) and gives an overall score of resilience. The range of scores is between zero and 100, which higher scores indicate greater resilience. Davidson and Connor reported test-retest reliability of this questionnaire as 0.87. Convergent validity of this questionnaire was obtained equal to 0.83 using Kubasa Hardiness Questionnaire (Connor & Davidson, 2003). In Iran, the Resilience Scale was standardized by Kayhani, Taghvaei, Rajabi and Amirpour. The results of simultaneous validity correlation coefficients showed a significant negative correlation between resilience and aggression and a positive and significant correlation with self-efficacy and life satisfaction; also, the reliability was obtained equal to 0.669 and 0.665 using Cronbach's alpha and Spearman-Brown respectively (Keyhani *et al.*, 2015).

- Distress Tolerance Scale: Simons and Gaher (2005) developed this scale that measures the four subscales of tolerance (3 items e.g. «Feeling distressed or upset is unbearable to me»), absorption (3 items e.g. «when I feel distressed or upset, all I can think about is how bad I feel»), appraisal (6 items e.g. «I can tolerate being distressed or upset as well as most people»), and regulation (3 items e.g. «I'll do anything to avoid feeling distressed or upset») on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (*Strongly agree*) to 5 (*Strongly disagree*), and item six is scored reversely, so the range of scores is between 15 and 75, which higher scores on this scale indicate higher distress tolerance. In Simons and Gaher's study, the validity results showed that this scale has good criterion validity and initial good convergence; the reliability was obtained by Cronbach's alpha method equal

to 0.72, 0.82, 0.78 and 70 for subscales of tolerance, absorption and appraisal, and regulation, respectively. The reliability of the whole scale was 0.82 (Simons & Gaher, 2005). In Azizi *et al.*'s study in Iran, content validity was confirmed and high internal consistency for the whole scale ($\alpha = 0.71$) and moderate reliability for the subscales of tolerance, absorption, appraisal and regulation were reported as 0.54, 0.56, 0.42 and 58, respectively (Azizi *et al.*, 2010).

The method of conducting the research was as follows: the questionnaires were designed online, and after identifying the communication channels of the students, including the class groups in Telegram, WhatsApp and Instagram pages, the online questionnaire was widely distributed. Necessary explanations such as the purpose of the research, how to answer the questions and the importance of participants' cooperation in this research were provided in the supplementary text together with the questionnaire, and individuals participated in this research voluntarily. After removing the incomplete cases, 260 proper questionnaires were finally obtained. All ethical principles of the research, including the confidentiality of the questionnaires, the informed consent of the participants in the research and the right to leave the research were observed. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation test and multiple regression with the help of SPSS software (v. 24).

## 3. Results

Based on the obtained results, the mean and standard deviation of the age of the sample was 20.4 ±3.47. Among the sample, 80 people (31.77%) were M.A. student-teachers for secondary and 180 people (69.23%) were M.A. student-teachers for elementary schools. Also, among the sample, 64 people were married (24.61%) and 196 people were unmarried (75.39%). *Table 1* shows the results of Pearson correlation to examine the relationship between resilience and social intelligence with distress tolerance, along with mean and standard deviation of scores. There was no correlation between demographic variables (such as age, field of study, marital status) and students' distress tolerance ($p > 0.05$).

Based on the results of *Table 1*, the calculated correlation coefficients between resilience and social intelligence with distress tolerance were positive and significant at the alpha level of 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Accordingly, it is concluded that resilience and social intelligence are directly related to distress tolerance and people who have higher resilience and social intelligence enjoy more distress tolerance.

Table 1. – Matrix of correlation coefficients between resilience and social intelligence with distress tolerance.

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 - Individual competence | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 - Trust | .641** | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 - Tolerating negative emotions | .473** | .490** | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 4 - Control | .221** | .192* | .279** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 5 - Spiritual effects | .498** | .302** | .463** | .259** | 1 | | | | | | |
| 6 - Resilience | .751** | .754** | .771** | .418** | .518** | 1 | | | | | |
| 7 - Social information processing | .498** | .514** | .479** | .246** | .607** | .538** | 1 | | | | |
| 8 - Social awareness | .217** | .175** | .191** | .327** | .324** | .306** | .501** | 1 | | | |
| 9 - Social skills | .438** | .512** | .606** | .296** | .648** | .608** | .314** | .634** | 1 | | |
| 10 - Social intelligence | .509** | .541** | .577** | .259** | .696** | .847** | .601** | .869** | .499** | 1 | |
| 11 - Distress tolerance | .324** | .322** | .511** | .205** | .529** | .608** | .432** | .501** | .633** | .473** | 1 |
| Average | 14.604 | 14.846 | 16.046 | 16.108 | 16.665 | 78.269 | 28.98 | 24.13 | 20.47 | 73.58 | 41.462 |
| Standard deviation | 3.544 | 3.398 | 5.127 | 5.504 | 1.777 | 11.396 | 4.060 | 2.769 | 4.509 | 9.025 | 6.023 |

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Multiple regression test was used to explain distress tolerance through resilience variable. The Durbin-Watson statistic was used to examine the independence of the remainders. The value of the Durbin-Watson statistic was 2.314, which considering that its value is in the range of 1.5 to 2.5, it can be said that the presumption of independence of the remainders has been observed. The normality of the distribution of scores was examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which because of the lack of significance of the obtained values, the assumption of the normality of the distribution of scores was approved ($p < 0.05$). To investigate the existence of multiple alignment between the predicting variables, tolerance indices and variance inflation factor (VIF) were used, which according to the obtained results, no deviation from the multiple alignment assumption was observed. The value of obtained F to investigate the regression model is equal to 76.742, which is significant at the alpha level less than 0.01, which indicates that resilience can well explain the changes related to distress tolerance and indicates the appropriateness of the provided regression model.

According to the results of *Table 2*, the multiple correlation coefficient between the independent variables and the dependent variable is equal to 0.776. Also, the value of the adjusted R-square is equal to 0.594, which shows that resilience explained 59.40% of the variance of distress tolerance. Based on the results, resilience components including individual competence ($\beta = 0.244$; $p = 0.008$), negative emotion tolerance ($\beta = 0.467$; $p = 0.007$), control ($\beta = 0.108$; $p = 0.003$) and spiritual effects ($\beta = 0.518$, $p = 0.021$) positively explain distress tolerance.

Multiple regression test was used to explain distress tolerance through social intelligence variable. The Durbin-Watson statistic was used to examine the independence of the remainders. The value of the Durbin-Watson statistic was equal to 1.883, which considering that its value is in range of 1.5 to 2.5, it can be said that the presumption of independence of the remainders has been observed. The normality of the distribution of scores was examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which owing to the lack of significance of the obtained values, the assumption of the normality of the distribution of scores was approved ($p < 0.05$). To investigate the existence of multiple alignment between the predicting variables, tolerance indices and variance inflation factor (VIF) were used, which according to the obtained results, no deviation from the multiple alignment assumption was observed. The value of the obtained F to study the regression model is equal to 57.667, which is significant at the alpha level less than 0.01, indicating that social intelligence can well explain the changes related to distress tolerance, as well as the appropriateness of the regression model.

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*Table 2. – Results of regression analysis to explain distress tolerance based on resilience variable.*

| Model | Non-standardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficients | t | Sig. | R | Adjusted $R^2$ | F value | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | SE | Beta | | | | | | |
| Constant | -3.619 | 1.543 | | -2.423 | 0.012 | .776 | .594 | 76.74 | $p < 0.001$ |
| Individual competence | .415 | .089 | .244 | 4.644 | $p < 0.001$ | | | | |
| Trust | -.115 | .097 | -.065 | -1.181 | 0.074 | | | | |
| Negative emotion tolerance | .549 | .047 | .467 | 11.717 | $p < 0.001$ | | | | |
| Control | .166 | .045 | .152 | 3.316 | $p < 0.001$ | | | | |
| Spiritual effects | 1.754 | .143 | .518 | 12.283 | $p < 0.001$ | | | | |

*Table 3. – Results of regression analysis to explain distress tolerance based on social intelligence variable.*

| Model | Non-standardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficients | t | Sig. | R | Adjusted $R^2$ | F value | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | SE | Beta | | | | | | |
| Constant | -3.262 | 6.709 | | -.486 | 0.672 | .559 | .354 | 57.667 | $p < 0.001$ |
| Social information processing | 1.231 | .211 | .353 | 5.842 | $p < 0.001$ | | | | |
| Social awareness | 1.323 | .258 | .259 | 5.120 | $p < 0.001$ | | | | |
| Social skills | 0.642 | .190 | .205 | 3.376 | $p < 0.001$ | | | | |

*Table 4. – Multiple regression analysis to explain students' distress tolerance through social intelligence and resilience.*

| Model | Non-standardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficients | t | Sig. | R | Adjusted $R^2$ | F value | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | SE | Beta | | | | | | |
| Constant | 44.038 | 1.338 | | 32.914 | $> 0.01$ | 0.812 | 0.651 | 78.012 | 0.01 |
| Social Intelligence | 0.172 | 0.024 | 0.429 | 7.166 | $> 0.01$ | | | | |
| Resilience | 0.177 | 0.023 | 0.512 | 7.769 | $> 0.01$ | | | | |

According to the results of *Table 3*, the multiple correlation coefficient between the independent variables and the dependent variable is equal to 0.599. Also, the value of the adjusted R-square is equal to 0.354, which shows that social intelligence explained 35.4% of the variance of distress tolerance. Based on the results, the components of social intelligence including social information processing (β = 0.353; p < 0.001), social awareness (β = 0.259; p = 0.006) and social skills (β = 0.205; p < 0.001) positively explain distress tolerance.

Simultaneous multiple regression analysis was used to explain students' distress tolerance through social intelligence and resilience.

In *Table 4*, the obtained F value for the regression model is 78.012, which is significant at the alpha level less than .01. This shows that social intelligence and resilience can well explain the changes related to students' distress tolerance and indicates the appropriateness of the proposed regression model. The adjusted R-squared ($R^2$) value is 0.651, which shows that the intelligence and resilience account for 65% of the variance of students' distress tolerance. Value of standardized regression coefficients (Beta) are as follows: social intelligence (β = 0.429; p < .01) and resilience (β = 0.512; p < .01). Therefore, it is concluded that social intelligence and resilience positively and significantly predicts students' distress tolerance.

## 4. Discussion

Distress tolerance refers to the degree to which a person is able to tolerate negative psychological or physical states. Distress tolerance is increasingly seen as an important element in creating new insights into the onset and maintenance of psychopathology as well as prevention and treatment of it. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the role of social intelligence and resilience in explaining students' distress tolerance (a study in Covid-19 period).

The results showed that there is a direct and significant relationship between social intelligence and its components with students' distress tolerance. The results of regression analysis showed that the components of social intelligence including social information processing, social awareness and social skills positively explain students' distress tolerance. From the above finding, it can be deduced that with increasing social intelligence, students' distress tolerance increases. The above finding is consistent with the results of previous studies in this field. The results of Simons and Gaher's study showed that social intelligence plays a role in promot-

ing men's distress tolerance (Simons & Gaher, 2005). Hsieh *et al.*'s study showed that there was a negative and significant relationship between social intelligence and psychological distress of students with Internet addiction (Hsieh *et al.*, 2019). In explaining the above finding, it can be said that social intelligence is a skill that the holder can control her/his spirits through self-awareness, improve it through self-management, understand it through empathy and behave in ways, through relationship management, to raise the morale of oneself and others. In other words, social intelligence is the ability to understand and manage people and act wisely in human relationships (Hernez-Broome, 2012). In fact, the social intelligence contributes to the ability to be consistent in goal orientation when experiencing psychological stress with self-control and improving negative emotions by processing the social information (that emphasize on understanding and predicting behaviors and emotions, as well as verbal and non-verbal messages in human relations), social skills (the ability to enter and adapt to new situations), and social awareness (the tendency to be unaware or surprised by events in social situations) (Silvera *et al.*, 2001).

Another finding showed that there is a direct and significant relationship between resilience and its components with students' distress tolerance. The results of regression analysis showed that the components of resilience including competence / personal strength, trust in personal instincts / tolerance of negative emotions, positive acceptance of change / secure relationships, restraint/control and spirituality positively explain students' distress tolerance. From the above finding, it can be deduced that with increasing resilience, students' distress tolerance increases. The above finding is consistent with the results of previous studies in this field. In this regard, the study of Cano *et al.* showed that high resilience increases the distress tolerance of adults (Cano *et al.*, 2020). The study of Arici-Ozcan *et al.* indicated that there is a significant relationship between resilience and students' distress tolerance (Arici-Ozcan *et al.*, 2019). Also, the study of Falavarjani *et al.* showed that improving resilience contributes to increase the social adjustment, optimism and distress tolerance of female nurses (Falavarjani & Yeh, 2019). In explaining the above finding, it can be said that resilience as a tendency for self-correction causes the person to find the way to be on the right path and be able to resist the problems, challenges and difficulties of life (Coşkun *et al.*, 2014). Resilient people are flexible and adapt quickly to environmental changes, and after facing stressful situations, they improve their mental state and suffer from less distress, but people with low resilience find it difficult to adapt to new conditions and return to their previous state (Mehrinejad *et al.*, 2015). Also, people with

high levels of psychological resilience have a high sense of accomplishment and success, and enjoy more self-confidence. On the other hand, when facing stress, they usually have a source of internal control that can take responsibility for existing actions and conditions and more likely will have better performance on different dimensions of their lives (Castillo, 2006). Resilience enables people to use their potential in difficult and exhausting situations and to use the challenges ahead as a launching pad for their pride. Thus, resilience by reducing these stressors and problems can ensure the mental health of individuals and increase their efficiency and productivity (Shatté *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, resilience acts as a protective factor against stress and psychological pressures and supports the learner to improve her/his situation in difficult and inappropriate situations and gain more tolerance.

Our study has limitations to be considered. Due to the nature of correlational study design, it is difficult to derive causal relationships from the analysis. A longitudinal study is more powerful to determine an association and provides more evidence for possible causal interpretation. The limited participants and the type of research, which is correlational, create limitations in the field of generalization of findings, interpretation and etiological documents of the studied variables that should be considered. Another limitation of this study is the use of self-report method to measure students' psychological variables. It is suggested that interviews be used in future studies alongside self-report tools. Finally, according to the results of this study, it is suggested that student counseling centers in universities help improve the health of students in the Covid-19 period by holding workshops on social intelligence management and resilience.

## 5. Conclusion

Social intelligence and resilience were positively and significantly related to students' distress tolerance. In total, 65% of variation in students' distress tolerance was attributed to social intelligence and resilience. The prevalence of Covid-19 severely affects the mental health of individuals, including distress tolerance, so in order to prevent and control the damage caused by it, various strategies can be used; and in severe cases, psychological interventions such as developing social intelligence and effective resilience can be applied. Therefore, it is possible to improve distress tolerance in college students through enhancing social intelligence and resilience using educational courses.

*Ethical considerations*

This study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Institutional Review Board and the Ethics Committee of Birjand University of Medical Sciences (approval code: IR.BUMS. REC.1399.429). All participants were informed about the study objectives, their freedom to participate in or withdraw from the investigation. All participants had provided informed consent before participation.

*Conflict of interest*

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

# APPENDIX

## *CD-RISC-25*

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25) is a self-administered scale containing 25 items that exhibit good psychometric properties.

The following represent the items for the 25-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale – noting that the items listed here are not a complete representation of the scale:

1. I am able to adapt when changes occur.
2. I have one close and secure relationship.
3. Sometimes fate or God helps me.
4. I can deal with whatever comes my way.
5. Past successes give me confidence.
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. I believe most things happen for a reason.
10. I make my best effort, no matter what.
11. I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles.
12. Even when hopeless, I do not give up.

13. In times of stress, I know where to find help.
14. Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly.
15. I prefer to take the lead in problem-solving.
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 make unpopular or difficult decisions.
19. I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear, and anger.
20. I have to act on a hunch.
21. I have a strong sense of purpose in life.
22. I feel like I am in control.
23. I like challenges.
24. I work to attain goals.
25. I take pride in my achievements.

Connor and Davidson (2003) developed the 25-item Resilience Scale, which measures five components of competence / personal strength (items 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 23, 24, & 25), trust in personal instincts / tolerance of negative emotions (items 6, 7, 14, 15, 18, 19, & 20), positive acceptance of change / secure relationships (items 1, 2, 4, 5, & 8), restriction or control (items 13, 21, & 22), and spiritual effects (items 3 & 9) on a Likert scale from 0 (*Completely incorrect*) to 4 (*Always true*) and gives an overall score of resilience.

Connor, K. M., & Davidson, J. R. (2003). Development of a new resilience scale: The Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC). *Depression and Anxiety*, *18*(2), 76-82.

### Distress Tolerance Scale (DTS)

Think of times that you feel distressed or upset. Circle the item that best describes your beliefs about feeling distressed or upset. Please answer regarding your feelings of distress 'in general', that is, on the average.

The Distress Tolerance Scale (previously Distress Tolerance Questionnaire, DTQ) is a 15 item self-report measure of emotional distress tolerance.

Simons and Gaher (2005) developed this scale that measures the four subscales of tolerance (3 items), absorption (3 items), appraisal (6 items), and regulation (3 items) on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (*Strongly agree*) to 5 (*Strongly disagree*), and item six is scored reversely, so the range of scores is between 15 and 75, which higher scores on this scale indicate higher distress tolerance.

| Strongly Disagree | Mildly Disagree | Agree and Disagree Equally | Mildly Agree | Strongly Agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1. Feeling distressed or upset is unbearable to me. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2. When I feel distressed or upset, all I can think about is how bad I feel. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3. I can't handle feeling distressed or upset. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4. My feelings of distress are so intense that they completely take over. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5. There's nothing worse than feeling distressed or upset. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6. I can tolerate being distressed or upset as well as most people. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7. My feelings of distress or being upset are not acceptable |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8. I'll do anything to avoid feeling distressed or upset. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9. Other people seem to be able to tolerate feeling distressed or upset better than I can. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 10. Being distressed or upset is always a major ordeal for me. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 11. I am ashamed of myself when I feel distressed or upset. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 12. My feelings of distress or being upset scare me. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 13. I'll do anything to stop feeling distressed or upset. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 14. When I feel distressed or upset, I must do something about it immediately. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 15. When I feel distressed or upset, I cannot help but concentrate on how bad the distress actually feels. |

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*Social Intelligence Scale*
*Tromso Social Intelligence Scale (TSIS)*

1. I can predict other people's behaviour.
2. I often feel that it is difficult to understand others choices.
3. I know how my actions will make others feel.
4. I often feel uncertain around new people who I don't know.
5. People often surprise me with the things they do.
6. I understand other people's feelings.
7. I fit in easily in social situations.
8. Other people become angry with me without me being able to explain why.
9. I understand other's wishes.
10. I am good at entering new situations and meeting people for the first time.
11. It seems as though people are often angry or irritated with me when I say what I think.
12. I have a hard time getting along with other people.
13. I find people unpredictable.
14. I can often understand what others are trying to accomplish without the need for them to say anything.
15. It takes a long time for me to get to know others well.
16. I have often hurt others without realizing it.
17. I can predict how others will react to my behaviour.
18. I am good at getting on good terms with new people.
19. I can often understand what others really mean through their expression, body language, etc.
20. I frequently have problems finding good conversation topics.
21. I am often surprised by others reactions to what I do.

1 = Describes me extremely poorly; 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 = Describes me extremely well.

Social Skills (items: 4, 7, 10, 12, 15, 18, and 20), Social Awareness (items: 2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 16, and 21) and Social Information Processing (items: 1, 2, 6, 9, 14, 17, and 19).

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## Riassunto

*Comprendere i fattori che influenzano o sono correlati alla tolleranza al disagio è molto importante. Pertanto, lo scopo di questo studio era di indagare il ruolo dell'intelligenza sociale e della resilienza nello spiegare la tolleranza al disagio degli studenti universitari. Uno studio descrittivo di correlazione è stato condotto su 260 studenti universitari maschi dell'Università Farhangian di Birjand (Iran) nel 2020/21. Hanno completato la scala di intelligenza sociale, la scala di resilienza e il questionario sulla tolleranza al disagio. I risultati hanno mostrato che esisteva una relazione diretta e significativa tra intelligenza sociale e tolleranza al distress (r = 0,473; p < 0,001), nonché resilienza e tolleranza al distress (r = 0,608; p = 0,008). Inoltre, il coefficiente di determinazione ha mostrato che le componenti dell'intelligenza sociale e della resilienza fino al 65% possono spiegare la varianza della tolleranza al disagio degli studenti. Interventi psicologici come la promozione dell'intelligenza sociale e della resilienza efficace possono essere utilizzati per prevenire e controllare il disagio degli studenti universitari, soprattutto durante la pandemia di Covid-19.*

*Parole chiave:* Intelligenza sociale; Resilienza; Studenti universitari; Tolleranza al disagio.