

The Art of Resilience:

A Mixed Methods Investigation into
the Factors and Processes that Influence
Young Women's Resilience in New
Delhi, India.

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Abstract

Resilience is a widely researched phenomenon. It is understood as ‘a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity’ (Luthar et al, 2000, p.543) and is characterised by a complex interplay of personal, relational, and contextual protective factors (e.g., Cicchetti, 2010; Masten, 2001, Rutter, 1987; Ungar, 2011a). Despite not being explicitly outlined, psychological resilience is integral for achieving the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and 5 (Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment) by 2030. However, there is little understanding of the specific factors that contribute to women and girls’ resilience, and the broader processes that mould them, particularly in complex societies where patriarchy dominates (Liebenberg & Ungar, 2009).

This research study adopts a mixed methods approach to illuminate young women’s narratives of resilience in the context of an all-female college in New Delhi, India. It applies Ungar (2011a)’s Socio-Ecological Resilience (SER) theory to identify the protective factors that are promotive of resilience, and the influence of the wider socio-cultural context in shaping them. The main findings suggest that young women prioritise numerous individual and relational protective factors that facilitate the resilience process. Those with an internal locus of control are more likely to have access to a greater variety of protective factors. Resilience should be considered more than a predictable set of universally defined protective factors and outcomes as specific socio-cultural contexts hold significant influence in enabling and/or inhibiting young women’s access to protective resources.

Overall, the findings reveal a culturally sensitive understanding of young women’s resilience in New Delhi, India. This can work towards advancing resilience theory and informing relevant resilience-building interventions. The findings can help to accelerate India’s progress towards achieving SDG 3 & 5 by 2030 and spotlight the importance of women’s resilience in the post-2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

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Glossary of Terms

ABR – Arts-Based Research
BBBP - Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
BERA – British Education Research Association
CD – Coefficient of Determination
CD-RISC – Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale
CFA – Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI – Comparative Fit Index
CI – Confidence Interval
CSR – Child Sex Ratio
EFA – Exploratory Factor Analysis
EWS – Economically Weaker Section
FC – Family Cohesion
GO – Goal Orientation
GOI – Government of India
IPV - Intimate Partner Violence
KMO – Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LGBTQ+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer + Community
MDG – Millennium Development Goals
NCC – National Cadet Corps
OBC – Other Backwards Class
PC – Personal Competence
PCA – Principal Component Analysis
READ – Resilience Scale for Adolescents
RMSEA – Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
RQ – Research Question
RS – Resilience Scale
RSA – Resilience Scale for Adults
SC – Scheduled Caste
SC – Social Competence
SD – Standard Deviation
SDG - Sustainable Development Goals
SE – Standard Error
SEM – Structural Equation Modelling
SER – Socio-Ecological Resilience
SES – Socio-economic Status
SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SR – Social Resources
SRMR – Standardised Root Mean Square Residual
SS – Structured Style
ST – Scheduled Tribe
TLI – Tucker-Lewis Index
UN - United Nations
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WEF – World Economic Forum
WEP – Women Entrepreneurship Program
WHO - World Health Organisation

Preface

“It’s all Character Building”

Throw it back to April 2022 and I’m on the side of a busy highway in New Delhi. The raw and blistering 44-degree heat (climate change is real folks) of a Monday morning is softened by the trees above me. My Uber driver has just yelled “*Two minutes please*” from the opposite side of the road, whilst walking off with one of the car’s tyres. The man to the right of him is blowing up the tyre by foot pump. The man to the left of him is strategically launching small bags of peanuts into fast-moving car windows and to families of five balanced carefully on top of motorbikes. I’m standing next to what seems to be a Glastonbury festival for mosquitoes and my skin almost automatically turns bright red and itches all over. My senses are on absolute overload. All I can hear is the fast-moving pace of the traffic and the complex sounds of what New Delhi has to offer. Oh yes, its rush hour ...even more of a hectic dash than normal. Hundreds of people pour out of Delhi Cantt railway station every few minutes. They cram onto already packed busses, full to the brim of commuters returning home from work. Turns out, my Uber has broken down, and I’m now stood on the side of what feels like the busiest road in India.

Minutes before, I had visited a local college in New Delhi for the first day of my thesis data collection. A day that for nearly three years I’d been waiting for, but it was a day that coincided with a national taxi strike which also meant that every car, auto-rickshaw, and push peddle bike were unavailable, busy, or hiking their prices enormously. The girls that I had become friendly with back at the college had been trying tirelessly to book any form of transport home, which after an hour, wasn’t looking promising. Just outside of the college gates, one of the girls was massively giving it out to a taxi driver. This taxi driver had increased his price from 200 rupees to nearly 2000 (that’s a jump from £2 to £20 – might seem relatively reasonable, but it’s actually pretty extortionate). This final price was not originally quoted on the Uber app. She uttered a few swear words and sent him on his way. We turned to our phones and tried to book any form of transport as the sun started to set. In those 45 minutes, I got talking to her a bit more. She was holding a copy of *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë and humming ‘Dynamite’ by BTS. She told me about her passion for English Literature and that her dream was to study at Oxford University. She mentioned that she is encouraged by her parents and college staff to pursue her goals and has worked

with her professor to publish a poetry book. Our conversation was cut short by a notification that Mr Singh was on his way to pick me up.

Ten minutes into the journey, I hear a loud bang, and before you know it, we've swerved into the side of the highway. Mr Singh gets out and inspects the vehicle. He opens the door and shouts "*Get out! Get out!*". As I made my way out of the car, the heat hit me. It's like stepping into a blazing furnace. Even at 5pm, it's still the same temperature, probably even hotter. In those '*two minutes*' that Mr Singh had said to me – which turned out to be 90 – I realise that my response to a stressful situation is something that I probably need to work on. I'm a doom-monger, a pessimist, a cynic, a worrier, an avid doubter, someone who catastrophizes every single little thing that might happen to me. If one thing goes wrong, that's me done for, I'm out. Let's rather put this in a positive light – I'd say that I'm a planner, or a prepper if you will. I plan for every eventuality, and if something goes wrong (which I always expect it to do) I've got a stringent plan in place. If something goes right on the other hand, I'm pleasantly surprised. So, in that moment, my brain is working on overdrive, thinking of ways to improve my current situation...somehow.

At that moment, Mr Singh heroically dodges through 10 lanes of traffic whilst rolling the tyre and shouting "*Good as new*" in Hindi – God bless you Mr Singh. I look down at the plaster covering the hole in the tyre, but at that point, I would've gotten into a car with no roof, doors, and windshield if it meant going somewhere. Myself, and a crowd of people who had recently gathered, watch as Mr Singh puts the tyre back on with only two out of the four bolts used to previously secure it. I share a concerned expression with a lady to my left, shrug, and get into the car. I am certainly now relieved that I'm actually in a moving vehicle and heading back to the hotel where a shower is on the cards.

Ding, ding ding. Mr Singh turns around to me at the traffic lights, with a look of sheer horror on his face. Something is wrong. We lock eyes for a few seconds, I glance down at the car's dashboard...there's no petrol.

I could tell from this moment; this trip would be both an adventure and **character building**.

Journey's Past

Historically, the 'Young' tribe (of three people) has neither been keen explorers or adventurers. Dad, a 'posh Geordie' as his friends like to call him (he's from the affluent side of Monkseaton and has now lost his accent), has been a geography teacher for over 50 years,

as well as the occasional headmaster. Throughout his career, he has led countless groups of teenagers right to the top of turbulent tectonic plates in Iceland and ventured inside of active volcanoes. However, terrified by the threat of bugs, flora, fauna, and the heat, has vowed never to leave England's garden county (unless it's to his beloved Newcastle). "*The bugs, Susan, the bugs. Jesus Christ Susan, I'm being eaten alive*", he'd often shout hysterically to my mother on a hot day in Kent...in our own garden. Mum is a little more intrepid. She grew up with my grandad who worked in the army with the Gurkha's, so they often lived in different cities in Asia, a few years at a time. She lived in places such as Malaysia, Borneo, and Brunei, and can recall monsoon seasons, going diving in exotic places, and learning different languages. Mind you, she also lived in the world famous – Isle of Sheppey which trumps them all I'd say.

My parents don't really do 'foreign holidays', and hate sleeping in strange beds, so growing up, we tended to spend our holidays in Costa del Newcastle. The travel up to Newcastle was often planned with military precision, which sometimes made it feel more like tactical strikes than Summer getaways. We'd stay for two weeks in a lovely Slaley cottage, often spending our days in the centre of Newcastle and the countryside. Whenever the weather was looking pretty dire, Mum used to say, "*Come on, we're going to the beach, no one will be there*". This would often be followed by Dad who would always say "*Eleanor, you know this, geographers never get a day off*". Despite memories of being drenched, cold and tired after beach hikes, I still have a deep personal connection with the coast, especially Whitley Bay and Tynemouth. Our big trip was to New York City back in 2013. Those 10 days were full of touristy activities, like sailing around Manhattan, visiting the Empire State Building, and getting bombarded by fake Marvel superheroes in Times Square. I would often stay in the hotel room on most evenings, as mum and dad wanted a few 'diet cokes' at our nearest English-themed pub. We'd also do short day trips to Calais, which was close enough as we lived in Kent. We'd get on the ferry and go straight to Auchan, France's biggest supermarket. Mum and Dad would often stock up on cheap wine, beer and Orangina, which at the time, we thought was sold exclusively in France. We stopped these trips in 2008 when I started going to secondary school, but I'll never forget that moment when my mum realised that Orangina¹ was being sold in our local Sainsbury's, a mere two miles away...at half the price.

¹ I must note that after some extensive research, Orangina started to be sold in the UK in 2001. We kept going to Calais until 2008.

The Young's, including myself, aren't entirely adventurous. I've never really been one for leaving the comforts of my own home for long periods of time. That person just wasn't me. I didn't spend my pre-university days on an all-girls holiday to Zante or Ibiza, neither did I spend a gap year hostelling around Asia or climbing up Kilimanjaro in a tie-dye t-shirt raising awareness for something. I love my home comforts...it makes me feel nauseous even thinking about being away from the 'Real Housewives' franchise for weeks at a time. What I did want to do however, was step outside my comfort zone and go to the university furthest away from home. I thought I'd follow in the footsteps of my dad and do a bachelor's degree in Geography at Newcastle University in 2015. After graduating, I chose to pursue the element of the course I loved so much – Sustainable Development – and enrolled onto a Master's in 2018. I was led by wonderful supervisors, supported by a great team of colleagues, and had the chance to conduct research on young women's empowerment in Ghana. The sheer love of what I was doing, and a love for who I was slowly becoming, spurred me onto do a PhD in 2020. As you may know, 2020 probably wasn't the best time to be a postgraduate researcher, but after years of waiting, shrouded in uncertainty, I got the greenlight to collect the data I required for my thesis in 2022. A trip of a lifetime that I had been dreaming about, but never had the momentum to pursue...until now.

Flash forward to February 2022. Conducting actual physical research in India was on the cards, and I was elated. Whilst I knew this research trip was for me and my PhD, deep down I knew I'd also be travelling for my parents. Whilst I'd travelled to Ghana for my Master's research, this trip to India felt entirely different. I felt more grown up, mature and happier, a large step from deliberating whether to quit university entirely back in 2016. I think I take after my dad, he's quite overly emotional and sometimes can't cope. I also take after my mum – constantly fretful in times of safety but stoic in a crisis. I think we are all contradictory souls at heart – a mixture of both intrepid and afraid, outgoing, and solitary. The measure of your sanity, I guess, is where you draw the line between these polar opposites. Perhaps this adventure would give me the chance for some much-needed recalibration.

I'm not afraid to admit I have weaknesses. It is these weaknesses that probably would make this a '*misadventure*' rather than '*adventure*'. I bet you're keen to know, so I will list just a few of them:

- I am a terribly anxious traveller (if I could be at the airport 5 days before my flight, I would),
- I am overly cautious about what I eat abroad – that means no ice, salad, fruit, ice-cream...anything apart from bread really,
- I have zero navigational skills and am unable to follow relatively simple instructions,
- I am not one for nature or the outdoors - if you ask me to go camping, I will think you're joking,
- I do not like sleeping in a bed that's not my own,
- If I am stressed, I will go silent or use my high, squeaky voice to tell you that "*I'm fine*" (I'm obviously lying),
- Whilst I am exceptional at learning people's names (if you met me once, 12 years ago, I will probably still remember your full name), I have absolutely no ability to learn a language,
- My body doesn't bode well in temperatures higher than 26 degrees.

However, when asked by my supervisor – Professor Pauline Dixon, if I still wanted to go, I said yes. I will always say yes. I often need to be pushed, but then I will throw myself into each and every experience. I will accept '*most*' dares. I will accept maddening offers and crazy adventures as doing so has got me where I am today. I must look like a square to others, and an obvious rule-follower, but I think I am someone who eschews order for chaos. I love being thrown in at the deep end. I love a challenge, stress, and the drama of it all, it's when I work best. I feel excited when a journey is organic and unpredictable. Am I looking for an adventure?

The answer is YES.

What's this All About?

There is a tendency among some academics and early career researchers to pretend we know it all, adopting a mask of clear-cut professionalism and absolute authority. But, a lot of the time (not applicable to everyone), we don't know everything. My travels to Ghana and India especially, have told me something clear – that I am an utter fool. Whilst you can spend years and years reading online articles, books, and reports about your topic in the location you will be collecting the data, unless you are there to experience at least a miniscule portion of it, you know very little. I went into data collection owning my ignorance. I won't be able to

understand young women's stories of resilience, and act like it's all familiar to me – why should I? I want to listen, learn, and feel absolutely everything I possibly can. I want to dive in headfirst.

The most glorious and most difficult thing about being an early career researcher, is that I get to observe and learn about people's lives. Within my field of research, I have the opportunity to learn interesting things about women's daily realities and understand how they perceive the world around them. I get to learn about times where they have shown courage, confidence, and resilience. I also get to learn about some of the most cruel and heart-breaking experiences too. Sometimes I have listened to incredibly difficult and painful narratives from groups of young women, which relate to mental health, abuse, cruelty, and death. Most of the time I did nothing. Sometimes, there is absolutely nothing I can do. I can give them a cuddle, but I can't intervene as an outsider in their lives. Other times, the reality was the only thing I had, the only positive contribution I could make was to provide them with the space to tell their story among friends and where I can observe, hear their testimonies, and bear witness. Then go back to the hotel for a little cry.

This research explores the narratives of resilience, among a sample of young women who attended an all-female college located in New Delhi, India. It explores the factors and processes that they have used to adapt to adverse conditions and work towards resilience and provide an insight into how context and culture have shaped these processes. Some of the things that are captured in this thesis are shocking, upsetting, and disturbing. Some things are uplifting, influential and inspiring. Some of it may make you cry with sadness...or happiness. Even if this thesis can't encompass it all, if 100,000 words only captures a corner of the experience, the human eye sees more. I saw and experienced everything I possibly could, and I want to share as much as I possibly can with you. So, I share with you the stories of resilience, coming from some of the bravest, talented, and most amazing young women I got the pleasure of meeting in New Delhi.

In classic Young style, I'm getting emotional even writing this.

Here it goes.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Back in May 2020, during the height of the pandemic, I stumbled across a captivating article published by UN Women, titled ‘*Ten things you can learn from women’s resilience that will help you stay strong in the time of Covid-19*’ (UN Women, 2020). The article recognises the powerful accomplishments of numerous female leaders, such as Malala Yousafzai and Eleanor Roosevelt, who during difficult times, the world has turned to for inspiration and motivation. Among all, one story stood out from the rest – *Frida Kahlo*. Frida was a young woman from Mexico City who had to endure multiple hardships throughout her life course, which often confined her to her bed. She used art, especially painting, as a meaningful tool to help her cope with, and tackle, her own personal crises. One quote in particular resonated with me:

“At the end of the day, we can endure much more than we think we can.”

(UN Women, 2020)

Frida’s story encapsulates the concept of resilience. Her quote emphasises that people have the astonishing ability to overcome adversity and cope with a variety of complicated and incredibly difficult situations, often without realising it. However, everyone’s experiences and abilities are unique. Why is it that some individuals can feel overwhelmed by minor and/or major stressors, whilst others may flourish despite the risks that they are exposed to? Since the 1970’s, several theorists within the field of psychology have strived to understand the protective and health-enhancing capacities of individuals and how these resources influence positive developmental pathways and future trajectories (e.g., Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Glantz & Johnson, 1999; Rutter, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1982; Cowen, 1994). Decades later, resilience research persists with one key objective in mind - *What makes people resilient in the face of adversity?*

It is Frida’s personal story of resilience that illustrates the rationale of this thesis research, which seeks to explore the factors and processes that influence young women’s resilience in the context of New Delhi, India. This research study investigates these complex factors in detail, exploring how to accelerate progress towards achieving the United Nations’ (UN)

Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and 5 (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment) (United Nations, 2023a) by 2030. The findings also contribute important knowledge towards the significance of women's resilience in informing the post-2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

This introductory chapter initially outlines the rationale of this research study, prior to presenting the construct of resilience, clarifying its definition, key components, and the central objectives of resilience research. A brief history is given of resilience in the development sector, with a particular focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015). This section also considers the link between resilience and elements of SDG 3 and 5, and India's current progress towards achieving these goals. It also presents the significance and contribution of this research study, prior to outlining the structure that this thesis will follow.

1.2. The Case for Researching Resilience

This section of the introduction considers the key reasons as to why the researcher chose to undertake this thesis research. It initially considers why resilience was selected as the main focus of research, the reasons for sampling a group of young women in the context of New Delhi, India, and finally, the motivation behind using arts-based methods to understand women's resilience.

1.2.1. Why Study Resilience?

Humans typically encounter a variety of difficulties and challenges throughout their lifetimes, ranging from minor to major life events. Bonanno & Mancini (2008) estimate that most individuals will experience at least one potentially adverse event in their lifetimes. In this case, the term '*potentially*' is significant, as it draws attention to the differences in how people react to life events and whether adversity occurs because of it. It is the field of resilience that seeks to explore the dynamic processes that contribute to positive development (Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2005), or in other words, why some individuals can endure adverse experiences, and why others may find it more difficult.

Much of the current resilience literature identifies that individual attributes, access to supportive and cohesive family units, and the availability of social support structures that are external to the family, are the sole factors that contribute to young people's resilience (e.g.,

Luthar et al, 2000; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Rutter, 1990, 2002; Masten et al, 2009). However, as the study of resilience has continued to grow over the past six decades, and spread across several different contexts and cultures, so has the complexity of defining what resilience is and the protective resources that underpin its processes. Many resilience researchers, such as Masten (2001, 2014a) and colleagues (Masten & Reed, 2002) argue that the protective factors outlined above are only ‘the shortlist’, as there are potentially broader and more substantial factors at play. Similarly, Theron (2016a, p.638) argues that as much of the literature is western-based, these ‘generic mechanisms’ are considered as insufficient to completely explain resilience, as they tend to overlook the contextual and cultural factors that are dependent on fostering the resilience process (e.g., Masten, 2014b; Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar, 2011a, 2013, 2015; Ungar et al, 2007; Wright et al, 2013).

Despite accelerations in global resilience research, many researchers continue to pay limited attention to understanding the diverse array of factors that influence positive outcomes for young people in developing country contexts. There is a paucity of research that captures youth-directed understandings of resilience and gathers insight into how their social and physical ecologies enable and/or inhibit accesses to protective resources (Masten, 2014b; Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar, 2011a, 2013, 2015; Ungar et al, 2007; Wright et al, 2013). Whilst there are several studies that adopt a cultural and contextual lens to investigate young people’s resilience-supporting mechanisms, they are typically conducted within South African contexts (e.g., Malindi, 2014; Phasha, 2010; Theron & Malindi, 2010; Theron & Theron, 2013; Theron, 2016a, 2020; van Rensburg et al, 2018). Yet, the factors that contribute to positive development are dependent on specific socio-cultural contexts, which cannot be overlooked when conducting resilience research with youth from diverse backgrounds (Ungar, 2005, 2011a). Consequently, there is still not much that is known regarding how young people in other developing country contexts, such as India, navigate their complex social environments and work towards resilience. Additionally, whilst there is much research that emphasises the protective role of exhibiting an internal locus of control (e.g., Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Luthar, 1991; Rutter, 2013), there are a limited number of investigations that have been conducted specifically with samples of young women from culturally diverse backgrounds. There is, therefore, a gap in the literature that this research begins to address.

1.2.2. Why Young Women in New Delhi, India?

The development of women's resilience has been seen to have direct, and indirect inferences with fostering well-being, inclusive growth and driving sustainable development (UN Women, 2020). The article published by UN Women (2020) highlights that when women and girls have access to the opportunities, resources, and experiences, that are meaningful for their resilience, then they are likely to possess the power to facilitate innovation despite the odds and build strength among communities (UN Women, 2020). Supporting women's resilience, therefore, can help to unleash the human capital that is necessary for a country's social, economic, and political development, and build a better future for all (UN Women, 2020). However, not all women have access to such privileges and opportunity structures to access health-promoting resources required for resilience, particularly in culturally complex and stratified societies.

India is heavily patriarchal, with an entrenched history of unequal power distributions between genders, which has ultimately shaped the country's cultural practices, societal norms, and gender roles (Chakravarti, 2004). In 2023, India ranked 127 out of 146 countries (0.643) in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) (2023) Global Gender Gap Report, scoring particularly low in Economic Participation and Opportunity (0.367) and Health and Survival (0.950) categories. Despite the country's rapid economic advancements in previous years, a large majority of women and girls are still faced with numerous cultural constraints and structural barriers that prevent them from making essential life-choices. Such barriers are often found to be strongly influenced by the behaviours and attitudes of the groups of individuals that reside within multiple system levels, such as the immediate and extended family unit, formal education systems, workplace, community, and wider society (Dasra & The Kiawah Trust, 2012).

There is a limited amount of research that examines the protective factors that contribute to women's resilience, particularly from countries where patriarchy dominates, like India. Whilst published studies have taken significant strides in illuminating groups of at-risk women's resilience journeys (e.g., Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) survivors), few focus specifically on gathering the perspectives of young adult women. Only a handful report on the wider cultural and contextual processes that enable and/or inhibit the resources required for resilience, such as the influence of spirituality and religious beliefs, societal perspectives, and the role of the collectivistic family unit (e.g., Shanthakumari et al, 2014; Hebbani &

Srinivasan, 2016; Verma, 2015). It is this partial narrative that exists in the literature that justifies this research study, which seeks to identify the factors and processes that contribute to young women's resilience in the context of an all-female college in New Delhi, India. These narratives are integral in not only enhancing resilience research and theory, but informing interventions and policies that support, nurture and sustain women's resilience and mental well-being in India.

1.2.3. Why Use Art to Understand Resilience?

A widespread call exists among cultural resilience researchers to spotlight the lived perspectives of those participating in the research to capture local indigenous knowledge and patterns of adaptation that may essentially be invisible to outsiders (see Ungar, 2003, 2008, 2011a; Liebenberg & Ungar, 2009; Liebenberg & Theron, 2015; Liebenberg, 2009a). It is Ungar (2013) who suggests that researchers should incorporate innovative techniques to extract young people's conceptualisations of resilience. Arts-Based Research (ABR)² methods (e.g., painting, drawing, and photography) have emerged as powerful tools when conducting resilience research and are perceived as instrumental to encourage young people to express thoughts, feelings, and emotions beyond traditional forms of communication (e.g., Liebenberg, 2009a). Participant-produced images can foster participation, be a source of empowerment, and provide a voice to those who may not otherwise be heard (Guillemin & Drew, 2010). The arts also encourage deep reflection and reflexivity and are effective for supporting researchers to identify the protective factors that are perceived as influential in promoting the transformational processes of resilience (e.g., McKay & Sappa, 2020; McKay & Barton, 2018).

Inspired by Frida Kahlo's story, and due to the researcher's background in Textiles and Art, and the scope of ABR methods in resilience research, it was decided that qualitative data would be captured through the delivery of 'Reflective Art Workshops'. The potential of the workshops align with that of the researcher's ontological position of critical realism, which regards the understanding of social phenomena through meaning-making and knowledge generation. The workshops provide a platform for the young women participating in this

² ABR is defined as 'a research method in which the arts play a primary role in any of all of the steps of the research method. Art forms [...] are essential to the research process itself and central in formulating the research question, generating data, analysing data, and presenting the research results' (Austin & Forinash, 2005, p.458-459).

study, to reflect on their experiences, document their own constructions of resilience, and enable the identification of potential strategies that could promote and sustain their well-being. It was felt that if this thesis, if it wanted to provide a unique contribution to the literature, should incorporate visual art techniques, alongside quantitative methods, to elicit complex narratives of resilience among young women in New Delhi, India. The next section of this introductory chapter outlines the components that comprise of resilience in greater detail.

1.3. Introducing the Construct of Resilience

Resilience is a widely researched phenomenon. It means different things to different people and is observed and measured according to the theoretical lens that is being applied. However, there are several complexities that surround defining what appears to be a relatively simple concept. In order to lay down the foundations of this thesis, this section presents the key components of resilience and considers the central objectives of resilience research.

1.3.1. Defining Resilience

Kaplan (2005, p.39) states that despite its popularity, the ‘deceptively simple construct of resilience’ is the topic of multiple debates across the world. For example, Masten & Powell (2003, p.4) propose that ‘Resilience refers to patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant risk or adversity’, whilst Luthar et al (2000, p.543) define the construct as a ‘dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity’. These definitions are purposefully broad and scalable across system levels and disciplines; however, they often concentrate on resilience as a process that enables multiple systems (e.g., individuals, families, and communities) to achieve *positive adaptation* when exposed to *adversity* (Garmezy, 1990; Luthar et al, 2000; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Masten et al, 1990; Masten, 2014a; Rutter, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Ungar, 2012). The following sections will set out the meaning of adversity and positive adaptation.

Adversity

Adversity typically encompasses ‘negative life circumstances that are known to be statistically associated with adjustment difficulties’ (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p.858).

Resilience cannot be studied without studying ‘risk’³ as it requires the assessment of young people’s risk levels (or adversity) and how they positively adapt to these circumstances (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2009). Adversity is often related to exposure to single (e.g., bereavement and illness) and multiple adverse (e.g., exposure to community violence and work-related stress) events that occur over a lifetime. It can also be categorised into ‘chronic’, where it extends over a considerable period of time and has a pervasive impact on the individual, and ‘acute’ whereby adversity has a brief duration and limited impact on life (van Breda, 2018, p.5). More recently, resilience research considers risk from a cumulative⁴ and contextual standpoint (e.g., McGinnis, 2018), which describes that as risk factors begin to pile up, resilience levels worsen, and protective resources decline alongside it (see Evans et al, 2013; Obradović et al, 2012). Recognising these patterns are significant as they suggest that there are different resilience pathways and trajectories for different individuals, based on the contextual severity of adversity and the resilience mechanisms accessible to them (Davydov et al, 2010; Bonanno & Diminich, 2013). Adversity is a multi-faceted concept and is a critical component of the resilience process, as implicit in Luthar et al (2000)’s definition.

Positive Adaptation

Resilience is often considered as a dynamic process, as opposed to a static concept, from adversity to positive adaptation (e.g., Werner & Smith, 1982; Garmezy, 1991; Garmezy et al, 1984; Rutter, 1987; Bonanno, 2004; Ungar, 2008; Luthar et al, 2000). Positive adaptation is, therefore, the ‘positive’ end of the developmental continuum of the resilience process. Luthar & Cicchetti (2000, p.858) define positive adaptation in terms of ‘behaviourally manifested social competence, or success at meeting stage-salient developmental tasks’⁵, which can include, for example, obtaining a good job, good academic performance, or getting along with family and peers. However, whilst an individual may meet the criteria for positive adjustment at one point in their lives, it does not necessarily mean that they will remain resilient when exposed to different types of adversity, or access to the same protective resources later in life. Issues regarding defining and measuring the criteria for positive

³ Risk is defined as ‘A variable associated with an elevated probability of a negative outcome for a group of individuals’ (Wright & Masten, 2015, p.6).

⁴ ‘Cumulative risk is defined as the ‘summation of all risk factors that the individual has experienced or an index of the overall severity of adversity experienced; this can include multiple separate risk events or repeated occurrences of the same risk factor’ (Wright & Masten, 2015, p.6).

⁵ Developmental tasks are defined as ‘Psychosocial milestones or accomplishment expected of members in a given society or culture in different age periods; these milestones often represent criteria by which individual development can be evaluated within the culture’ (Wright & Masten, 2015, p.6)

adaptation has received considerable attention and will be explored further in Chapter Two – Literature Review.

1.3.2. Central Objectives of Resilience Research

Luthar & Cicchetti (2000) recognise that the researcher studying resilience is devoted to identifying the ‘risk’ and ‘protective’ factors that have the potential to modify adversity. Like the definition of risk, a risk factor can be considered as ‘a measurable characteristic in a group of individuals or their situation that predicts negative outcome on a specific outcome criteria’ (Wright & Masten, 2005, p.19) (e.g., parent divorce, poverty, and mental ill-being). On the other hand, protective factors, otherwise known as ‘assets’ or ‘resources’ are considered as ‘a quality of a person or context of their interaction that predicts better outcomes, particularly in situations of adversity’ (Wright & Masten, 2005, p.19; Luthar et al, 2000; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

What resilience theorists agree on is that protective factors derive from three major influences: (1) the individual (e.g., intelligence, optimism, internal locus of control), (2) the family environment (e.g., family cohesion, family support), and (3) the community (or external) (e.g., peer support, role models) (see Windle, 2011; Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Masten et al, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1992). Having uncovered this, the resilience researcher’s primary aim is then ‘identifying mechanisms or processes that might underlie associations found’ (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p.858). Cultural resilience researcher, Michael Ungar (2011a), suggests that an insight into the wider socio-cultural environment is required to examine how it influences young people’s abilities to navigate and negotiate their way towards resilience. The final stage of resilience research is to investigate how protective factors may contribute to greater positive outcomes among those being studied. This holds significant influence in advancing resilience theory, discourse, and informing appropriate health-promoting interventions among child and youth populations. The following section outlines the significance of resilience in the international development sector.

1.4. Resilience in the International Development Sector

It is widely acknowledged that adolescence and young adulthood are periods of increased psychological and physical changes, and a critical period in one’s life that can affect the developmental journeys towards resilience (Arnett, 2000; Brooks-Gunn & Paikoff, 1997;

Ronen, 2021). Many operational definitions of resilience emphasise that the physical and psychological health of young people are notable components (e.g., Luthar et al, 2000). Therefore, resilience is a critical aspect of mental health and well-being, and an integral component of the UN SDGs⁶ despite not being explicitly outlined in health-related targets and indicators. This section details the direct and indirect implications of resilience within the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda to help inform the context of this research study. It also outlines India's progress towards the health and gender-related SDGs.

1.4.1. Resilience in Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

Original thinking around resilience stems from diverse origins, such as engineering, and includes an understanding of interconnected socio-ecological systems (Lovell et al, 2016). Over time, the construct of resilience has become regularly employed within numerous disciplines and sectors and presents an efficient framework to reduce vulnerabilities among people, households, and communities across the world (Bahadur et al, 2015). Since the introduction of the MDGs and the SDGs, developing resilience has emerged as a fundamental means to 'prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises associated with a range of threats to people's lives, livelihoods, and overall sustainable development' (United Nations, 2020, p.18).

Resilience is not only a common thread across the UN's three pillars of development (e.g., human rights, policy, and peace and security), but is a prominent theme within the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. This can be seen through its reference within the Paris Agreement, the World Humanitarian Summit, the World Health Organisation (WHO) European Policy Framework for Health and Well-being – Health 2020, and the SDGs. Each framework emphasises the significance of strengthening resilience across numerous 'sectors, contexts, and scales' (Peters et al, 2016, p.10) to support the implementation of effective interventions and policies that promote holistic and sustainable approaches to individual, community, and system-level well-being (WHO, 2017). It is also recognised that strengthening resilience, reducing vulnerabilities, and mobilising change, cannot be achieved without co-ordinated action across key stakeholders, such as governments, private and public sectors, non-profit organisations, media, and academia (Kapucu et al, 2021).

⁶ The SDGs are a collection of 17 goals, adopted in 2015, by a series of world leaders from 193 countries. They were designed as a 'universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity' (UNDP, 2023a).

1.4.2. Inclusion of Resilience in the SDGs

The SDGs have notably increased the profile of resilience in recent years. WHO (2017, p.11) states that the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda requires resilient societies and communities and ‘resilient systems to deal with potential vulnerabilities, shocks, disturbances by developing absorptive, anticipatory, and adaptive capacities’. Resilience is explicitly referred to in several SDGs and its inclusion has demonstrated the relevancy of the construct to policy and practice, making it an utmost priority for numerous governments, policymakers, and practitioners around the world (Lovell et al, 2016; United Nations, 2015). Direct references to resilience in the SDGs are detailed below (Lovell et al, 2016, p.15):

- **SDG 1 (No Poverty):** ‘Build the *resilience* of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters’,
- **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** ‘Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement *resilient* agricultural practices’,
- **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure):** ‘Build *resilient* infrastructure’, and stimulate inclusivity and sustainable industrialisation that promotes innovation’,
- **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities):** ‘Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, *resilient* and sustainable’,
- **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** ‘Strengthen *resilience* and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries’,
- **SDG 14 (Life Below Water):** ‘Strengthen the *resilience* of marine and coastal ecosystems’.

The Link between Resilience and Health

Resilience is not explicitly referred to in the SDGs’ extensive Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being): ‘Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages’ or its 13 targets (United Nations, 2015). This is despite the acknowledgement that ‘building community resilience and supportive environments’ are critical for population health and well-being, and therefore, acts as a central mechanism to accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs by 2030 (WHO, 2017, p.21). Resilience is firmly advocated within WHO’s Health 2020 framework, which seeks ‘to improve health for all, and to reduce health inequities through improved leadership and governance for health’ (WHO, 2017, p.8). A collection of goals that are considered to be essential domains of well-being, such as no poverty and zero hunger,

additionally have targets that refer to resilience⁷, thus, creating a narrative of ‘greater resilience leading to greater well-being’ (Chaigneau et al, 2022, p.288). The same can be seen in a collection of mental health literature with children and youth, whereby resilience is closely associated with strengthening positive mental well-being. Examples include the extent to which resilience is integral for supporting positive life satisfaction (Aiena et al, 2015; Windle, 2011; Liu et al, 2013), reducing psycho-emotional issues during adolescence (Ali et al, 2010; Tempski et al, 2015), and enhancing self-esteem and optimism (Baldwin et al, 2011; Downie et al, 2010). Recent research also highlights the importance of resilience on adolescent mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as global health outcomes (see Verdolini et al, 2021).

SDG 3 has several interconnections with other goals, such as SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), especially in terms of supporting and nurturing young people’s mental health and well-being. Chaigneau et al (2022, p.291) suggests that greater individual, community, and mobilised stakeholder action is required to better understand the mechanisms that enable individuals to become resilient. This includes in-depth examinations into the interactions between the social-ecological domains, the impact on developmental gains for resilience, and improvements in mental well-being despite exposure to adversity (Lovell et al, 2016). This overall, indicates positive synergies between both well-being and resilience, which are critical for addressing global sustainability challenges (Chaigneau et al, 2022).

The Link between Resilience and Empowerment

Risk, adversity, and vulnerabilities to shocks and stressors are often found to have a gendered dimension attached to them, notably through the ‘distinct and unequal gendered roles and responsibilities that fall to women and men’ (Smyth & Sweetman, 2015, p.413). Therefore, in recent years the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (UNDP, 2023b) has highlighted these discrepancies and emphasises the importance of women’s resilience for sustainable development. The UNDP (2023b) outlines the positive implications of building women’s resilience for the creation of enabling environments for women’s empowerment (e.g., economic, social, and educational), and forming ‘resilient communities’ to tackle the

⁷ For example, Target 1.5 states ‘Build resilience of poor and reduce their exposure to shocks’ (United Nations 2023a).

impact of climate-related hazards. In the discipline of community psychology, Brodsky & Cattaneo (2013) indicates that both resilience and empowerment are interrelated constructs, as they work together to support individuals and communities in recognising and promoting their own capacities to improve quality of life. Similarly, as according to Johnson et al (2005, p.111) ‘Empowerment is hypothesised to lead to increased resilience in the face of current and future stressors’ (Worell, 2001; Worell & Remer, 2003), due to the provision of greater resources to cope with stress. Therefore, promoting women’s empowerment and resilience can be instrumental in creating and sustaining health-related resources within the individual, and among micro and macro communities (Brodsky et al, 2022).

However, resilience only has faint implicit associations with targets and indicators of SDG 5: ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’ (United Nations, 2015).

International development organisations (e.g., UN and World Bank) recognise that whilst women are key drivers of ‘climate resilience’, for example (see Target 13.b⁸), they overlook the psychological components of women’s resilience, which are critical for laying down the health foundations that enable women to tackle and overcome contextual challenges. A greater understanding of the complexities around resilience is vital in assisting policymakers to develop policies and interventions that support individual and community resilience and provide mechanisms to promote women’s empowerment and mental well-being.

1.4.3. India’s Progress towards the Gender and Health-Related SDGs

The Sustainable Development Report⁹ ranks India 112 out of 166 countries, regarding progress towards the SDGs (Sachs et al, 2023). This places them behind all South Asian countries, except for Pakistan, and indicates that the country is not on target to achieve all 17 goals by 2030. As Figure 1 shows, despite India’s commitment towards attaining a collection of SDGs, such as SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), many challenges remain (Sachs et al, 2023).

⁸ SDG 13.b refers to ‘promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth, and local and marginalised communities’ (United Nations, 2023a).

⁹ The Sustainable Development Report tracks trends and progress towards the SDGs among the United Nations 193 Member Countries (Sachs et al, 2023).

Figure 1: India's SDG Dashboard and Trends



(Sachs et al, 2023, p.274)

Subramanian (2023)'s study offers the first mid-line examination of India's progress towards achieving the SDGs by 2030. The study measures the advancements that have been made across nine goals by identifying 33 critical indicators related to health and the social determinants of health. Subramanian (2023, p.11) suggests that 'India is off-target for nearly three-fifths of the 33 SDG indicators', relating to those associated with poverty, hunger, good health and well-being, and gender equality. Subramanian (2023)'s report recognises that there have been accelerated efforts on aspects of women's empowerment (e.g., education, health, and financial inclusion), such as through the implementation of lucrative programs such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao¹⁰, Mahila Shakti Kendra¹¹, and the Women Entrepreneurship Program¹². Yet, progress towards female health and mental well-being and gender equality remain a growing concern as the study predicts that India will not achieve SDG 5 until 2090, and for one-third of districts, this goal will be unattainable (Subramanian, 2023). Based on their findings, Subramanian (2023) suggests that if India is to move forward as a global economic superpower, there is an urgent requirement to increase the momentum of the health and gender-related indicators. This includes developing a strategic roadmap that encompasses

¹⁰ Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) is a Government of India campaign, launched in 2015, which aims at addressing 'the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of women empowerment over a life-cycle continuum' (PM India, 2023).

¹¹ Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme was launched in 2017 to provide 'one stop convergent support services for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition' (Ministry of Women and Child Development (India), 2017, p.1).

¹² The Women Entrepreneurship Program (WEP) was launched in 2022 and aims at female inclusion and leadership in business ventures (WEP, 2023).

‘an honest and transparent assessment of existing GOI [Government of India] programs that are directly or indirectly related to the SDGs’ (Subramanian, 2023, p.16). This would support the identification of successful and scalable programs or those that need to be implemented and prioritised in certain districts.

This thesis situates young women at the centre of the research process. It strives to illuminate young women’s voices to provide a more in-depth understanding of the factors and processes at play that contribute to their resilience. The findings aim to inform the development of relevant multi-levelled interventions, policies, and implementation of services that support young women’s resilience and health mental well-being in India. This can help to accelerate India’s progress towards achieving the gender and health-related SDGs in this Decade of Action¹³ and spotlight women’s resilience as an integral component of the post-2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The final section of this introduction chapter sets out the structure of this thesis.

1.5. The Thesis

This chapter has provided a background and rationale for this research. This section presents the research questions and the structure that this thesis will take. It also provides a brief overview of what is to be expected in the following chapters. The main focus of this thesis is to investigate the factors and processes that influence young women’s resilience in the context of New Delhi, India. It offers unique insights by adopting a mixed approach to illuminate narratives of resilience, and to better understand the heterogeneity that exists among diverse groups of young women who may experience resilience differently. There are three research questions that are considered to explore the overall research interest, which are as follows:

1. What are the protective factors that are associated with young women’s resilience?
2. How does young women’s locus of control orientation influence their resilience?
3. To what extent do young women’s socio-cultural contexts shape the protective factors that are promotive of their resilience?

Chapter Two presents a review of the present literature pertaining to resilience. The literature review begins by providing a brief insight into the history of resilience, ongoing debates, and

¹³ Outlined in 2020, the United Nations (2023b)’s Decade of Action ‘calls for accelerating sustainable solutions to all the world’s biggest challenges’, such as poverty, world hunger and climate change.

its core components. This is followed by an investigation into how resilience is measured with children and adolescents, prior to considering its limitations. The following section outlines Ungar (2011a)'s SER perspective and the scope of its application in research with child and youth populations. The final section examines the resilience research that has been conducted in the context of India.

Chapter Three presents this study's research methodology. A mixed methods approach is outlined and justified followed by a discussion concerning the research setting and instruments used for data collection. It also provides an overview of the techniques employed to analyse the data. This chapter also explores the philosophical worldview that forms the foundation to this research which focusses on critical realism as the ontological position and post-positivism as the epistemological position. A discussion of the efforts to ensure validity and reliability is presented alongside the ethical considerations that were followed by the researcher.

Chapter Four presents this research study's findings, starting with descriptive statistics which provide quantitative and qualitative insights into young women's background factors and socio-economic characteristics, prior to examining each of the research questions in turn. The first research question (RQ1) explores the protective factors that comprise of young women's resilience. RQ2 considers whether young women's locus of control orientation is a determining factor of resilience. The final research question (RQ3) focusses on the extent to which young women's socio-cultural contexts shape their resilience-supporting factors. These research questions are formed by a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data. Young women's artworks are presented throughout the thesis, corresponding to their discussions within the reflective art workshops. All artworks are presented in Appendix 10.

In Chapter Five, a discussion of the findings is presented, situating the results in the context of the previous literature, as well as the methodological foundation of the research. The discussion chapter focusses on each of the research questions in turn, prior to deliberating the study's limitations, implications, and avenues for future research. Finally, Chapter Six presents some concluding remarks, considers the lessons and inferences for understanding and building young women's resilience in India and situates the findings within the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature pertinent to the aims of this research study, which adopts a mixed methods approach to investigate the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India. Cooper (2010) identifies four notable functions of a literature review: (1) integrating the findings of the previous studies, (2) providing critiques of recent studies, (3) constructing potential associations between related aspects of research topics, and (4) revealing issues that are central to the research field. These four components are integrated into this chapter which presents the existing literature on resilience.

The first section situates the context of this research study by exploring the key concepts and terminologies associated with resilience. This consists of a brief insight into the history of the construct and the enduring debate regarding whether resilience should be considered as an innate quality or dynamic process. The second section outlines the key components of resilience and examines how they are presented in the literature. Following this, the third section considers how child and adolescent resilience is measured and the ongoing limitations associated with current resilience research. The fourth section looks at one modern day exponent who has significantly contributed to the way researchers think about resilience across different contexts and cultures – Michael Ungar. It explores the theoretical underpinnings of Ungar (2011a)'s Socio-Ecological Resilience (SER) framework, prior to examining the recent research that employs this approach with samples of diverse youth populations. As this thesis considers the influence of young women's socio-cultural contexts on their resilience, the final section explores the resilience research that is conducted with women and girls in India. It also outlines the convergences and divergences with western-based literature explored earlier in the chapter. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary. Overall, this chapter provides the theoretical underpinnings and findings from relevant academic literature to support this study's results which is presented in Chapter Four - Results and compared with in Chapter Five - Discussion.

2.2. Resilience: a ‘Conceptually Fuzzy’ Construct

This section begins the literature review with an exploration into the construct of resilience. It presents a brief history of resilience, with a particular focus on how the construct has adapted over time, and considers the insights from leading scholars (Norman Garmezy, Suniya Luthar, Ann Masten, Michael Rutter, Michael Ungar, and Emmy Werner) who have had major influence on resilience theory (see Appendix 1). The second section explores the enduring theoretical debate regarding whether resilience should be viewed as a static trait or dynamic process (e.g., Bonanno & Diminich, 2013; Luthar, 2006; Masten, 2013; Rutter, 1979). This is often considered as the ‘Trait vs Process’ debate.

2.2.1. Resilience History

The original journey to comprehend human resilience can be dated back to post World-War II, whereby researchers began to debate the reasons as to why some men had experienced trauma, and the psychological fallout associated with it, and why others didn’t (Grinker & Spiegel, 1945 in Hobfoll, 2002). It wasn’t until the 1970’s where researchers in the field of psychology made the discovery that some children at risk of psychopathology grew up with good outcomes despite being exposed to adversity (Werner & Smith, 1982; Anthony, 1974; Garmezy, 1971, 1974; Rutter, 1979; Werner et al, 1971). These publications instigated a surge of research around the construct of resilience to identify the potential protective and health-enhancing capacities of individuals, families, and communities, and how these resources positively influence children and youth developmental pathways and future trajectories (e.g., Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Glantz & Johnson, 1999; Rutter, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1982; Cowen, 1994).

Resilience has advanced into four major waves of research which has shaped how scholars have previously researched the construct (see Wright et al, 2013). The first wave focusses on primarily considering how aspects of the individual influences resilience behaviours, whereas the second yields ‘a more dynamic accounting of resilience’ that concentrates on ‘the transactions among individuals and the many systems in which their development is embedded’ (Wright et al, 2013, p.15). The third wave of resilience research fixates on creating interventions directed at altering young people’s developmental pathways (Wright et al, 2013). The current, and final wave focusses on considering how resilience is integrated across multiple interacting systems of reality (Wright et al, 2013). These waves of research

has also led to an influx of theories and accompanied concepts, measurements, and models which present multiple points of convergence and divergence between leading theorists in the field (see Appendix 1).

Despite its proliferate attention, it is paralleled with growing concerns regarding the thoroughness of resilience theory and associated research (e.g., Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Luthar, 1993; Luthar & Cushing, 1999; Luthar et al, 2000; Ungar, 2011a). Liebenberg & Ungar (2009, p.5) contends that resilience continues to remain a ‘conceptually fuzzy’ construct, with little uniformity in how the term is defined, operationalised, and measured. Similarly, Glantz & Sloboda (1999, p.110) states that ‘the concept of resilience is heavily laden with subjective, often unarticulated assumptions and it is fraught with major logical measurement and pragmatic problems’. For example, Higgins (1994, p.1) describes resiliency as the ‘process of self-righting or growth’, whereas Wolin & Wolin (1993, p.3) defines it as the ‘capacity to bounce back, to withstand hardship, and to repair yourself’. Masten (1994) argues that resilience comprises of three key components: (1) better than expected outcomes, (2) good adaptation despite adversity, and (3) recovery from trauma. Luthar et al (2000, p.543) argues that resilience should be considered as ‘a construct of dubious scientific value’. Yet, despite differences in terminology, many theorists, such as Masten (1994), suggest that resilience must be understood as a process that encapsulates the interplay between attributes of the individual and the wider environment. Debate as to whether resilience should be considered as a static trait, or a dynamic process is contested in the literature and is explored in the following section.

2.2.2. The Trait vs Process Debate

Many of the misperceptions regarding the ‘Trait vs Process’ debate stem from the early waves of resilience literature. Block & Block (1980)’s seminal literature on ego-resiliency emphasises that resiliency depends on the possession of a variety of individual attributes, such as ‘general resourcefulness and sturdiness of character, and flexibility of functioning in response to varying environment circumstances’ (cited in Luthar et al, 2000, p.547). Early longitudinal studies on child and adolescent resilience also suggest that personality traits, such as IQ (Masten et al, 1999; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; White et al, 1989), having an easy-going temperament (Werner & Smith, 1982; Wyman et al, 1999), and emotion regulation (Thompson & Calkins, 1996), are also important components. Werner & Smith (1982, 1992)’s longitudinal studies with 698 children born in 1955 on the island of Kauai,

Hawaii, identifies that one-third of children, who had previously experienced adversity (e.g., poverty, divorced parents), became self-confident and autonomous adults. The authors suggest that when resilient children reached high school, they were more likely to be socially competent, assertive, and exhibit a positive self-concept, in comparison to non-resilient individuals (Werner & Smith, 1982). The study labels the children who adapted well despite adversity as ‘invincible’ which assumes that they possess a collection of rare and remarkable qualities that enable them to transcend adversity (Werner & Smith, 1982).

Contrastingly, numerous scholars oppose that young people do not develop these competencies on their own, and argue against the construct’s overreliance on simplistic and/or individualistic-centred conceptualisations that underestimate the influence of the factors that are external to the child (Masten, 2004; Masten & Garmezy, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Luthar et al, 2000; Ungar, 2011a, 2012; van Breda & Dickens, 2017; Wright & Masten, 2015). Leading theorists collectively agree that resilience is not a remarkable quality that some children are born with. For example, Garmezy (1991, 1993) argues that it is simply not the case of the heroic child and warns researchers to avoid using the term ‘invulnerable’ as it implies that young people are incapable of being affected by adversity. Similarly, Masten (2001, p.227) refers to resilience as a process of ‘ordinary magic’, as many individuals who experience severe adversity, are likely to be able to achieve normative developmental outcomes. In this perspective, resilience is not perceived as a fixed trait, but an adjustable collection of processes that can be developed and nurtured over time (Masten, 2001).

Many researchers, such as Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw (2008a, p.33) argue that resilience is underpinned by ‘a series of ongoing, reciprocal transactions between the child and the environment’ (Masten, 2001; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Luthar et al, 2000; Ungar, 2005, 2008; Rutter, 2013). This reflects Bronfenbrenner (1979)’s early Ecological Systems Theory that explains how individual behaviour is determined by multiple, and interactional environmental factors. Implicit within this perspective is the understanding that resilience can change over time and is dependent on the interactions between individuals and their wider environment, as well as between risk and protective factors. Wright & Masten (2015) state that ‘The same individual may show maladaptive functioning at one point in time and resilience later in development or vice versa, depending on recent exposure to stress and the broader contexts of resources in his or her life’. Similarly, Masten (1994) and Masten et al (2005)

acknowledge that individuals can be late bloomers, whereby protective processes accelerate during the transition from adolescence to adulthood leading to positive outcomes later in life. Secombe (2002) extends on these debates in their argument:

“The widely held view of resiliency as an individual disposition, family trait, or community phenomenon is insufficient...resiliency cannot be understood or improved in significant ways by merely focussing on these individual-level factors. Instead, careful attention must be paid to the structural deficiencies in our society and to the social policies that families need in order to become stronger, more competent, and better functioning in adverse situations.”

(p.385)

Finally, many scholars argue that by observing the construct as individualistic, it runs the risk of blaming the child when they do not manifest resilience when faced with a difficult situation (Wright & Masten, 2015; Masten, 1994; Masten et al, 1990). van Breda & Dickens (2017, p.265) outline that individualistic theories place ‘an undue burden on individuals to extricate themselves from adversity, without attending to the socio-economic and structural forces impinging on human well-being flourishing’. Therefore, the process-driven definition of resilience challenges the social development model that emphasises a ‘pull yourself up by your bootstraps’ approach (Midgley, 2010, p.15; van Breda & Dickens, 2017; Garrett, 2016). Masten et al (1990) argues that by avoiding this perception, it deters the design and implementation of effective resilience-building interventions aimed at vulnerable children and adolescents (Reynolds, 1998). Luthar et al (2000) warns that researchers must be cautious in their terminology and should clearly outline whether their investigations focus on resilience as a trait or process to prevent potential deceptive influences. This research study follows the widely held notion that resilience is a multi-dimensional construct that is comprised of dynamic interactions between the individual and their environment. This section presented a brief introduction into the history of resilience and the complexities associated with the construct. The next section draws on the key components of resilience – risk and protective factors – and how they are presented in the vast body of literature.

2.3. Key Components of Resilience

Since the 1970s, leading resilience scholars have worked towards studying the effect of ‘risk factors’ upon young people’s development. Several recognised that despite being exposed to

severe adversity, many do not experience negative developmental outcomes (e.g., Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Glantz & Johnson, 1999; Rutter, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1982; Cowen, 1994). These unexpected findings have paved the way for interdisciplinary research that seeks to identify the factors and processes that contribute to young people's resilience despite exposure to risk (e.g., Garmezy, 1971; Rutter, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1982). Garmezy (1993) argues that the study of resilience requires researchers to focus on answering two major questions: (1) What are the risk factors (within the individual, family, and community levels) that influence maladjustment following adversity? And (2) What are the protective factors that protect them from such adjustment? This section explores the emergence of risk and protective factors in the study of resilience, and how they are presented in the literature.

2.3.1. Risk Factors

In a collection of empirical research there have been multiple attempts to operationalise resilience, with many considering to what extent do threats, risks and hazards have on positive functioning (e.g., Luthar, 2006; Masten et al, 1990; Tolan, 1996; Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Gordon & Song, 1994). Risk factors are often understood as characteristics that are likely to produce an undesirable outcome, notably among children (Masten, 1994). Bronfenbrenner (1979)'s theory assumes that risk factors emerge from the child's complex system of relationships with multiple levels of their surrounding environment¹⁴. Whilst Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues that risk factors that are present within the macro-system can have the largest effect on development, many researchers assume that the most harmful exist within an individual's immediate environment (e.g., maltreatment from family members, parent mental illness) (Beeghly & Cicchetti, 1994; Cicchetti & Rogosch, 1997; Masten & Coatsworth, 1995, 1998). Drawing on 'Trait vs Process' debate, Cowan et al (1996) contends that risk should also be considered as a process as individuals may react negatively to a risk factor at one point in their lives, but positive in another.

However, pinpointing a definition of risk has proven to be challenging to many theorists who are likely to share similar ideas of what constitutes as 'risk' (Howard et al, 1999). For example, Luthar et al (2000, p.550) state that 'some individuals may well see themselves as

¹⁴ Bronfenbrenner (1979) assumes that interactions between elements of the micro-level (face-to-face interactions with family and social contacts), meso-level (interrelations between the various settings an individual is embedded into, such as family, school, or church), and finally, the macro-level (policies and cultural beliefs and values shared by the community or country) predicts positive growth in suboptimal conditions.

being relatively well off, even those scientists may define their life circumstances as being highly stressful'. Howard et al (1999) suggests that whilst the field of resilience continues to develop, researchers should be cautious that young people's accounts of risk and resilience may not align with those of adult researchers. It is Condly (2006, p.225) who recommends that researchers should collect 'An accurate description of the nature of risk' as it is critical to understand 'how it affects people, how resilience operates, and how to develop interventions in the real world'. This research study follows Condly (2006)'s guidance by collecting quantitative, as well as in-depth qualitative data to capture young women's experiences of adversity, and the perceived resilience-supporting factors that support their positive adjustment.

2.3.2. Protective Factors

The study of protective factors entails a paradigm shift away from investigating the presence of risk factors and towards understanding how individuals from high-risk situations positively adapt (Masten et al, 2009). Many of the leading resilience theorists hold an ecological perspective which suggests that protective factors operate at internal and external levels and can help to buffer or prevent risk (see Appendix 1). They do not indicate that any protective factor is of greater value than the other, and rather, offer a variety of factors that correlate positively with resilient outcomes.

Much of the empirical research conceptualises resilience as multi-dimensional and delineates three sets of overarching protective factors that are implicated in the development of resilience: (1) Individual Attributes, (2) Attributes of the Family, and (3) the External Environment (e.g., Luthar et al, 2000; Masten & Garmezy, 1985; Masten & Reed, 2002; Masten et al, 2009; Werner, 1989; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Rutter, 1990, 2002; Hjemdal, 2007). Ungar (2008) considers an additional level of protective processes – culture and context (or spiritual/cultural) – which will be further explored in Section 2.5. Table 1 presents a summary of the most widely reported protective factors that are promotive of child and youth resilience, prior to briefly exploring each category in turn (Masten et al, 2009).

Table 1: Protective Factors in Children and Adolescents

Individual Attributes	Problem-solving skills
	Self-regulation skills
	Easy temperament
	Intelligence
	Positive self-concept (e.g., self-efficacy, self-confidence, self-esteem)
	Optimism
	Sense of purpose and meaning in life
	Internal locus of control
	Mental ‘toughness’
	Sense of humour
Attributes of the Family	Positive attachment to family members
	Close relationships to ‘competent, prosocial, and supportive adults’ (Masten et al, 2009, p.128)
	Authoritative parenting styles
	Family cohesion
	Organised home environment
	Education of parents and involvement in their child’s education
	Socio-economic status (SES)
External Environment	Effective schooling institutions
	Participation in prosocial organisations (e.g., extra-curricular clubs, societies)
	Community cohesion
	Meaningful relationships with peers
	Role models (e.g., peers, teachers, extended family)
	High levels of perceived public safety
	Good public health and health care

(adapted from Masten et al, 2009, p.127)

Individual Attributes

Individual attributes incorporate a selection of self-system variables, such as an engaging temperament, positive self-concept (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy), internal locus of control, motivation, optimism, emotion regulation and intelligence (Masten & Powell, 2003; Kim-Cohen et al, 2004; Werner & Smith, 1982; Wyman et al, 1999; Vanderbilt-Adrianne & Shaw, 2008a; Luthar, 1991; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Olsson et al, 2003). Evidence suggests that emotion regulation, such as applying self-help skills, is associated with positive adjustment despite exposure to adversity (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 1997; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992). It is believed that those who can positively manage their emotions, are more likely to be more well-equipped to cope with major (e.g., bereavement, illness) and minor (e.g., daily stress) stressors (e.g., Buckner et al, 2003). Gerber et al (2013, p.165) argues that the construct of ‘mental toughness’ or ‘hardiness’¹⁵ is shown to moderate adolescents’ depressive symptoms and life satisfaction. Social (e.g., empathy, communication) and cognitive (e.g., self-awareness, self-regulation) skills are also identified as key protective factors for child and youth resilience (Werner & Smith, 1992; Werner, 1995; Luthar, 1991). Individuals who obtain strong social skills that enhance co-operation and underpin positive relationships are considered as more likely to exhibit good interpersonal communication skills (Luthar, 1991; Werner, 1995), which contribute positively to development. A sense of humour and an optimistic outlook on life is also perceived to alleviate young people’s focus on personal failure and transform it towards a positive self-concept (Werner & Smith, 1992; Masten & Wright, 2010; Dumont & Provost, 1999).

Locus of Control

Rotter (1966)’s Locus of Control theory is often considered as being an influential individual attribute of resilience (e.g., Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Luthar, 1991; Rutter, 2013). The locus of control concept originates from Rotter (1966)’s Social Learning Theory, which details ‘that the effect of a reward depends on the extent to which a person infers a causal relationship between his or her own behaviour and the reward’ (cited in Vanderzee et al, 1997, p.1842). Locus of control (internal vs external) describes whether individuals believe in the influence of their own efforts and abilities on their life outcomes (Rotter, 1966). A large collection of empirical research outlines the protective force of an internal locus of control (Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Werner, 1989; Rutter, 2013; Aldwin, 1994; Luthar, 1991;

¹⁵ Hardiness refers to ‘a trait-like characteristic that influences the way people perceive situations and react in stressful circumstances’ (Gerber et al, 2013, p.165).

Luthar & Zigler, 1991). Werner & Smith (1982) identify that 'resilient' teenagers were more likely to have an internal locus of control, alongside a positive self-concept, and had access to a supportive social network. In a later study, Werner (1989) finds that among an 'improved group' of young mothers, they were more likely to exhibit an internal locus of control which had a positive influence on their determination, nurturance, and engagement with higher education. The 'un-improved group' were more likely to showcase an external locus of control which Werner (1989) posits to limited access to social support, an emotional dependency on mothers, and presence of psychological disorders. Rutter (2013) suggests that individuals who possess key mental features, notably those related to an internal locus of control (e.g., autonomy and agency), are more likely to obtain both control and success at meeting stage-salient tasks. In their study with 144 inner-city public-school students, Luthar (1991) declares that those who exhibit a higher internal locus of control are more likely to feel in control of their own lives, which is considered as invaluable for underprivileged students' ability to tackle and/or overcome adversity. Luthar (1991) and Luthar & Zigler (1991) also align an internal locus of control with social abilities and competencies.

Many empirical studies show that individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to have access to sources of social support, in contrast to those who are externally orientated (Hansson et al, 1984; Jones, 1982). For example, Eckenrode (1983) finds that internally controlled individuals are 'supposedly more capable to mobilise sources of support from the environment' (cited in Vanderzee et al, 1997, p.1843). Lefcourt et al (1973) indicates that as internal locus of control individuals possess a greater affinity to employ more information in governing actions and decisions, it results in a better application of social support. The assumption that those with an internal locus of control gain more from social support is reflected in several studies (e.g., Lefcourt et al, 1984; Sandler & Lahey, 1982). On the other hand, some studies argue that those with an external locus of control are in greater need of the support of others to support their psychological well-being (Dalgard et al, 1995).

Vanderzee et al (1997, p.1844) states that 'Individuals with an internal locus of control may perceive that they can control their positive outcomes by their *own* behaviour, which makes them less dependent on support from the environment' (Lefcourt, 1980; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1966). As Vanderzee et al (1997) suggests, it can be assumed that those with an internal locus of control may already possess the relevant internal attributes (e.g., positive self-concept) to enable them to cope with adversity and contribute to their psychological well-being. These

individuals may be less reliant on a supportive social network in contrast to those who are externally controlled (Vanderzee et al, 1997).

Recent research further explores the relationship between locus of control and resilience with young adults in a variety of contexts (Rajan et al, 2018; Felicia et al, 2021; Arsini et al, 2023; Haveroth et al, 2019; Alat et al, 2023; Slatinsky et al, 2022; Barron Millar et al, 2021). Slatinsky et al (2022) finds in their study with football players in the United States, that those with a higher internal locus of control were more likely to demonstrate higher resilience levels. This is reflected by Rajan et al (2018, p.301)'s study in Telangana, India, who states that 'parents [who have a child with an intellectual disability] experienced a higher amount of resilience when they are operating from an internal locus of control orientation'. Felicia et al (2021) identifies a strong relationship between locus of control and resilience among adolescents with divorced parents in Indonesia. Those with an internal locus of control were more likely to obtain a positive mindset, be hardworking, and possess problem-solving strategies to cope with their parents' divorce (Felicia et al, 2021). Similar to Vanderzee et al (1997)'s findings, the study suggests that an external locus of control is associated with lower resilience levels as adolescents are more likely to use social support (e.g., friends, God) to cope (Felicia et al 2021). Arsini et al (2023) finds a relationship between internal locus of control and a collection of individual resilience attributes, such as a sense of mastery, problem-solving skills, self-confidence, and higher achievement scores, among a sample of high school students in Indonesia. In Brazil, Haveroth et al (2019, p.18) discovers that accounting students that exhibit a higher internal locus of control were more likely to demonstrate determination, self-confidence, and perseverance, in comparison to those who report higher external scores. Collectively, these studies suggest that an internal locus of control is a notable driving factor for the development of resilience-supporting resources, yet this requires further investigation within developing country contexts (Rotter, 1966).

Attributes of the Family

A collection of literature explores the influence of attributes of the family on resilience, such as perceived social support, close relationships and healthy attachments with family members, parental warmth and encouragement, family connectedness and cohesion (Olsson et al, 2003; Kim-Cohen et al, 2004; Luthar, 2006; Masten et al, 1999; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Rutter, 1987; Smith & Carlson, 1997; Walsh, 1996, 2002; McCubbin & McCubbin, 1996). Evidence stresses the significance of having access to 'a high-quality relationship with

at least one parent, characterised by high levels of warmth and openness, and low levels of conflict' as it is positively associated with beneficial outcomes across multiple levels of risk (cited in Vanderbilt-Adriance & Shaw, 2008b, p.889-890; Cederblad et al, 1995; Luthar & Latendresse, 2005; Werner & Smith, 1982; Emery & Forehand, 1996; Ingoldsby et al, 2001). Supportive parenting is perceived to be instrumental to the resilience process and can either operate in the form of: (a) informative (e.g., guidance), (b) emotional (e.g., companionship), or (c) material (e.g., financial) support (Dumont & Provost, 1999; Smith & Carlson, 1996). For example, Smokowski et al (1999, p.439) identifies that resilient youth, who have access to 'motivational support', are more likely to feel motivated, optimistic, and reassured in their abilities to succeed in life. Access to warm, responsive, and non-blaming parenting styles is also linked with positive social, economic, and academic adjustment among young people (Kim-Cohen et al, 2004; Luthar, 2006; Masten et al, 1999; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992).

Rutter (2006, 2012, 2013) recognises that supportive relationships with family members acts as an imperative protective mechanism. Factors such as maternal warmth, positive relationships between siblings, and an optimistic atmosphere within the family unit, are considered as important to protect the individual against emotional and behavioural disturbances (Rutter, 2006, 2012, 2013). Similarly, Werner (1989) infers that resilient children are likely to report greater access to a structure and routine within the family home, and stronger affectional ties with family members. An absent father, disruptions to family life, having a working mother, and unsuitable childcare is associated with poorer adulthood coping according to Werner (1989). Contrastingly, Garmezy et al (1984) argues that family stability (e.g., marriages, working parents, upkeep of household) and family cohesion (e.g., presence of rules, communication, family activities) work together to modify competence and stress among children. Garmezy et al (1984) also indicates that access to a stable family unit is likely to have positive implications on a child's IQ levels and social competencies.

External Environment

Finally, the broader external environment considers the influence of neighbourhood, school, and work, and includes access to social support and strong bonds between peers and teachers, for example (Wyman, 2003; Beam et al, 2002; DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). Availability of nurturing and supportive relationships outside of the family environment is contemplated as an important aspect of resilience (Masten et al, 2009). This is associated with enhanced motivation, a sense of belonging, feeling understood, heightened self-esteem, and the

application of effective coping strategies (e.g., Southwick et al, 2016). For example, community cohesion (Barbarin et al, 2006; Gorman-Smith et al, 2005), presence of youth organisations (Cauce et al, 2003), quality of the school environment (Ozer & Weinstein, 2004), and after-school activities (Wyman, 2003) are often linked to positive child functioning. Garmezy et al (1984) finds that access to a caring maternal substitute, supportive and concerned teachers, or an institutional structure that fosters ties to the larger community, are examples of external factors that positively influence youth resilience. External support systems, which include access to a supportive social network (e.g., church, work, peers) are also deemed to have positive implications on the development of individual attributes, such as a positive self-concept (Garmezy et al, 1984; Werner & Smith, 1982; Werner, 1989).

This section has outlined the key components of resilience and examined how they are presented in the literature. It has showcased an ecological perspective which suggests that resilience is influenced by protective factors at individual, familial and external levels. The following section explores how the construct is measured with children and youth and the ongoing limitations in resilience research.

2.4. Operationalising Resilience with Children and Youth

The large body of empirical literature has led to the development of numerous models and instruments that operationalise resilience. This section examines the existing quantitative approaches that measure child and adolescent resilience, with a focus on the applicability of the Resilience Scale for Adolescents (READ). This section also considers the limitations of existing resilience research and how this study seeks to address them.

2.4.1. *Brief Review of Existing Resilience Scales*

The ambiguities regarding defining, conceptualising, and interpreting resilience creates considerable hurdles in operationalising the construct (e.g., Janousch et al, 2020). The variation in approaches result in major inconsistencies regarding to the potential of both risk and protective factors, and estimates of their prevalence (Windle et al, 2011; Luthar et al, 2000). The multiple components of resilience presents researchers with considerable challenges regarding forming a measure that successfully captures its dynamicity (Rudd et al, 2021). Many measurements are employed by researchers to assess resilience (e.g., Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale, Nowicki & Strickland, 1973), self-esteem (e.g., the Harter Self-Perception Profile, Harter, 1986), and school adjustment (e.g., the Child Rating Scale,

Hightower et al, 1987). However, as Hjemdal et al (2006) argues, these scales are only indirect measures and make it difficult to not only compare results between studies but being able to identify which factors contribute to the resilience process.

There are many direct approaches to measure resilience which are commonly used in the literature. These include; the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003), The Resilience Scale (RS; Wagnild & Young, 1993), and the Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA; Friborg et al, 2003). The CD-RISC scale aims to measure stress and coping ability within clinical practice (Connor & Davidson, 2003). In their review of resilience measurement scales, Windle et al (2011, p.8) suggests that whilst it demonstrates high psychometric evaluation, the scale focusses only on measuring individual-level attributes and requires further 'theoretical clarification'. This is similar to Windle et al (2011)'s critiques of Wagnild & Young (1993)'s Resilience Scale (RS), as despite the RS measuring the extent to which individuals self-report perseverance and self-reliance, for example, the scale is again an individual-level measure. On the other hand, the RSA (Friborg et al, 2003) emphasises resilience as a multi-dimensional construct, as it examines the intrapersonal and interpersonal protective factors that contribute to positive adaptation. However, like the previous, the RSA is focussed exclusively on measuring adult resilience. Both Janousch et al (2020) and Windle et al (2011)'s studies argue that many of these scales are too lengthy in nature or remain the early stages of development and thus require further validations with different populations. These aspects impede the potentialities of making valid comparisons across a variety of different contexts, and with younger populations (Janousch et al, 2020).

Windle et al (2011, p.14) states that 'Ideally, measures of resilience should be able to reflect the complexity of the concept and the temporal dimensions' and how it develops over time. The authors convey that only a handful of measures aim to investigate resilience across the three levels (individual, family and external), thus, replicating theoretical acceptability (Windle et al, 2011). The Resilience Scale for Adolescents (READ) (Hjemdal et al, 2006) emerges in Windle et al (2011)'s review as an operational measure of resilience that receives considerable psychometric ratings (content and construct validity), assesses the variety of factors that exist within multiple domains, and is tailored towards child and youth samples. This is reflected in a recent study by Ballard et al (2024) who also suggests the READ has its roots within a 'developmental and socio-ecological foundation' and scores the highest in

‘theoretical formulations for the population of interest (adolescents)’. Given the complex nature of young people’s resilience, and the requirement for a dynamic and multi-levelled approach to researching the construct (Ungar & Theron, 2020), this research employs the READ to measure the protective factors that comprise of young women’s resilience in New Delhi, India. The next section explores the scope of the research that adopts the READ.

2.4.2. Resilience Scale for Adolescents (READ)

The RSA (Friborg et al, 2003), which consists of 41 items relating to adult resilience, had been used as a starting point for the development of the READ. Hjemdal et al (2006) adapted and simplified the items, based on participant feedback, and was given age-appropriate content to measure adolescent resilience. Similar to the RSA, the READ contains five key factors: (1) Personal Competence (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy), (2) Social Competence (e.g., communication skills, flexibility), (3) Structured Style (e.g., ability to plan and structure routines), (4) Family Cohesion (e.g., family support), (5) Social Resources (e.g., access to social resources external to the family), which encapsulate all three overarching categories of resilience (Hjemdal et al, 2006).

The first category (Individual Attributes) is represented by *Personal Competence*, *Social Competence* and *Structured Style*, the second (Attributes of the Family) includes *Family Cohesion*, and the third (External Environment) is covered by *Social Resources* (Hjemdal et al, 2006). The READ has been translated into different languages (e.g., Spanish, Italian), and validated with samples of adolescents in several countries, such as Norway (von Soest et al, 2010; Moksnes & Haugan, 2018; Askeland et al, 2019), Italy (Stratta et al, 2012), Mexico (Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014), Ireland (Kelly et al, 2017), Spain (Pérez-Fuentes et al, 2020), and Switzerland (Janousch et al, 2020). However, these studies highlight that Hjemdal et al (2006)’s original five-factor structure, and 28-item solution, may be problematic.

Von Soest et al (2010) employs the READ with a sample of 6723 adolescents in Norway and identifies a similar five-factor structure to Hjemdal et al (2006)’s original study, however, five items are removed. Janousch et al (2020) uncovers a comparable five-factor, 27-item model using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and excludes one item due to inconsistencies. Stratta et al (2012) combines the Personal Competence and Structured Style factors to produce a four-factor solution in their validation study with adolescents in Italy. Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014) in their study with 840 adolescents in Mexico, removes six

items in their five-factor solution, which differs from the original structure in two ways. Firstly, whilst Social Competence, Family Cohesion, and Social Resources remain relatively similar, Personal Competence comprises of four, as opposed to eight items, measuring mainly adolescents' self-confidence. Secondly, the remaining Personal Competence items, and a few similar items in the Structured Style factor, are combined to create a new factor called 'Goal Orientation', replacing Structured Style. This reflects a collection of studies who acknowledge that the Structured Style factor has a less than acceptable alpha value (von Soest et al, 2010; Kelly et al, 2017; Janousch et al, 2020; Pérez-Fuentes et al, 2020). Pérez-Fuentes et al (2020) replicates Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s five-factor solution in their study with adolescents in Spain. Moksnes & Haugan (2018) removes several items from their solution reducing it to 20 items (von Soest et al, 2010; Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014), however, maintains Hjemdal et al (2006)'s original structure. Kelly et al (2017) is the only study to identify the original structure without modifications.

All studies outline strong and significant inter-correlations between each of the READ factors (von Soest et al, 2010; Stratta et al, 2012; Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014; Kelly et al, 2017; Moksnes & Haugan, 2018; Askeland et al, 2019; Pérez-Fuentes et al, 2020; Janousch et al, 2020). Moksnes & Haugan (2018, p.438) uncovers substantial correlations between the READ factors, indicating that 'having resilient resources in one domain increases the probability of such resources in other domains'. Similarly, Stratta et al (2012, p.484) suggests that the inter-correlations should, therefore, 'be regarded as factors measuring different but related aspects of the concept of resilience' (von Soest et al, 2010; Hjemdal et al, 2006). This further supports the theoretical understanding that resilience is a multi-dimensional phenomenon (e.g., Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Luthar et al, 2000). Many studies also identify gender differences between overall scores, with girls being more likely to access social resources than boys but are more likely to feel less personally competent and show higher signs of stress (Hjemdal et al, 2006; Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014; von Soest et al, 2010; Kelly et al, 2017). In contrast, Stratta et al (2012) uncovers that boys score higher on Personal Competence and Social Resources, and the total overall READ score (Werner, 1989). When controlling for age and gender, Hjemdal et al (2011, p.315) finds that older adolescents are more likely to experience greater levels of 'depression, anxiety, stress, and obsessive-compulsive symptoms' in comparison to their younger counterparts.

The READ is also shown to be negatively correlated with psychosocial disorders among adolescence, such as depression (Hjemdal et al, 2006; Hjemdal, 2007; Skrove et al, 2013; Moksnes & Haugan, 2018) and anxiety (von Soest et al, 2010; Hjemdal et al, 2011, Skrove et al, 2013), alongside positive self-system variables, such as self-esteem (Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014; Kelly et al, 2017; Moksnes & Haugan, 2018), self-efficacy (Sagone & Caroli, 2013; Janousch et al, 2020) and an overall satisfaction with life (Seligman, 2002). Moksnes & Haugan (2018) finds that the Personal Competence factor has the strongest correlations with measures of self-esteem, stress, sense of coherence, and depression, emphasising the importance of a positive self-concept. The authors also find that Family Cohesion, Social Resources, and Social Competence detail moderate to strong correlations with these measures, implying that ‘having social competence and social support are important for one’s perception of self-worth, daily life stress and perceiving life as coherent’ (Moksnes & Haugan, 2018, p.438). Kelly et al (2017, p.19) identifies that ‘perceived social support was correlated with all factors of the READ, but higher correlations were seen for FC [Family Cohesion] and SR [Social Resources]’, emphasising the importance of relational resources in supporting adolescents to buffer the effects of adversity. Optimism is highly correlated with the Personal Competence factor which infers that self-system variables are influential in adolescents’ positive thinking (Kelly et al, 2017). The study also finds that anger is positively associated with Family Cohesion and Personal Competence factors, suggesting that the family context is instrumental in the development of emotion regulation (Kelly et al, 2017). Engagement in delinquent behaviours, such as smoking cannabis and drinking alcohol, is also identified as having small but significant correlations with all READ factors, especially Family Cohesion (Kelly et al, 2017; von Soest et al, 2010). As Hjemdal et al (2006) mentions, those who have experienced negative life events (e.g., divorce, parental death) tend to score lower on the READ, and those who participate in hobbies that entail social interactions (e.g., team sports), and have elevated activity levels, are more likely to score higher.

Only von Soest et al (2010) includes indicators relating to SES, school grades, and family background variables (e.g., levels of education) in their study, to identify a relationship with adolescents’ resilience scores. The authors report that all ‘five resilience factors showed small to moderate correlations with the indicators of SES and school grades’ (von Soest et al, 2010, p.221), indicating that adolescents who score higher READ scores are more likely to come from high SES backgrounds. Parents living together and parent overprotection, strongly

influence the Family Cohesion factor, more so than the remaining factors (von Soest et al, 2010). Length of parent education has positive, but weak correlations with all READ factors (von Soest et al, 2010). The relationship between siblings and all five READ factors are small, and having a close friendship positively influences the Social Resources and Social Competence factors (von Soest et al, 2010).

To the researcher's knowledge, the READ has not been used to identify potential relationships with locus of control variables and has not been employed in an Indian context. This research study draws on this gap by adopting the READ to investigate the protective factors that are representative of female college students' resilience in New Delhi, India. Further insight into the reasons for selecting the READ are outlined in Chapter Three - Methodology. The following section considers the limitations of resilience research which this research study aims to draw on.

2.4.3. Limitations in Resilience Research

There are several limitations that are identified in the literature, when it comes to operationalising young people's resilience (see Luthar et al, 2000; Kaplan, 1999; Masten, 2007). These include obscurity in terminology, dependence on quantitative-focussed methods, the underrepresentation of young people's voices, and the predominance of western-based interpretations. This section outlines each of these challenges in turn.

Obscurity in Terminology

One notable limitation is the ambiguities in defining the key components of resilience (see Section 2.3). The concept of risk is highly contested. Some theorists argue that risk does not always lead to poor development outcomes (e.g., Rutter, 2013; Ungar, 2013; Luthar, 2006). Rutter (2013) suggests that exposure to low-level risk can contribute to a child's healthy development (e.g., improved coping skills), which is labelled as 'steeling effects'¹⁶. However, Rutter (2013) refers to these events as controllable experiences of stress, as compared with uncontrollable, which could lead to adverse outcomes as opposed to resilience (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Many theorists suggest that depending on the sample, location, and time, whilst some protective factors can be considered to promote positive outcomes, some can also be risk factors (e.g., Luthar et al, 2000; Ungar, 2013; Rutter, 2013). For example, Luthar

¹⁶ Rutter (2013, p.477) compares 'steeling effects' with 'inoculations' by suggesting that 'resistance to infections does not come avoiding all contact with the pathogens; such avoidance is likely to increase vulnerability rather than promote resilience'.

et al (2000) suggest that high intelligence levels, and high SES, in some instances, can create risk as opposed to acting as protective elements. Rutter (2013, p.476) states that there is ‘a requirement to assess individual needs in relation with particular circumstances rather than assume that all risk and protective factors have similar effects in all conditions in all people’. Only Masten (2011) describes risk and protective factors as distinct variables.

Quantitative-Focussed Methodologies

A major criticism, especially among cultural resilience researchers (e.g., Liebenberg & Theron, 2015; Ungar, 2008, 2011a, 2013), is the focus on quantitative-focussed measurements when conducting resilience research. Liebenberg & Theron (2015, p.204) argues that quantitative methodologies result in ‘superficial understandings of resilience...misaligned research designs’ and little comprehension of the complex resilience processes that occur within young people’s daily lives. In their review of resilience theories, VicHealth (2015, p.30-31) disputes that ‘Quantitative measures are useful for testing theory, but they do not provide any new understanding about the nature of variables, how they operate, or their importance to the resilient person’. Similar to Liebenberg & Theron (2015)’s argument, whilst quantitative scales are beneficial to test the relationship between resilience variables, VicHealth (2015, p.31) claims that ‘these methods do not reveal any new factors that may be pertinent in the process of resilience...by persisting with only quantitative measures there is an assumption that all significant variables have been identified’. According to Ungar (2003, p.94), these methods exclude the already ‘hidden voices’ in the production of knowledge. Ungar (2003) calls for the application of qualitative and/or mixed methods approaches to elicit in-depth accounts of resilience and build on quantitative discoveries (see Section 2.5). This research study aims to build on this limitation by employing a mixed methods approach to capture detailed narratives of young women’s resilience.

Absence of Young People’s Voices

Young people’s voices are somewhat absent in much of the resilience literature. Many theorists (e.g., Luthar, Garmezy and Werner) often rely on parent and teacher reports or use quantitative surveys to collect data on young people’s protective factors. Whilst these forms of data collection provide significant insight into a child or adolescents’ adaptive functioning, VicHealth (2015, p.31) warns researchers that ‘it cannot be assumed that others have more insight into the young person’s life than the young person themselves’. This is reflected by

many scholars who dispute the lack of youth representation in understandings of resilience, and the relevant factors that influence resilience processes (e.g., Masten, 2014b; McCubbin & Moniz, 2015; Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar, 2011a, 2013, 2015). These authors advocate for a more holistic, and action-orientated approach to conducting research with youth to gather perspectives of what supports and/or inhibits the resilience process (Theron, 2016a; van Rensburg et al, 2018, 2019a, 2019b). If these narratives are lost, it may misinform interventions and social policies that aim to support young people's mental well-being and stagnate progress towards achieving SDG 3 by 2030. Some researchers campaign for the involvement of the perspectives of youth and to actively engage them as co-researchers in the research process (see Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021; Suleiman et al, 2006). This research study aims to illuminate the voices of young women to better understand the factors and processes that they perceive to contribute towards their resilience.

Western-Focussed Interpretations of Resilience

The construct of resilience, and how it is subsequently measured, is often criticised by cultural researchers for being too westernised and Eurocentric (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Ungar, 2011a), unclear (Luthar et al, 2000), lacking relevance across different contexts and cultures (Ungar, 2008) and assuming cultural homogeneity (Liebenberg & Theron, 2015; Masten, 2014b; Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar, 2011a, 2013, 2015). Yet, according to Ungar (2008, p.203), 'there are highly specific protective processes in each community and culture that contribute to positive development'. Whilst aspects of positive functioning might be relevant across global populations, 'the relative importance of each is far from consistent in the literature when contextual, temporal, and cultural variation is taken into account' as Ungar (2008, p.221) states. Many researchers argue that there is a lack of attention towards the resilience processes that underpin positive outcomes for specific groups, such as majority-world youth living in developing country contexts (Theron, 2016a; Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar, 2013). Ungar (2006) calls for greater sensitivity when it comes to considering the influence of contextual and cultural factors by different populations, and how they are manifested into everyday life, especially among those conducting cross-cultural research. By eliciting young women's narratives, this research works towards gathering a culturally and contextually embedded understanding of resilience (Ungar et al, 2007).

This section has outlined how resilience is operationalised and has considered its limitations. The focus now turns to Michael Ungar, who proposes an extra layer of protective processes

(culture and context) and recommends the SER framework when conducting research with diverse youth populations, which has been widely received (e.g., Cicchetti, 2013; Wright & Masten, 2015; Wright et al, 2013; Liebenberg & Theron, 2015). Ungar's theory holds relevance to this research study as it focusses on exploring how young women's wider socio-cultural contexts has influence on their resilience. The following section presents Ungar's approach, prior to examining existing research that has adopted the SER perspective.

2.5. Ungar's Socio-Ecological Thinking around Resilience

Several theorists acknowledge the multi-dimensionality of resilience (e.g., Luthar et al, 2000; Masten & Garmezy, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992). However, despite the claim that resilience should be perceived as a process, many do not consider the influence of broader societal influences. Ungar (2005, 2008, 2011a, 2013) stresses that the individual's social and physical environment, and the resources that are both available and accessible within it, are integral to understand youth resilience. Ungar is one of the few theorists that argues for the consideration of context and culture as an extra level of protective processes (see Appendix 2). This section explores Ungar's theoretical approach, focussing on the rationale for proposing the Socio-Ecological Resilience (SER) framework and the theory's key elements. It also reviews some of the research that works towards understanding resilience using ABR methods. This is followed by a critical evaluation into the wider scope and contributions of the literature that adopts an SER perspective to examine child and youth resilience. It also provides reasoning's as to why Ungar's theory has been employed in this study.

2.5.1. Empirical Underpinnings

Ungar (2004, 2005, 2008, 2011a) criticises resilience researchers for focussing on western-based samples, and their apparent lack in sensitivity towards the factors that can potentially influence how resilience is defined and manifested by different populations. For example, Ungar (2008, p.128) states that resilience is primarily defined from a Eurocentric perspective, whereby emphasis is placed on the 'individual and relational factors typical of mainstream populations and their definitions of health functioning'. This research is perceived to largely ignore the complexity of an individual's socio-cultural context and assumes that the findings can be generalised (Trickett, 2009; Ungar, 2008; Runswick-Cole & Goodley, 2013).

Following the fourth wave of resilience research, Ungar et al (2007, p.287) compiles qualitative and quantitative data from 14 international communities, that experience multiple

risks (e.g., violence, mental illness), to identify youth pathways towards resilience. According to Ungar et al (2007, p.288), the study aims to ‘support a culturally embedded understanding of positive youth development that better accounts for young people’s resilience in western and non-western countries’. Ungar et al (2007) seeks to uncover how resilience is defined by different populations, whether there are culturally specific components, and to what extent are there unique processes and outcomes that are related to specific cultures and contexts. The authors find seven tensions of resilience: (1) access to material resources (e.g., financial, medical), (2) relationships (e.g., significant others, peers), (3) identity (e.g., personal sense of purpose), (4) power and control (e.g., caring for oneself and others), (5) social justice (e.g., meaningful roles in society), (6) cultural adherence (e.g., adhering to cultural values) and (7) cohesion (e.g., feeling part of something larger than oneself) (Ungar et al, 2007). Their findings suggest that such tensions exist in all cultures, and young people will resolve them in culturally relevant ways that they envisage as meaningful (Ungar et al, 2007).

In their later mixed methods study, Ungar (2008) reaffirms that youth cannot resolve the seven tensions unless the resources they require are available and accessible to them. These studies reflect Bronfenbrenner (1979) theory¹⁷, and argue that a contextual and cultural¹⁸ lens is required to centre young people’s understandings of resilience. This suggests that there must be a focus on how young people’s environments liberate and/or constrain positive developmental processes and provide access to the protective factors that support resilience pathways (Ungar et al, 2007; Ungar, 2008). Ungar (2008) calls for a more ecologically sensitive approach for studying resilience across different contexts, which lays the foundations for the SER framework:

“There has yet to be presented a coherent understanding of resilience that captures the dual focus of the individual and the individual’s social environment and how the two must be accounted for when determining the criteria for judging outcomes and discerning processes associated with resilience.”

(p.223-225)

¹⁷ Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues that culture (a macro-systemic factor), and context (an exosystemic factor) alter the ways in which individuals access health-promoting resources (e.g., education, healthcare, and shelter).

¹⁸ Context is defined as ‘the broader social and physical ecologies that shape a child’s lived experience’, whilst culture is termed as ‘the everyday practices that bring order to our experience, and the values and beliefs that support them’ (Ungar, 2015, p.38).

2.5.2. Key Elements of the SER Perspective

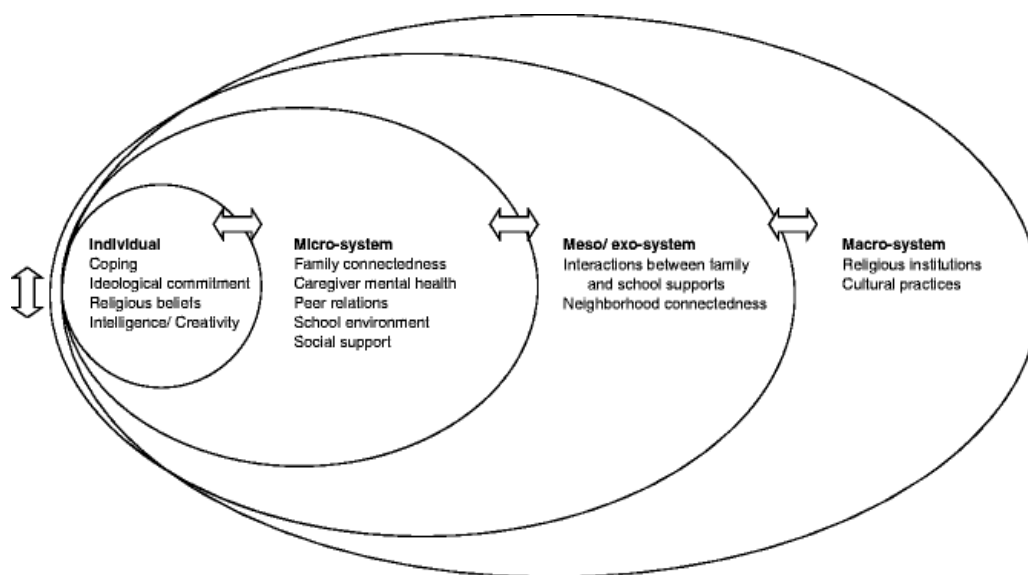
Ungar (2011a) proposes four key principles (decentrality, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relatively – see Appendix 2) which provide a framework to explain the variabilities in positive adaptation. Ungar’s definition of SER contains these principles (Ungar, 2008):

“In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to *navigate* their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to *negotiate* for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways.”

(p.225)

The SER perspective assumes that resilience is shaped by a set of interactive processes that operate across multiple systems (see Figure 2) (Ungar, 2011a; Tol et al, 2013; Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012). Ungar (2008) mentions that alongside the individual themselves, socio-ecological stakeholders (e.g., peers, parents, community members, government) work together to support the process of resilience by making resilience-supporting resources both accessible and available (Ungar, 2011a, 2012, 2015). Liebenberg & Ungar (2009, p.7) state that resilience is dependent on these socio-ecological stakeholders in ‘changing the opportunity structures around children in order to make successful development more likely’.

Figure 2: The Socio-Ecological Resilience (SER) Theory



(Tol et al, 2013; Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012)

The SER perspective assumes that resource provision is insufficient alone to support resilience, as according to Theron (2016a, p.636) it ‘requires that youth actively seek out, and appropriate the resources needed to facilitate their positive adjustment, and that their ecologies provide such resources in relevant ways’ (Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar, 2011a; van Rensburg et al, 2018). Resilience will only occur if there is an available opportunity structure, and a willingness by those who control the resources to provide what the individual needs in culturally meaningful ways (Ungar, 2013, p.256). Ungar (2011a)’s perspective encompasses the dual processes of navigation¹⁹and negotiation²⁰, which according to Ungar & Jefferies (2021, p.2) ‘explain why individual attributes...can only produce positive outcomes if social and physical ecologies provide opportunities for people to develop and apply their strengths’. Therefore, as an individual’s ecologies are likely to account for the variance in their developmental pathways, Ungar (2011a) proposes that to understand resilience as a process-orientated construct, researchers must pay more attention to measurements of complex environments as opposed to complex individuals.

Cultural Relativity

One of the key principles that provides the theoretical underpinnings of Ungar (2011a)’s SER framework is *cultural relativity*²¹, which is particularly relevant to this research study. Theron & Liebenberg (2015, p.23) state that ‘conceptualisations of resilience, along with the mechanisms that support competent adjustments to adversity, are relative to, and shaped by, the often-intersecting cultures that define social ecologies’. Therefore, it is widely considered that an individual’s culture will have a considerable influence on their understandings and access to resources that may be meaningful for their resilience (Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar, 2011a; van Rensburg et al, 2013; Theron & Theron, 2013; Theron, 2016a). This reflects Bronfenbrenner (1979)’s theory which views culture as a ‘powerful macrosystemic influence that shapes identities and value systems at global, national, and local levels, along with transactions at the micro-level’ (cited in Theron & Liebenberg, 2015, p.26). As outlined by Theron & Liebenberg (2015), culture can often include national culture (e.g., shared practices and beliefs), a set of nationally shared values (e.g., collectivism), global culture (e.g., dress and language), micro-cultures (e.g., local communities) or race and ethnicity. In this

¹⁹ Navigation is defined as both ‘personal agency and motivation’, alongside ‘movement towards resources that are both available by those in power to those who are disadvantaged’ (Ungar, 2011a, p.10).

²⁰ Negotiation implies how ‘individuals alone and in groups ascribe meaning to the resources that are available and accessible’ (Ungar, 2011a, p.10).

²¹ Cultural relativity suggests that ‘positive growth under stress are both culturally and temporally (and therefore, historically) embedded’ (Ungar, 2011a, p.8).

perspective, culture at the macro-level (global/national) can be particularly influential in promoting beliefs, values, and norms that can influence positive development at the micro-level (individual), and structure of micro-systems (e.g., the family) (Theron & Liebenberg, 2015). Ungar (2015, p.45) suggests that different cultures will possess different values, therefore, by investigating the protective processes, which are perceived as relevant to populations, it reflects an understanding of resilience that incorporates a ‘much needed complexity into models of coping under adversity’.

Ungar (2008, p.233) argues that attentiveness is required by researchers to ‘discover local truths’, as opposed to ‘colonising people’s experiences’ and ‘understanding ‘others’ in terms relevant only to western science’. A collection of cultural resilience researchers advocate for contextually attuned approaches that represent hidden narratives of those who thrive despite exposure to adversity, and to better understand the potentially unnamed processes of resilience (Liebenberg, 2009a; Liebenberg & Theron, 2015; Ungar, 2003, 2012). There are several studies that illustrate the potentialities of ABR methods (e.g., drawing, painting, collage) in understanding and building resilience among diverse groups of people (McKay et al, 2020; McKay & Barton, 2018; McKay & Sappa, 2020; McKay, 2019, 2021; Barton, 2019; Barton et al, 2022; Shand, 2014). The next section examines this research in greater detail.

2.5.3. Resilience, Art, and Culture

Much of the existing ABR resilience literature is conducted with samples of teachers and pre-service teachers and identifies relationships between arts-based reflection and mental well-being, identity development and resilience (McKay et al, 2020; McKay & Barton, 2018; McKay & Sappa, 2020; Barton, 2019). These studies emphasise the role of ABR in enabling teachers to interact ‘physically, emotionally, individually, or collaboratively with materials, images, sounds, and other stimuli to help make sense of their reality or lived experiences’ (McKay, 2021, p.3). McKay (2019) and McKay (2021) similarly use photo elicitation and collage reflection techniques to examine the role of self-care in teacher education, identity development and resilient engagement among groups of teachers and pre-service teachers in Australia. Both studies find that teachers identify multiple personal (e.g., goal orientation, self-care strategies) and contextual factors (e.g., access to social networks) that enable them to thrive despite stressful situations (McKay, 2019, 2021). The author concludes that an arts-based approach is effective in enabling teachers to share what potentially could not be expressed through verbal means (McKay, 2019, 2021). Drawing on Dewey (1993)’s thinking

around reflective thought, the study also suggests that the arts encourage deep reflection and reflexivity which supports participants to embrace the specific enablers, and tackle the inhibitors, that contribute to their personal and professional identities as teachers (McKay, 2019, 2021; McKay & Sappa, 2020; Barton, 2019).

There is a growing body of research that adopts an ABR approach, using visual arts methods as tactile discussion tools to examine young people's resilience-supporting factors, and the contextual and cultural realities that shape them. Techniques include; body-map storytelling (Lys, 2018; Shand, 2014), photo elicitation (Kumpulainen et al, 2016) and draw-and-talk activities (Theron, 2016a, 2020; Theron et al, 2014; 2011a; Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; Jefferis & Theron, 2017; Kumpulainen et al, 2016; Hall & Theron, 2016; Pretorius & Theron, 2019). Lys (2018) and Shand (2014)'s studies employ body-mapping techniques, within an SER perspective, to explore the self-identified protective resources that influence marginalised young women's resilience trajectories²². The authors find that the activities are beneficial in promoting discussion and illuminating stories of resilience (Lys, 2018; Shand, 2014). Participants can contextualise and narrate their experiences through artwork relating to culture, goal orientation, and the significance of supportive networks of women (Lys, 2018; Shand, 2014). Shand (2014, p.97) acknowledges that the arts support 'a broader and deeper understanding of resilience, one that embraced the lived experience of the individual as well as the social, cultural, and policy context'. These studies highlight the unique contribution that ABR methods possess in understanding women's resilience within diverse contexts and are influential in informing research and policy that centre around female health and well-being (Lys, 2018; Shand, 2014; Bonanno et al, 2012).

Like previous studies, this research employs ABR methods to enable young women to explore and express their experiences of resilience beyond traditional forms of communication. The ABR approach aligns with an SER perspective which places emphasis on understanding the individual, contextual, and cultural processes of resilience that are relevant to the individual themselves (Ungar, 2011a). The following section explores these studies further by outlining the scope of research that employs an SER perspective with youth populations.

²² Bonanno (2005) defines resilience trajectory as 'characterised by improvement to levels that indicate absence of psychological symptoms' (cited in Hobfoll et al, 2009, p.139).

2.5.4. Socio-Ecological Resilience Research with Young People

A large portion of studies that adopt an SER model are primarily focussed with ‘at-risk’ youth populations living in North America and Africa (notably South Africa) (see Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021). These populations include LGBTQ+ youth (Asakura, 2016; Erhard & Ben-Ami, 2016), refugees (Sleijpen et al, 2017), individuals living in low-income areas (Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016; Hamby et al, 2019; Lucier-Greer et al, 2014; Theron et al, 2017; van Breda & Dickens, 2017; van Rensburg et al, 2019a, 2019b), and within areas of political turmoil (Goeke-Morey et al, 2013).

Similar to the protective factor groupings outlined in Section 2.3.2, Vaughn & DeJonckheere (2021) find in their review of the SER literature, that resilience is categorised into four key domains: (1) personal, (2) relational, (3) structural, and (4) spiritual/cultural (van Breda & Theron, 2018). Whilst the domains are distinctly defined, Vaughn & DeJonckheere (2021, p.130) states that ‘there are interactions such that the personal layer is shaped by relationships, community resources, structural supports, and inequalities and societal beliefs’. Ungar (2011a) suggests that an in-depth understanding of the aspects within the relational, structural, and spiritual/cultural domains is integral to outline the potential enablers and/or barriers to young people’s health and well-being (Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021). Much of the literature outlined in this section adopts a qualitative and/or mixed methods approach, whilst a small selection employs solely quantitative methods (van Rensburg et al, 2019b; Theron, 2016b; Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016; Martinez-Torteya et al, 2017). This section explores the constructs relating to each of the domains in turn whilst considering the interconnections that exist between them.

Personal/Individual Domain

Many studies that refer to the personal domain often include constructs relating to positive thinking, optimism, and personal control (Sleijpen et al, 2017; Adegoke & Steyn, 2017; Malindi, 2018; Theron, 2020). Sleijpen et al (2017)’s qualitative study aims to identify the challenges faced by young refugees in the Netherlands and the factors that contribute to their resilience. Young refugees acknowledge the importance of positive thinking and feeling in control during periods of significant adversity (e.g., relocating home and adjusting to new cultures). According to Sleijpen et al (2017, p.354), this provides them with a ‘sense of pride and confidence in their own abilities, and some sense of ‘being resilient’. Similarly, Adegoke & Steyn (2017) discover that HIV-positive female adolescents in Nigeria place significant

value on remaining optimistic during adversity. The authors state that ‘the ability to become resilient despite all odds is a personal trait that has helped them [participants] to sustain their well-being’ (Adegoke & Steyn, 2017, p.9). Both Malindi (2018) and Theron (2020)’s studies also find that adopting a positive outlook on life and obtaining a sense of humour supports young people in coping with stressful circumstances. Studies that employ arts-based methods often report visual references towards the physical and natural environment (e.g., light, birds, butterflies emerging from cocoons) to portray positive self-concept, hope, optimism, and humour (Shand, 2014; McKay & Barton, 2018; Hall & Theron, 2016).

Persistence, perseverance, and inner strength are also identified as personal attributes that can enhance an individual’s capacity to cope with negative life situations (Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Asakura, 2019; Lucier-Greer et al, 2014; Sleijpen et al, 2017; Malindi, 2018; Theron, 2017, 2020). Pretorius & Theron (2019) find that marginalised young people in South Africa value believing and repeating affirming messages to prompt perseverance in times of hardship and support them in their resilience journeys. Perseverance, agency, and determination are also associated with holding a future-orientated attitude (Theron, 2017) and the empowerment of women (Pretorius & Theron, 2019). Daily ‘pep talks’, a positive internal dialogue, taking pride in one’s own abilities, and recognising that the past does not define them, have also been identified as motivating young people to cope with stressors (Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Sleijpen et al, 2017; Malindi, 2018). Asakura (2019, p.280)’s study with a sample of LGBTQ youth, identifies that resilience is reflected in an individual’s ability to ‘show up’ in the face of LGBTQ-related adversities (e.g., homophobic bullying). Congratulating themselves on small victories (e.g., going to school and getting out of bed) and ‘battling through’ difficult moments are also described as important sources of youth resilience (Asakura, 2019, p.280).

Many studies find that resilient youth often report feeling that they have become stronger, more independent, and psychologically mature because of their challenging experiences (Malindi, 2018; Sleijpen et al, 2017; Fourie & Theron, 2012; Shand, 2014; Lys, 2018). Malindi (2018, p.341) reports that young mothers felt that their experiences of motherhood had ‘toughened’ them and provided further encouragement towards achieving their aspirations. Visual symbols of nature (e.g., trees, rock formations, animals) are often portrayed as metaphors to describe inner strength and resilience in ABR-based studies (e.g., Shand, 2014; Huss, 2007; Lys, 2018). Some studies emphasise the importance of agency and

personal control as enablers of resilience (Fourie & Theron, 2012; Berridge, 2017; Everall et al, 2006; Newsom & Myers-Bowman, 2017). Berridge (2017, p.91) finds that young people in foster care in England, employ agency through ‘exercising choices; developing individual coping styles; deciding whether or not to engage with supports offered; and by judging the quality of services’. Reclaiming personal power (e.g., letting go of negative thoughts and forgiveness) is also found to positively facilitate acceptance and growth (Newsom & Myers-Bowman, 2017). Everall et al (2006, p.466) finds that among female sexual abuse survivors, that ‘hitting [rock] bottom’ or simply having enough of feeling sad and angry, was associated with taking back control (e.g., facing fears, altering thinking patterns) and instigated the journey towards resilience.

A limited number of studies with at-risk youth outline the influence of goal-orientation as a resilience-supporting factor (Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Adegoke & Steyn, 2018; Theron, 2016a; Everall et al, 2006). Pretorius & Theron (2019) find that South African youth value striving for educational success, which includes demonstrating a preparedness to work hard to achieve their personal goals, and to make their parents proud. Despite not being referred to explicitly, Adegoke & Steyn (2018) imply that valuing education, dreaming about the future, and setting career goals emerges as a significant cultural enabler of resilience among female adolescents in Nigeria (Theron, 2016a). Goal orientation encourages a sense of ‘purposefulness in life’, and a source of empowerment (Adegoke & Steyn, 2018, p.1291). Based on their findings, Everall et al (2006) suggests that setting goals, hopes, and plans are beneficial in influencing vulnerable young women’s abilities to think positively about the future, and to foster a sense of purpose and meaning in life.

Studies also highlight the importance of short and long-term coping strategies, or self-care strategies for resilience (Lys, 2018; DeJonckheere et al, 2017; Hall & Theron, 2016). Lys (2018, p.7) identifies that among a sample of indigenous female youth, emotional expression through artwork serves as an important ‘therapeutic tool to process their feelings and recognise their intrapersonal strengths’. The value of creating art is perceived as a form of distraction, empowerment, and a source of confidence, when faced with emotional challenges (e.g., family conflict) (Lys, 2018). In addition, Lys (2018) also finds that emotional connections to music (e.g., listening to music) and connections to nature are important intrapersonal coping mechanisms among the sample. Similarly, spending time with nature, listening to music, engaging with crafts, and dancing, are also reported as sources of peace

and comfort for South African youth in Hall & Theron (2016)'s study. DeJonckheere et al (2017) proposes that writing poems, playing video games, writing in diaries, and engaging in physical supports are sources of distraction and ways to deal with family and peer-related conflict among Latino immigrant children.

Emotional distancing, avoidance, or tactical ignoring is also found to be an effective coping style for some youth samples (Erhard & Ben-Ami, 2016; Sanders et al, 2017; Asakura, 2019). Erhard & Ben-Ami (2016, p.211) find that psychologically ignoring and socially distancing oneself from dysfunctional peer relationships (e.g., homophobic bullying) is associated with 'maturity, authenticity, intelligence, and self-acceptance' among lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) secondary school students in Israel. Maladaptive and distractive coping strategies (e.g., drugs, drinking alcohol, clubbing) are also considered as providing young people with moments of power and rebellion, and respite from stress in the literature (e.g., Shepherd et al, 2010; Bogar & Hulse-Killacky, 2006). However, Ungar (2008) outlines that as an individual's capacity to cope is contextually referent, patterns of avoidance may be symbolic of adaptive behaviours to survive when living under adverse conditions. When an individual hits a crises period, maladaptive behaviours may be the only avenue for problem-solving or distraction, especially when there is no other feasible solution (Ungar, 2008).

Relational Domain

The relational perspective of resilience assumes the centrality of supportive relationships (e.g., peers, family members, community members, and professionals) as resilience-promoting resources (Ungar, 2011a, 2012; Walsh, 2002). These resources are often referred to separately or collectively. Many studies identify important interactions between the relational and personal layer and emphasise its important position within the SER framework.

Several studies have revealed the importance of availability and accessibility to safe, and supportive family networks (DeJonckheere et al, 2017; Hall & Theron, 2016; Goeke-Morey et al, 2013; Lys, 2018; Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Malindi, 2018; Li et al, 2018). Both DeJonckheere et al (2017) and Hall & Theron (2016) find that the presence of trusted, caring and encouraging parents are supportive in enabling young people to master daily challenges, overcome fears, and increase a willingness to try new activities. Mothers, or mother figures, often emerge as the preferred source of social among young people (DeJonckheere et al, 2017; Hall & Theron, 2016; Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Malindi, 2018; Lys, 2018; Li et al, 2018; Sleijpen et al, 2017; Theron, 2016a, 2020). Hall & Theron (2016) find that adolescents

learn valuable advice and socially appropriate behaviours from their mothers, such as forgiveness, and guidance in how to cope with challenges (Theron, 2020). During academically challenging circumstances (e.g., failure of examinations), Chinese adolescents in Li et al (2018)'s study, proclaim that their mothers act as a strong source of encouragement, especially those who value their child's well-being over academic successes. Pretorius & Theron (2019, p.380) suggest that mothers act as a 'pillar[s] of strength' to adolescents, as they regularly encourage perseverance during difficult life periods. However, for some adolescents, mothers act as inhibitors to their resilience as they often play a key role in reducing their perception of self-control, restrict social opportunities, and create a tense environment at home (Pretorius & Theron, 2019). However, the authors suggest that many adolescents understand that their mothers are simply supporting them 'to make constructive choices', and ultimately want the best for their children (Pretorius & Theron, 2019, p.384). Adolescents in Theron (2016a)'s study prefer not to approach their mothers for emotional support, and instead are only used as sources of material support (e.g., providing food and shelter).

Support from other female family members (e.g., auntie, grandmother, sister), are also identified as integral for building resilience among some youth populations, especially among young women (Hall & Theron, 2016; Li et al, 2018; Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Theron, 2016a, 2020; Theron et al, 2013; Fourie & Theron, 2012; Lys, 2018). Lys (2018)'s study finds that indigenous young women value emotional support from female family elders, and sisters, notably in the absence of harmonious relationships with parents. These family members are regarded as important in supporting young women in avoiding and building resistance against engaging in risky behaviours (e.g., drinking alcohol) (Lys, 2018). Similarly, Hall & Theron (2016) and Theron (2016a, 2020)'s studies find that aunties and grandmothers are not only regarded as important sources of emotional support but are foundations of stability within the household, providing adolescents with structured daily routines, and aiding them in devising and working towards their educational goals. Contrastingly, there is little mention towards the influence of fathers, or father figures, in youth resilience processes. Lys (2018, p.8) states that adolescent girls have 'stronger bonds with female relatives compared to male relatives', and fewer than 1% of adolescents in Theron (2020)'s study report that fathers are their main sources of resilience. Some South-African-based studies attribute these findings to father absenteeism, or the traditional gender roles and responsibilities in South African culture (Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Theron,

2016a). However, Theron (2020) acknowledges that grandfathers are more likely to urge adolescents to invest in their future and act as key motivators for academic success.

Presence of cohesive family and community units are also acknowledged as notable protective resources (Theron, 2020; Goeke-Morey et al, 2013; Pretorius & Theron, 2019). Theron (2020, p.87) emphasises the importance of having access to a strong and ‘stable support system’, which consists of supportive ‘relatives and nonrelatives’ that provide material and emotional resources. Goeke-Morey et al (2013) finds in their study that less cohesive families, with high levels of inter-familial conflict, and violent community environments, are more likely to have a negative impact on an adolescent’s healthy adjustment and educational outcomes. The authors suggest that ‘A peaceful home environment may provide youth both the instrumental and emotional support necessary for academic success, including...a sense of emotional security, self-confidence, and a culture of achievement’ (Goeke-Morey et al, 2013, p.249). Pretorius & Theron (2019)’s study suggests that in some cases, complete emotional detachment from family networks, can rather enable resilience, especially among those who have been raised within dysfunctional family environments (Werner & Smith, 1992).

The significance of supportive peer relationships and networks are widely acknowledged in the literature (Sleijpen et al, 2017; Pretorius & Theron, 2019; DeJonckheere et al, 2017; Lys, 2018; Erhard & Ben-Ami, 2016; Asakura, 2019; Hamby et al, 2019; Malindi, 2018; Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; van Breda & Dickens, 2017; Sanders et al, 2017). Sleijpen et al (2017) finds that support from peers positively influences the resilience of refugee adolescents, as they provide a sense of safety, support, distraction, and fun. Pretorius & Theron (2019, p.385) state that peers are a ‘shoulder to cry on’ when adolescents experience significant life difficulties, as they tend to better understand the stresses associated with parental expectations. Peers also influence the development of positive coping habits (e.g., studying together) and enact useful advice to ‘urge resilience-enabling choices’ (Pretorius & Theron, 2019, p.386). Other studies find that positive peer relationships and close-knit bonds are supportive in reducing academic stress and enhancing motivation, which has a positive influence on educational outcomes and social and emotional functioning (Theron & van Rensburg et al, 2018; DeJonckheere et al, 2017).

In the same vein, supportive peer networks are often identified as resilience-enablers, especially when young people are subject to bullying (Lys, 2018; Erhard & Ben-Ami, 2016;

Asakura, 2016). Lys (2018) mentions that peer networks are motivational, offer guidance for important decisions, and provide emotional protection from bullies. Erhard & Ben-Ami (2016) and Asakura (2016) identify that peer acceptance, advocacy, and engaging with virtual support groups, are significant sources of support, and strategies to counterbalance the negative effects of homophobic bullying. Asakura (2016) argues that resilience among LGBTQ youth requires more than personal assets and resources, and rather access to LGBTQ-friendly environments and networks of supportive peers and allies. Group connectedness, especially within a social group that shares similar interests, is often associated with a sense of belonging, acceptance, and positive self-concept (Hamby et al, 2019; Malindi, 2018; Shand, 2014). On the other hand, some studies suggest that membership in peer groups that engage in risky behaviours, or have negative relationships with the individual, can undermine resilience and enhance psychosocial risk (e.g., Rutter et al, 2001; Sanders et al, 2017). Sanders et al (2017, p.11)'s study suggests that reducing social contact with antisocial peers 'may represent a proactive strategy some youth adopt to reduce risk'. Whilst withdrawal from negative peer relationships may have consequences for some, the authors suggest that it may support young people in coping with adversity. However, Sanders et al (2017, p.11) acknowledges that whilst it can be beneficial, 'the strategy is unlikely to be sustainable without additional external support that addresses the emotional consequences of the social withdraw strategy', such as support from family members to fill the 'relational void'.

Positive relationships with 'role models', such as school teachers, is widely documented in the literature as key enablers of competence, school engagement, and positive mental well-being (Malindi, 2018; Li et al, 2018; Hall & Theron, 2016; Jefferis & Theron, 2017; Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Theron & Theron, 2014; Theron et al, 2014; Theron & van Rensburg et al, 2018; Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016; Lys, 2018; DeJonckheere et al, 2017). Teachers are considered as sources of emotional support and academic motivation, resulting in positive effects on students' personal and professional development (Malindi, 2018; Li et al, 2018). Li et al (2018) suggests that whilst teachers in China exert substantial academic pressure, it encourages students to push themselves to succeed in their studies. Research also finds that teachers act as important mentors and life coaches for students, and the promotion of agency, eliciting valuable guidance, and constructive advice on how to deal with issues, are seen as integral for building a positive self-concept (Hall & Theron, 2016; Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; Theron et al, 2014; Jefferis & Theron, 2017; DeJonckheere et al, 2017; Pretorius &

Theron, 2019). Teachers can also act as confidants alongside friends and family (Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016). In some cases, they can act as the only source of support in the absence of positive parent/parent-figures due to absenteeism, maltreatment, or death (Jefferis & Theron, 2017; Malindi, 2018; Li et al, 2018; Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Lys, 2018; Theron et al, 2014).

Relational aspects within the community system also emerge as important protective resources, notably within developing country contexts (Theron et al, 2011b; Adegoke & Steyn, 2018; Lys 2018; Mpofu et al, 2015). Theron et al (2011b) identifies that ethnic minority youth access religious institutions and depend on cultural traditions as formal social networks to support their identity formations. Adegoke & Steyn (2018) find that adolescent girls in Nigeria proclaim that access to a strong social network within the church community, offers both emotional and material support and contributes significantly to their cultural identities. Participation in church youth activities provides indigenous female youth in Lys (2018)'s study with a sense of safety, mutual support, and escapism during periods of hardship. However, some adolescents report that they value their relationship with God over their relationships with church members (Lys, 2018).

Structural Domain

The structural domain, according to Vaughn & DeJonckheere (2021, p.130), is inclusive of the 'non-relational aspects of resilience in the social environment such as schools, community organisations, churches, social services, financial resources, and neighbourhood safety', and is often referred to as 'community resilience' (Ellis & Dietz, 2017, p.S86).

A large portion of research highlights the predominantly positive role of school ecologies in fostering young people's resilience processes (Masten, 2014b; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2013; Theron, 2016b; Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012; Theron & Theron, 2014; Theron et al, 2013, 2014; Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2009; Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016; Kumpulainen et al, 2016). According to Tatlow-Golden et al (2016, p.105), school ecologies are effective in supporting 'academic efficiency, self-determination, behavioural self-control, rewarding peer friendships, caring and authentic teacher-child relationships, and strong home-school connections'. In their scoping review of the literature, Theron (2016b) emphasises the influence of school ecologies in meaningfully championing young people's resilience. Theron (2016b) stresses the salience of teachers as socio-ecological partners of resilience, notably through developing warm, trusting, and respectful relationships with students

(Masten, 2014b; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2013; Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012; Theron et al, 2013; Theron & Theron, 2014) and championing students as capable agents of change (Masten, 2014b; Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2009; Theron et al, 2014). The school community is also seen as providing a climate that promotes success and engagement, endorses values that bolsters personal and professional advancement and boosts a sense of community which is inclusive of cultural diversity (Swanson & Spencer, 2012; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2013).

An environment that delivers extra-curricular activities (e.g., non-academic activities, such as music, cultural events) is also found to be supportive of young people in making constructive connections and developing interpersonal skills (Gilligan, 2000; Masten, 2014b; Reis et al, 2005; Theron et al, 2014; Theron & Theron, 2014; Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016; van Rensburg et al, 2018). This echoes Sleijpen et al (2017)'s study, who finds that attending and performing at school is associated with positive distraction, a sense of increased power and control, and an opportunity to access social contacts. A learning climate that supports the optimal advancement through curriculum, such as access to material resources (e.g., food and books) and development of applicable life skills, is widely considered as a major facilitator of resilience (Masten, 2014b; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2013; Kumpulainen et al, 2016). Theron et al (2013) indicates that when the school environment values young people's voices, and enables the opportunity for personal expression and agency, it can be a significant predictor for resilience-supporting processes. A small amount of literature argues that school ecologies can also act as inhibitors to resilience, such as through exposure to bullying, and negative relationships with peers (e.g., Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016).

Some studies highlight the importance of professional services and individuals, such as psychologists, in working with at-risk young people to develop resilience-fostering and responsive community environments (Kumpulainen et al, 2016; Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016; Theron et al, 2013; van Rensburg et al, 2018; Adegoke & Steyn, 2017; Lys, 2018). Adegoke & Steyn (2017) claim that school counsellors, and community centre counselling support, provide emotional support to individuals to deal with psychological distress, and elicit the necessary guidance for the development of social competencies to enable resilience navigation. van Rensburg et al (2018) finds that higher perceptions of psychological and physical caregiving is associated with greater use of support services (e.g., healers, and counsellors) among adolescents. Contrastingly, van Rensburg et al (2013) argues that whilst

accessing professional services are beneficial for well-being, they are only supportive of positive adjustment when the young people themselves perceive them as both meaningful and culturally respectful. This is reflected by Lys (2018) who outlines that adolescents report not accessing formal mental healthcare services due to the cultural barriers and stigmas associated with well-being support for indigenous tribes in Canada.

Availability of supportive and cohesive communities, which provide access to safe spaces, and offer culturally appropriate service provision, are also influential constructs within the structural domain (Asakura, 2016, 2019; Fourie & Theron, 2012; Theron et al, 2017; van Breda & Dickens, 2017; Thomas et al, 2016; Sanders et al, 2017; Hall & Theron, 2016; Shand, 2014). Communities that provide opportunities for social engagement among youth (e.g., youth clubs) are found to foster a sense of well-being and enable young people to develop relationships and networks with others who hold similar interests (van Breda & Dickens, 2017). For example, Shand (2014) finds that participation in an Australian community-based mental health arts program positively contributed to marginalised women's perception of inner strength, mastery, and resilience, and encouraged the development of friendships and an exploration of their own cultural identities. Shand (2014)'s study illuminates the significance of creative and safe community spaces that encourage participation and inclusion. Emotional, material, and financial support from neighbours, community organisations, and health services, are also found to be supportive for young people navigating stressful circumstances (van Breda & Dickens, 2017; Asakura, 2016, 2019; Thomas et al, 2016). However, as Goeke-Morey et al (2013) and Ungar & Hadfield (2019) argue, community environments which are not cohesive, or rife with conflict, are less likely to be effective. Non-relational aspects of the community system also emerge as supportive for young people post-adversity (Walsh & Black, 2018). For example, Walsh & Black (2018) emphasises that alongside social networks, the role of local government organisations are influential in promoting young people's resilience, self-efficacy, and social and political activism.

Despite the fact that the influence of the structural layer is relatively underexplored, Vaughn & DeJonckheere (2021, p.130) argue that researchers must acknowledge the significance of 'broader social and community level factors' that influence young people's resilience. This is reflected by van Breda & Theron (2018, p.238) who state that 'a child growing up in poverty implies that the child is responsible for dealing with the effects of the macro structural forces

that impinge on his or her life, and diverts attention away from these forces, instead of critiquing and dealing with them'. Therefore, the structural layer places significant emphasis on the role of 'institutions, social services, economic development, social networks, civic engagement, collective empowerment, and community advocacy' (Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021; Ellis & Dietz, 2017) in building resilience. Addressing inequalities that exist within structural and social factors may be an efficient avenue for policy, alongside interventions that are targeted at children and young people (Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021).

Spiritual/Cultural Domain

The final domain of SER refers to spiritual/cultural, which acknowledges 'the morals, ethics, values, and worldviews surrounding individuals', such as 'guiding cultural philosophies, religious and spiritual beliefs, traditional practices' (Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021, p.130). Embedded in culture are expectations regarding appropriate ways to cope with adversity, that in turn, influence how an individual interacts with their social ecology (Ungar, 2011a).

Many studies acknowledge the importance of religious beliefs and spirituality (e.g., prayer, belief in God) in the promotion of resilience trajectories (Adegoke & Steyn, 2018; Lys, 2018; Malindi, 2018; Fourie & Theron, 2012; Hall & Theron, 2016; Theron & Malindi, 2010; Theron, 2016a; Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; Thomas et al, 2016). Strong attachment with participating in religious practices, such as traditional ceremonies or rituals, are often identified as having a positive influence on psychological well-being, and it is strongly aligned with the development of competence, academic attainment, and positive self-concept (Martinez & Dukes, 1997). Adegoke & Steyn (2018) find that faith, prayers, regular church attendance, cultural identities, and social support from the church community, act as valuable emotional and psychological protective resources for young women in Nigeria. Belief in God promotes optimism, and the hope that their situation, and the stigma attached to HIV-infection, would eventually change (Adegoke & Steyn, 2018). This also reflects studies which find that faith-based resources (e.g., prayer, reading the Bible, and listening to Gospel music) are supportive in regulating young people's anxieties, and provide them with a sense of peace and protection (Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; Hall & Theron, 2016; Malindi, 2018; Lys, 2018). Whilst much of the literature often supplements spirituality with social support (e.g., church community, religious leaders), Lys (2018) notes that for some young women, who experience periods of loneliness and isolation, a dependence on God could be their only source of emotional support.

Much of the literature highlights the significance of adherence to cultural norms, beliefs, and social justice to inform the resilience process among samples of youth primarily living in non-western contexts (Adegoke & Steyn, 2018; Theron, 2016a; van Rensburg et al, 2019a) or within indigenous or marginalised communities (Lys, 2018; Shand, 2014). Many South African-based studies indicate that due to contextual and cultural dynamics, whereby African women are traditionally tasked with caring for the younger generation, individuals are more likely to demonstrate resilience through deep connections to women as opposed to men (Theron, 2019; Theron & Ungar, 2019). Theron (2016a)'s study similarly identifies that a close connection to culture and accessing cultural resources that are relevant to South African communities, are resilience-promoting factors. These include a belief in the inherent strength of women, spirituality, and beliefs regarding the importance of education for personal and professional development (Theron, 2016a). Indigenous young women in Lys (2018, p.5)'s study make visual references to nature (e.g., sun, water, insects, and trees) and images relating to Inuit culture, which portray 'a grounding force that was a source of intrapersonal strength that made them [participants] feel more whole as individual's'. References to traditional music (e.g., hand drums, throat singing) are also associated with the realisation of inner strengths, self-confidence, and formation of identities (Lys, 2018). The authors find that engaging in outdoor activities (e.g., running and hiking) act as a form of escapism, emotional processing, and a source of safety and grounding, as well as encouraging a reconnection with spiritual identities (Lys, 2018). Shand (2014, p.43) acknowledges that a cultural connection to nature not only reflects women's well-being, but 'the notion that resilience is an innate and natural resource' and a symbol of female strength.

On the other hand, Adegoke & Steyn (2018)'s study in Nigeria finds that female adolescents report that whilst Yoruba cultural practices help them to prevent engaging in risky behaviours (e.g., sex before marriage), they believe that it is a constraint to their resilience. Adolescents acknowledge that cultural gender traditions, which include the subordination of women and controlled access to education, affect their perceived ability to adjust well in life (Adegoke & Steyn, 2018). The authors state that 'speaking out against these discriminatory practices can also be regarded as a manifestation of resilience', as adolescents possess the opportunity to distance themselves from stringent cultural practices (Adegoke & Steyn, 2018, p.1295). Like the structural, the spiritual/cultural domain of resilience is relatively underexplored in resilience literature. Overall, these studies identify numerous associations between all four

layers, reinforcing the idea that resilience is a dynamic and interactive process (see Sleijpen et al, 2017).

This section has outlined the rationale, and key elements of Ungar (2011a)'s SER perspective. It has also considered the influence of ABR methods when conducting resilience research with diverse groups of young people, and the scope of research that has employed an SER framework. This thesis follows Ungar (2011a)'s SER perspective to examine young women's resilience in New Delhi, India. Mechanisms of resilience are contextually and culturally relative to specific populations, therefore, resilience will differ and vary relative to an individual's social structure (Ungar, 2011a; Masten, 2014; Panter-Brick, 2015). As opposed to 'seeking homogeneity in concepts of resilience and its manifestations', an in-depth examination is required to understanding young women's lives that are evident of the variety of constraints, choices, and resources that manifest as resilience, according to the young women themselves (Ungar et al, 2007, p.307). Ungar (2011a)'s SER approach encapsulates an additional layer of protective processes; therefore, it is the most appropriate theoretical model to uncover the complex, and multi-levelled resilience pathways that young women navigate, within a diverse country context such as India. To add further relevance to this study's findings, the following section explores the resilience research that has been conducted in an Indian context.

2.6. Resilience Research in India

There is a relatively small amount of research that explores the factors and processes that contribute to women and girls' resilience in developing country contexts, particularly in India. To add contextual relevancy to the findings of this study, the next section explores a selection of the resilience research that does exist. The first part will consider the salient context-specific factors and developmental challenges faced by many young women in India. The second part outlines the existing research that investigates the protective factors among women and adolescent populations in India, and the socio-cultural factors that are associated with resilience. It also outlines potential gaps in the literature that this study draws on.

2.6.1. Challenges for Women and Girls in India

A substantial body of narrative-based research captures young women's experiences of structural discrimination and gender-based violence, which pose significant threats to everyday safety (Bansal et al, 2021; Hebert et al, 2019; Dhillon & Bakaya, 2014; Beattie et

al, 2019; Pillai et al, 2009; Talboys et al, 2017; Tripathi et al, 2017; Parikh et al, 2019). The far-reaching consequences of ‘eve teasing’²³, such as the short- and long-term emotional impacts, is commonly described in urban settings in India (Talboys et al, 2017; Hebert et al, 2019; Bansal et al, 2021; Parikh et al, 2019; Ramanaik et al, 2018). Much of the literature highlights that women are more likely to report a higher risk of public sexual harassment, including verbal and physical encounters in their neighbourhoods, or on public transport (Dhillon & Bakaya, 2014; Leach & Sitaram, 2007; Tripathi et al, 2017; Hebert et al, 2019; Parikh et al, 2019). Hebert et al (2019, p.4) suggests that many young women in their study report multiple responses to sexual harassment, which vary from feeling frightened, embarrassed, and ‘fighting back’ against the attacker. Some acknowledge that their mothers often encourage them to resist harassment through the adoption of self-defence strategies, whilst others remain cautious about how men could harm them (Hebert et al, 2019).

Threats to women’s safety, driven by stringent cultural norms and expectations, are also found to act as a barrier to their mobilities outside of the family home, often accompanied with further restrictions to accessing health and education services (Hebert et al, 2019; Chakraborty, 2016). Hebert et al (2019) finds that upon disclosure of sexual harassment, male chaperone’s (e.g., brothers and male cousins) accompany young women outside of the family home or enforce their confinement all together to prevent neighbourhood gossip. This reflects much of the literature which emphasises that young women who experience sexual assault, are likely to suppress the incident with fears of restricted freedoms (Hebert et al, 2019), bringing shame to the family, and not being taken seriously by local authorities (Bhattacharyya et al, 2019; Dhillon & Bakaya, 2014; Hebert et al, 2019). Dhillon & Bakaya (2014, p.1) state that sexual harassment crimes are often left unreported due to ‘shame, stigma, fear of retaliation, insensitivity of the police, long and complicated legal procedures, low conviction rates, and an overarching culture of impunity’. Threats to personal safety, accompanied with absence of harmonious and supportive relationships with family members, are frequently associated with higher levels of psychological distress, lack of hope, and sometimes suicidal ideation among young women in urban India (Beattie et al, 2019; Patel et al, 2021; Parikh et al, 2019).

Regarding negotiating and navigating autonomy, much of the literature emphasises the role of the family in limiting young women’s personal, educational, and occupational freedoms

²³ Eve teasing is used to describe the harassment of women by men and adolescent boys in public places.

(Hebert et al, 2019; Khan & Deb, 2021; Bansal et al, 2021; Parikh et al, 2019). Some studies acknowledge the pressures experienced by young women, especially in conforming to socially prescribed roles and the implications on mental well-being (Andrew et al, 2012; Das et al, 2012b; Rao et al, 2012). In some cases, restrictions are placed on young women's mobilities to prevent them from engaging in romantic relationships to defend their value, purity for marriage, and protect the reputation of the family unit (Hebert et al, 2019; Basu et al, 2017). However, Bansal et al (2021) and Parikh et al (2019) find that despite societal stigmas, adolescents often reporting engaging in romantic relationships beyond their parents' knowledge (Hindin & Hindin, 2009; Santhya et al, 2011). Sexual minority women in Srivastava (2021)'s study report the pressures to conform to societal standards and highlighted numerous LGBTQ-related difficulties (e.g., limited personal freedom, ridicule from society and lack of identity). Similarly, some studies acknowledge that family and community members act as notable inhibitors to accessing educational and career aspirations (Hebert et al, 2019; Parikh et al, 2019). For example, Parikh et al (2019) finds that older adolescents outline stressors stemming from parents influencing their choice of school subjects and career prospects, with girls report the additional psychological burden of engaging in household responsibilities whilst juggling their studies. In Hebert et al (2019)'s study, families and community members are found to prevent young women from accessing higher education all together, as elder family members consider it as a hindrance to marriage. Preference for a male child also emerges as a prevalent socio-cultural risk factor for some young women which is deep-rooted in Indian psyche due to observed economic benefits to the family (see Khan & Deb, 2021; Singhi et al, 2013; Carson et al, 2014; Pande & Astone, 2007). In their study, Khan & Deb (2021) note that a preference for male children has psychological implications for female participants due to a perceived lack of emotional support and judgement from family members (Khan & Deb, 2021). The findings suggest that gender inequality exists within the form of socially constructed and predefined gender roles (Batra & Reio, 2016), which are indicators of how contemporary trends within Indian society may be exacerbating intergenerational stress for women and girls (see Hindin & Hindin, 2009; Basu et al, 2017).

Hostile family environments (e.g., underlying conflict or aggressive parenting styles) are additionally acknowledged as a significant contributor to stress among young people in India (Nagabharana et al, 2021; Khan & Deb, 2021; Patel et al, 2021). Khan & Deb (2021) find in their study with young Indian adults, who have experienced childhood adversity, that

dysfunctional family relations (e.g., hostilities, controlling behaviours, arguments) act as risk factors for mental well-being, and the development of resilience during adulthood. Some studies argue that verbal or psychological punishment within the Indian household, particularly by fathers, is a prominent source of psychological distress (e.g., increased anxiety levels, externalising behaviours) (Sandhu & Sharma, 2015; Patel et al, 2021; Nagabharana et al, 2021). Interpersonal issues stemming from peer and romantic relationships, such as fracturing of relationships, arguments, or comparing oneself to peers, is also recognised as a source of distress among Indian adolescents (Parikh et al, 2019; Nagabharana et al, 2021; Mathew et al, 2015).

Many studies identify that academic pressure is a developmental challenge for many young people, often motivated by parents and teachers, and exacerbated by a highly competitive education system (Nagabharana et al, 2021; Rentala et al, 2019; Parikh et al, 2019; Deb et al, 2015; Verma et al, 2002; Jayanthi et al, 2015; Arun et al, 2017). Parikh et al (2019, p.3) finds that alongside parental pressure, excessive homework, punishment, and a lack of guidance to improve exam performance by teachers produces ‘a vicious cycle of guilt, low-confidence, lack of productivity and poor performance, even driving some students to contemplate suicide’. Similarly, societal expectations, such as ‘social constructions of ‘success’ that emphasise exam performance to progress into high-status professions’, also contributes to stress and anxieties around occupational futures (Parikh et al, 2019, p.4; Nagabharana et al, 2021; Mathew et al, 2015). Chronic academic stress is shown to be associated with negative lifestyle habits (e.g., diet, physical activity), increased reports of depressive symptoms, self-harm, suicidal ideation and attempt, and breakdown of peer friendships (Deb et al, 2015; Jayanthi et al, 2015; Arun et al, 2017; Sidhartha & Jena, 2006; Arun & Chavan, 2009; Parikh et al, 2019). Some studies acknowledge the influence of internet and social media use as a coping strategy during the Covid-19 pandemic, which enabled the continuation of meaningful relationships with peers, building new online relationships, and acted as a form of escapism (e.g., Singh et al, 2020; Barron Millar et al, 2021).

2.6.2. Resilience Research in India

There is a limited amount of research that focusses on understanding the protective factors that contribute to women and girls’ resilience in India. Published studies often sample groups of IPV survivors (Shanthakumari et al, 2014; Ahmad et al, 2013), sexual minority women (Srivastava, 2021; Bowling et al, 2016, 2018), women social workers (Stanley et al, 2021),

widows (Verma, 2015), and school-going adolescents (Parikh et al, 2019; Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016; Prabhu & Shekhar, 2017; Sidheek et al, 2017). Despite sharing some convergences, these studies uncover different protective factors as to those conducted with western populations. For example, the influence of a collectivistic family culture, availability of family members, societal structures and religious beliefs and practices are all influenced by ‘the local cultural milieu’ and are therefore, specific components of Indian culture (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016, p.28; Annalakshmi & Abeer, 2011). This section examines the research that have been conducted in an Indian context to add further contextual relevancy to this study’s findings.

Shanthakumari et al (2014) collects in-depth qualitative data from 16 female IPV survivors in Bangalore to gather an understanding of the protective factors that support women in feeling resilient despite their challenging circumstances. Shanthakumari et al (2014, p.705) identifies that instrumental help and emotional support from a strong network of female role models (e.g., friends, relatives, and colleagues), who have experienced similar situations, provide them with a sense of hope that their situations would change. The authors mention that a belief in the ‘inherent strength of women’, and supporting others in distress, are notable protective factors that evoke a sense of purpose and belonging (Shanthakumari et al, 2014, p.704). Partners (e.g., boyfriends and husbands), and male members of the family (e.g., brothers and fathers), act as critical sources of social support, in contrast to female members (e.g., mothers, sisters, grandmothers, mother-in-law) (Shanthakumari et al, 2014). The authors attribute these findings to the culture of silence upheld by many Indian families regarding open discussions about violence and relationships (Shanthakumari et al, 2014; Bhattacharyya et al, 2019; Gupta & Ailawadi, 2005).

Shanthakumari et al (2014, p.706) also highlights that ‘Self-confidence, self-esteem, optimism, hope, internal locus of control, courage, perseverance, diligence, and active coping’ are influential for the women’s resilience. However, they also point out that whilst ‘personal factors are very important, they are insufficient as sole predictors of resilience as biological, social support and environmental systemic factors also contribute’ (Shanthakumari et al, 2014, p.707). Living with dignity, rising above difficulties, financial independence and being strong for the sake of their families are also found to enact a sense of confidence and strength (Shanthakumari et al, 2014). The authors suggest that whilst a ‘faith in God’, or relationship with a ‘higher power’ contribute to resilience, many emphasise ‘the

need to take action themselves and not just depend on God, who at times they questioned’ (Shanthakumari et al, 2014, p.708). The study does not identify the existence of potential structural factors (e.g., police, legal system, or professional services) in influencing resilience. However, drawing on Ahmed-Ghosh (2004)’s findings, the authors recognise that there are notable gaps in India’s legal system that can act as operational barriers in accessing support for vulnerable women.

Srivastava (2021)’s recent study explores the processes and outcomes of resilience among sexual minority women²⁴ in Delhi and Kolkata. Srivastava (2021) identifies that parents are key actors in the resilience process, as warm and nurturing parent-child relationships are considered as critical in determining positive life experiences and supporting women in coping with societal gender-based discrimination. Like Shanthakumari et al (2014)’s findings, in some instances, women report a lack of support from the family unit which encourages them to seek and create alternate sources of support (e.g., peers, colleagues, and same-sex partners) (Srivastava, 2021). Maintaining positive relationships with friends and family supports the development of personal attributes, and provides the women with the determination, optimism, and self-confidence to believe that they can lead successful lives, despite having a ‘devalued social identity’ (Srivastava, 2021, p.1308). The authors suggest that greater attention should be placed on exploring the role of wider societal forces and the role of background information and socio-economic characteristics to add greater depth into the complexity of the lives of marginalised women in India (Srivastava, 2021).

Hebbani & Srinivasan (2016)’s study explores the spiritual and cultural factors that are linked to the resilience of vulnerable young adults in Bengaluru, India. The authors identify that families act as an ‘institution’ during periods of adversity, whereby young people are motivated to fulfil roles and responsibilities (e.g., caring for elder family members) to help contribute to the wellness and cohesiveness of the family (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016, p.30; Pillai et al, 2009; Avasthi, 2010). Hebbani & Srinivasan (2016) mention that family members are a critical source of strength and provide a ‘sense of continuity’ and encouragement during difficulties (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016, p.30). In contrast to Shanthakumari et al (2014)’s findings, Hebbani & Srinivasan (2016) find that female family members are integral sources of emotional, material, and financial support, and contribute to a greater sense of well-being among young adults. Hebbani & Srinivasan (2016)’s findings support India’s ‘collectivistic’

²⁴ Sexual minority women are individuals whose sexuality differs from the majority of surrounding society.

family orientation, which emphasises togetherness, cohesiveness, and providing support to individual family members in times of crises (Chadda & Deb, 2013; Mullatti, 1995; Khan & Deb, 2021; Avasthi, 2010). The authors also discuss that community connectedness is also an important resilience-supporting factor (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016). Young adults recognise that participation in religious practices (e.g., prayer, fasting and rituals), and visiting places of worship, often with family and community members, evokes amplified inner strength and positive energy (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016). Engagement in religious practices is associated with many individual resilience attributes in the wider resilience literature (e.g., competence, academic achievement, goal-orientation) (e.g., Martinez & Dukes, 1997; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). Hebbani & Srinivasan (2016, p.31) also highlight that God (e.g., Krishna and Jesus) acts as ‘a friend, counsellor and source of support’ and encourages perseverance. Hebbani & Srinivasan (2016)’s study reinforces the significance of socio-cultural factors in supporting young people’s resilience in India.

Parikh et al (2019)’s study considers the ecological stressors and protective strategies experienced by school-going adolescents in Delhi and Goa. The authors outline that younger adolescents and girls report favouring advice and support from parents and teachers, particularly when they are faced with academic difficulties or eve-teasing (Parikh et al, 2019). However, peers are the preferred source of support, especially when adolescents thought that adults would not be as ‘open minded’ about the situation, or would punish them (Parikh et al, 2019, p.5). The authors also highlight that coping strategies (e.g., diary writing, crying, yoga and meditation) are positive and self-soothing, and enable them to reflect on, and deal with their stressors (Parikh et al, 2019). Like the previous studies, seeking guidance and support from God is perceived as a protective strategy to deal with stressors (Shanthakumari et al, 2014; Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016), and preventing engaging in risky behaviours (e.g., drinking alcohol and smoking) (Parikh et al, 2019).

Verma (2015) investigates the cultural and contextually sensitive strategies that are adopted by vulnerable women living in conflict-ridden contexts in Kashmir. Verma (2015, p.6) finds that one woman in particular, copes with adversity by ‘structuring her time, keeping herself busy, using faith and social connections, and accessing supportive relationships’ (e.g., mothers and siblings). Religion and faith-based supports are also considered as being valuable reflective and meaning-making tools which are integral in informing applicable coping strategies (Verma, 2015). Reflecting on their findings, Verma (2015, p.166)

recognises that by providing a space for women to explore their journeys of resilience, aids them in seeking personal control over their situations and supports their well-being and identity development. Verma (2015, p.167) recommends that working with women in local communities, and understanding the structures that enable and/or inhibit resilience, are important to inform policies that enhance availability and accessibility of resources and opportunities.

Khan & Deb (2021) explore the extent to which the Indian family unit can act as a source of risk and resilience among young adults who have experienced maltreatment. Khan & Deb (2021, p.6) emphasise that nurturing and supportive relationships with parents, notably mothers, are associated with ‘academic achievement, emotional maturity, development of kindness, and empathy’. Seeking support from other family members (e.g., siblings and grandparents), especially when relationships with parents are strained, are also identified as notable protective factors among young adults (Khan & Deb, 2021). However, in some cases, ‘parents fulfilled materialistic needs sufficiently but were unable to provide an emotionally healthy home environment’ (Khan & Deb, 2021, p.26-7) due to the existence of inter-familial conflict or unstable family dynamics. In these situations, young adults report physically and/or emotionally distancing themselves from family members (Khan & Deb, 2021). This reflects Ungar (2004)’s and Werner & Smith (1982)’s findings which suggest that whilst this may prevent the development of importance resilience-supporting factors, distancing oneself from a dysfunctional family environment may help to alleviate risk and contribute to future resilience trajectories. Khan & Deb (2021) acknowledge that whilst complete detachment from the family unit is often supposed as objectionable in Indian culture, it may be critical for an individual’s perceived safety, autonomy, and agency. The findings emphasise the role of the dynamic family unit that is comprised of ‘ever-changing risk and protective factors’ (Khan & Deb, 2021, p.7). The authors did not acknowledge the role of additional individual factors (e.g., locus of control) or wider socio-cultural stimuli (e.g., religious/spiritual beliefs) in influencing young adults’ resilience.

This section has emphasised that whilst there are convergences with western-based literature, there are notable divergences which are specific to the Indian context. For example, the studies highlight the significance of inter-familial relationships and family cohesion, alongside religious beliefs, practices, and spirituality, as vital components of resilience in Indian culture (Annalakshmi & Abeer, 2011; Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016; Khan & Deb,

2021; Avasthi, 2010). Indian cultural norms and practices at the wider societal level (macro-system) can play a significant role in influencing protective resources within the individual and family environment (micro-system) (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016). As Ungar (2011a) suggests, socio-cultural contexts can influence how individual's attach meanings to resources and opportunities within their environments. This study extends on the existing research to gather an understanding of the factors and processes that contribute to young women's resilience in New Delhi, India. The following section presents a conclusion to this chapter.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the literature pertaining to young people's resilience. First, it explored the construct's history and provided an insight into the enduring 'Trait vs Process' debate. The second section outlined the key components of resilience – risk and protective factors – and the extent to which they are presented in the literature. It emphasised resilience as a dynamic process and multi-dimensional construct that extends over three levels of reality (individual, familial and external environment). This chapter also considered the different ways in which resilience is operationalised with child and adolescent populations, and outlined the limitations associated with resilience research (terminology, methods, youth representation and western interpretations). It also explored the applicability of Ungar (2011a)'s SER theory when conducting resilience research with groups of young people in diverse contexts. This section considered the protective resources that exist within four domains of resilience (personal, relational, structural, and spiritual/cultural), and highlighted the intercorrelations between them. To help situate this research study's findings, the final section examined the current resilience research that has been conducted with young people and women in India. It highlighted the role of the socio-cultural context in influencing resilience, particularly emphasising the significance of the collectivistic family unit and religious beliefs, spirituality, and culture. Overall, this chapter highlighted the complexity of resilience and outlined opportunities for future research. The next chapter presents this research study's Methodology.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter explored the existing literature pertaining to resilience, focusing on Ungar (2011a)'s SER framework. This chapter presents this research study's methodology, which is defined by Blaikie (1993, p.7) as 'the analysis of how research should or does proceed'. It is critical to describe the methodology of a research study to consider the assumptions, principles, and procedures (Schwandt, 2007) that have been utilised to describe, explain, and justify method selection (Carter & Little, 2007). As such, this chapter will discuss the methodological approach that has been used for this research, establishing the advantages of this strategy, and justifying the methods that were employed. To begin, the research questions will be outlined, prior to presenting this study's research design. This includes a justification for the adoption of a mixed methods approach, as well as discussing the sampling techniques, instrument design and analysis procedures used. The philosophical standpoint from which this research is conducted will also be examined, focussing on the ontological position of critical realism, and epistemological post-positivist approach. This chapter also contemplates the validity and reliability issues that arose from this research and the actions taken to address them. Finally, the ethical considerations will be outlined, detailing the ethical procedures that follow Newcastle University Ethics Committee and the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines to ensure high standard ethical research.

3.2. Research Questions

Bryman (2012, p.9) defines research questions as 'an explicit statement of what it is the researcher wants to know about', arguing that the use of questions is critical to ensure that the researcher is both precise and targeted with their investigations. Denscombe (2010) offers six possible aims for research questions, as well as drawing attention to the controversy of the wider goals of research; to predict, explain, evaluate, describe, develop, and to empower. White (2017) adds an additional seventh aim, comparison. This research uses a critical realist ontology, hence the research questions seek to explain the generative mechanisms behind phenomena, as in line with Bhaskar (2008), the originator of critical realism. The research questions are:

1. What are the protective factors that are associated with young women's resilience?
2. How does young women's locus of control orientation influence their resilience?
3. To what extent do young women's socio-cultural contexts shape the protective factors that are promotive of their resilience?

3.3. Mixed Methods Approach

This study adopts a mixed methods approach, which typifies the type of research that combines various quantitative and qualitative elements. The purpose of this approach is to provide a richer and more reliable understanding of the phenomenon at play (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p.4), hence, overcoming potential weaknesses and biases that a single approach would typically yield (Denscombe, 2008). In relation to the critical realist ontological position (see Section 3.8), a mixed methods approach can provide more nuanced and authentic accounts of the complexities of phenomena under investigation by examining the various stratified dimensions of reality. To justify the application of a mixed methods approach, the researcher must understand the advantages and disadvantages for both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Kim, 2012). This section outlines a justification as to why a mixed methods approach was employed in this research study, and how it links to the ontological and epistemological position presented later in this chapter. It will also outline how the researcher triangulated the data, the strengths and weaknesses associated with mixed methods, and the approach to mixing methods in this study.

3.3.1. Triangulation

Triangulation is often perceived as one of the most advantageous characteristics of conducting mixed methods research (Cohen et al, 2018). It is widely observed that triangulation, the adoption of more than one method, is beneficial within the social sciences to enhance the richness of data, examine the complexity of human behaviour, achieve greater confidence of findings, and demonstrate concurrent validity (Cohen et al, 2018; Bryman, 2012). Deacon et al (1998) notes that triangulation can be used to refer to a process of cross-checking findings derived from quantitative and qualitative research. Therefore, the use of triangulation within this study can help the researcher to add weight to conclusions that are 'probably true', within the post-positivist epistemological stance (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Within a critical realist perspective, triangulation can produce more concise conclusions as qualitative data can aid the finding of in-depth associations between domains (Bhaskar,

2008). For example, ABR methods can aid the researcher in examining the relationships identified within the quantitative data in greater detail.

Triangulation stimulates the creation of inventive methods, and new ways of capturing a problem to balance with conventional data methods (Jick, 1979; Miles & Huberman, 1994; DeVos, 1998). The use of ABR methods (e.g., participant-produced images) can help to illuminate the often-hidden voices of young people (Ungar, 2003). It can also act as a participatory and dialectical method that attempts to provide participants with more power and control over the research process and has the potential to generate new forms of knowledge, skills, and perspectives (see Clark, 1998). ABR methods can be particularly useful in enabling the researcher to delve into the often-inaccessible private worlds of participants with their consent (Liebenberg, 2009a). Triangulation is perceived as a powerful tool to reveal concurrent validity (Cohen et al, 2000), as a variety of methods can help to reinforce and complement each other. It was possible to triangulate the data elicited from the reflective art workshops, using thematic analysis, to explore the common themes and phenomena at play, and in turn, inform the responses to the research questions.

3.3.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of Mixed Methods

There are a multitude of strengths and weaknesses tied to adopting a mixed methods approach when conducting research within the social sciences. A combination of quantitative and qualitative data in research can combine the advantages of each form of data (Creswell, 2002). Quantitative data can help to enhance the accuracy of findings and enables generalisability across contexts, therefore, establishing external validity (Shadish et al, 2002; Polit & Beck, 2008). Generalisability is relatively complex, as despite some studies having high-equality evidence (Shadish et al, 2002), it is possible that the findings can be too specific to that certain cultural context, and can, therefore, be unfeasible to generalise it to others. On the other hand, qualitative data can provide a ‘rich, contextualised understanding of human experience through the intensive study of particular cases’ according to Polit & Beck (2010, p.1452). Ungar & Liebenberg (2005, p.211) state that ‘Typically, studies of resilience have employed designs that integrate established test instruments with demonstrated reliability and validity from studies of mental and social functioning’. However, the same researchers argue that quantitative-focussed studies possess two types of shortcomings: ‘[The first is] arbitrariness in the selection of outcome variables and [the second] the challenge of accounting for the social and cultural context in which resilience

occurs' (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005, p.211-212; see also Ungar, 2003; Ungar & Teram, 2005). Therefore, including qualitative approaches within resilience research is considered as integral to overcome the shortcomings of quantitative methods, to enhance an understanding of youth resilience, and uncover the hidden voices of marginalised populations across different cultural contexts (Ungar, 2003). As according to Ungar (2008, p.232), employing a mixed methods approach can 'produce a thicker account of the experiences of youth participants, demonstrating the interconnections between aspects of resilience and the tensions that govern their resolution'. In resilience research, ABR methods are often used 'to elicit, process, and share understandings and experiences that are not readily or fully accessed through more traditional fieldwork approaches' (Greenwood, 2012, p.2). According to Liebenberg (2009a, p.133), images produced by participants during the research process represent 'the vision and perception of the researcher, that is, the researcher's interpretation of the participants' social and physical ecology'. Similarly, Niesyto (2000) advocates for youth-constructed visual images in social science research, as it not only brings greater depth to conversations, but enhances the quality of data, and supports the researcher to better understand young people's views of the world (Young & Barrett, 2001; Clark, 1999; Liebenberg, 2009a). Niesyto (2000, p.137) also states that 'if somebody...wants to learn something about youths' ideas, feelings, and their ways of experiencing the world, he or she should give them a chance to express themselves by means of their own self-made media productions'.

In this study, ABR methods were conducted through 'Reflective Arts Workshops', which were used to gather in-depth perspectives of young women's narratives of resilience, something that quantitative methods alone would not be able to achieve. According to Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004, p.21), mixed methods can 'provide stronger evidence for a conclusion through convergence and corroboration of findings'. In turn, this can support the study's reliability in terms of 'respondent validation, credibility of results, replicability, equivalence, stability, internal consistency and Cronbach alphas, dependability, credibility, accuracy, fidelity to context' (Cohen et al, 2018, p.43). The combination of qualitative and quantitative data, therefore, presents a well-rounded approach to informing resilience theory and practice, and advancing research across different contexts where evidence is lacking (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Mixed methods approaches are not without their weaknesses. This approach is often heavily scrutinised by critics who claim an overreliance on typologies and advocate for a higher status of quantitative versus qualitative research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). From an interpretivist perspective, Leininger (1994) argues that the combination of paradigms is so radically different that they cannot be reconciled. Methodological purists often contest the mixed methods approach, as they believe that researchers should always work within a distinct quantitative or qualitative paradigm (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Within the philosophical domains, several authors criticise the dominance of a positivist approach within mixed methods research (Hesse-Biber, 2010; Denzin, 2010; Giddings & Grant, 2006). Others direct their attention towards considering that mixed methods is a separate paradigm, which can lead to an artificial separation of the quantitative and qualitative approaches (Bergman, 2008; Niglas, 2010; Sandelowski, 2014; Symonds & Gorard, 2010). However, as McEvoy & Richards (2006, p.68) state, ‘researchers should use whatever methods are needed to obtain the optimum results, even if it involves ‘switching between’ alternative paradigms’. Therefore, similar to critical realist beliefs, the choice of the methods within this research study have been dictated by the nature of the research (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). This study requires an in-depth exploration of resilience, therefore, ABR methods are appropriate to not only give voice to participants, but ‘to empower participants by recognising their knowledge and expertise, and to stimulate reflections that highlight participants’ own responsibilities, strengths, and resources in a non-hierarchical way’ (Lopez et al, 2018, p.2). ABR methods provide participants with the option for verbal and non-verbal expression, therefore, it is an efficient approach when studying sensitive topics and can help to complement the findings uncovered by quantitative data analysis.

3.3.3. Approach to Mixed Methods

Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) identify six mixed methods research designs²⁵. Each of the typologies present a framework for understanding the different ways in which mixed methods research can be conducted, providing a common vocabulary and basic structure to help organise and describe designs and processes (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This research study uses an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, whereby the researcher collects and analyses quantitative data first, followed by the collection of qualitative data to help

²⁵ These consist of convergent parallel design, explanatory sequential design, exploratory sequential design, embedded design, transformative design, and multi-phase design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

provide further explanation and interpretation of quantitative data (Cohen et al, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The two-phased design was the most appropriate for this research study as it enabled one type of data to be collected at a time. Due to the complications posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in lockdowns in the UK and India, quantitative data was initially collected online. The questionnaire was distributed to female students at a college in New Delhi in March 2020 which gathered descriptive information and resilience data from participants (see Section 3.5.1). The researcher was able to analyse potential associations between the variables prior to collecting physical qualitative data in April 2022 when travel restrictions eased. Qualitative data, collected through ABR methods, helped to build a more comprehensive understanding of young women's resilience. The following section outlines this study's research setting and discusses the sampling techniques that were employed.

3.4. Research Setting

This section outlines the setting in which this research study took place. It presents a profile of the college that was selected as the research setting, and includes a brief summary of the institution's history, objectives, and admissions process. This section then proceeds to discuss why this college was chosen and how participants were sampled prior to data collection.

3.4.1. Female College

The constraints posed by the Covid-19 pandemic limited the researcher's ability to gather insights from young women representing diverse socio-economic strata across different locations in New Delhi. Despite the national lockdowns having eased during the researcher's data collection visit, local lockdowns and travel restrictions hindered access to a variety of higher education settings. Therefore, due to its existing associations with Newcastle University, one all-female college situated in New Delhi was selected for this research study, alongside its mission to educate and develop young women regardless of their caste, socio-economic status, disabilities, or cultural backgrounds.

The college places significant value on empowering its students through a multifaceted approach that underlines education, professional development and personal growth. It offers a diverse range of academic courses that encourages critical thinking and fosters an environment where students can pursue their passions and navigate towards their futures. The college offers a wealth of degree courses, such as bachelor's degrees in English, Hindi,

History, Journalism and Economics, and caters to a large section of women from disadvantaged backgrounds. Women from SC (Scheduled Caste), ST (Scheduled Tribe), EWS (Economically Weaker Sections) and OBC (Other Backward Caste) are accommodated with reserved seats and relaxations with grades. The college is also proactive in its approach to bolster and enhance young women's self-confidence and leadership skills through the delivery of inclusive societies and extra-curricular clubs for student participation. Examples of societies include the Art Society, National Cadet Corps (NCC), Film Club, and the Fashion Society, which often hold regular events that are open to all of its members. For example, the Happiness Club aims to help students build resilience to manage stressful situations by hosting regular seminars, dance sessions and storytelling sessions. It was evident from the researcher's initial visits to the college that the institution places significant emphasis on bolstering women's rights, gender equality and the social and economic empowerment of its students. Through the incorporation of awareness programmes that address societal issues, and creating support networks and mentorship opportunities, a key aim of the institution is to empower young women to become active participants within their societies and advocates for social change. The college also prides itself on promoting a safe and supportive environment with policies that are aimed at preventing harassment and discrimination of its students. Finally, the college endeavours to accentuate the achievement of its students and alumni, instilling the message that they can succeed in their career trajectories. This study selected participants belonging to a handful of societies on campus to participate in the qualitative data collection phase, which is explained in the following section.

3.4.2. Sampling

The college was chosen through convenience sampling²⁶, due to its close collaboration and recent involvement with Newcastle University research projects that have been focussed on female empowerment. In March 2020, the online questionnaire was sent to female college students via Qualtrics²⁷, a web-based survey programme that collected descriptive (background information and socio-economic characteristics), resilience and locus of control data (see Section 3.5). The questionnaire was sent to the email address of the students that had previously given their consent to be contacted externally. The online questionnaire

²⁶ Convenience sampling involves choosing individuals to whom the researcher has easy access to (Cohen et al, 2018).

²⁷ Qualtrics is an online survey tool that allows researchers to build and distribute surveys and analyse responses from participants (Qualtrics, 2022).

resulted in 567 responses being recorded from students aged 18-24. Convenience sampling was used for the quantitative portion of data collection due to the restrictions posed by the Covid-19 pandemic as the researcher was unable to collect data physically. It was also the most appropriate method to capture data on a large scale to enhance the study's reliability and validity.

The researcher collected qualitative data over four weeks in April-May 2022. The researcher received a tour of the college and was introduced to college management, teaching staff and a selection of college student ambassadors. A member of staff met with the researcher to better understand the research aims and objectives and to assist them in devising a data collection strategy for the following weeks. The member of staff introduced the researcher to a selection of college ambassadors who were representatives of the institution, as well as presidents or vice-presidents of their respective societies who were interested in including their society in the research study. Each ambassador communicated the research aims and objectives (sent by the researcher) out to their society members through their social networks, as well as with friends at the college who may have been interested in participating. In most cases, student ambassadors became the point of contact for their society and managed the organisation of the reflective art workshops on behalf of its members. This resulted in four workshops (two sessions in each), consisting of a selection of members from four different societies: the Art Society, the LGBTQ+ Society, the Happiness Club, and the NCC, all of whom agreed to participate in the study.

Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009, p.180-181) indicate that it is common for researchers who adopt a mixed methods approach to use more than one type of sampling method, as well as using different sample sizes. Therefore, for the qualitative portion of data collection, the researcher used the snowball sampling method²⁸ to sample a diverse selection of students through using participants' social networks and personal contacts to gain access to individuals (Cohen et al, 2018). The arts-based workshops were, therefore, respondent driven, as participants were able to identify further contacts for the researcher and actively recruited them to be involved in the research (Heckathorn, 1997, p.178). Furthermore, snowball sampling relies on strong interpersonal relations, known contacts and requires social knowledge and equalisation of

²⁸ According to Cohen et al (2018, p.220), snowball sampling is where 'researchers identify a small number of individuals who have the characteristics in which they are interested. These people are then used as informants to identify, or put the researchers in touch with, others who qualify for inclusion; these in turn, identify yet others – hence the term snowball sampling'.

power relations (Cohen et al, 2018). This enabled a wide range of society members to feel more comfortable in participating in the research study as they would be accompanied with a group of peers who they already have close connections with. More information regarding the context of the college and participants' descriptive statistics are outlined in Chapter Four (Section 4.2). The following section describes the research instruments and methods used during both data collection phases of this research.

3.5. Research Instruments

This section evaluates the different research instruments employed during data collection to inform the following results chapter (Chapter Four). The methods used during the quantitative portion of this research study are outlined first, prior to a discussion of the qualitative methods.

3.5.1. Cross-Cultural Application and Translation of Questionnaire Scales

A collection of researchers have emphasised caution when adopting research instruments in contexts other than that in which they were devised (Greenfield, 1997; Mpofu & Ortiz, 2009). The presumptions behind test items and testing procedures cannot be assumed to translate cross-culturally. Observed scores may reflect less about the ability or construct of interest and more about the gaps where the imported instrument misrepresents the performance of culturally diverse others. Instruments that are aimed to measure psychological constructs may be applied to respondents with cultural diversity without proven cross-cultural comparability (Hambleton & Lee, 2013; Hambleton et al, 2004). Scales that have been employed within previous research were selected to compose the online questionnaire, as these reported good validity and reliability measures. Comparisons from previous literature would also enable interesting insights presented in Chapter Five – Discussion. The Resilience Scale for Adolescents (READ) (Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014; Hjemdal et al, 2006) and the Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966; Lumpkin, 1985) are components of the online questionnaire, and have been devised and delivered in other countries. To the researcher's knowledge, there are few studies that have attempted to validate these scales within developing country contexts. For example, whilst the READ is a valid measurement of adolescent resilience, there will be substantive differences in meanings associated with resilience, and how resilience manifests across different cross-cultural populations, which will restrict the generalisability of findings (Janousch et al, 2020). As reflected by Beaton et al (2000), researchers must conduct further

multinational and multicultural studies and adapt instruments for use in other languages and cultures. Therefore, the online questionnaire was translated from English into Hindi, checked by a Hindi-speaking colleague, and sent via email to college students' email addresses.

3.5.2. *Quantitative Methods*

This section outlines the quantitative methods that were employed in this research study, beginning with an insight into the cross-cultural application and translation of the questionnaire scales before discussing the segments of the online questionnaire (background factors and socio-economic characteristics, resilience, and locus of control).

In total, 567 young women participated in the quantitative portion of the research study, and were aged between 18-24, studying either an undergraduate or postgraduate master's degree. As outlined in Section 3.4, due to restrictions posed by the Covid-19 lockdown, the questionnaire was administered online via Qualtrics and sent to the email addresses of each student who had previously consented to be contacted externally. Participants completed the questionnaire either on their computer or on their mobile at home. Contact information for a member of staff at the college, as well as the researcher's email address, was also included in the questionnaire if participants had any queries. The online questionnaire comprised of three components: (1) Background Factors and Socio-economic Characteristics, (2) the Resilience Scale for Adolescents (READ) (Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014; Hjemdal et al, 2006), and (3) Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966; Lumpkin, 1985). The questionnaire is presented in Appendix 3. The following sections explain these scales in greater detail and outline their inclusion in the questionnaire.

Background Factors and Socio-economic Characteristics

The opening section of the questionnaire gathered simple data on a handful of indicators relating to participants' background demographics and family information. These included questions related to their age, religion, caste, house location, English reading and conversational skills, home building type, and parent employment status and education. This also included a multiple-choice section relating to family-owned assets where participants were asked to tick each item that the family owns, such as access to a car, bike, mobile phone, or cultivated land. This section took inspiration from the data made available on Dollar Street, an online database created by Gapminder that compares households' consumptions across the world, focussing on household amenities as opposed to purely

income-based measurements. The measure totals consumption by dividing it into ‘adult equivalents’ using the value of consumption to US Dollars (Gapminder, 2022). The questions related to parent employment status and education, and family-owned assets enabled an estimation of participants’ socio-economic status (SES). Questions regarding the nature of participants’ homes, such as building type, floor material and location, were included to provide a greater insight into young women’s home living environments.

The Resilience Scale for Adolescents (READ)

The second section of the questionnaire consisted of the Resilience Scale for Adolescents (READ) (Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014; Hjemdal et al, 2006). The READ has 28 positively phrased items measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) (Hjemdal et al, 2006). Higher scores on the READ indicate a higher level of resiliency in the relevant domain (Hjemdal et al, 2006). The READ is the only scale measuring adolescent resilience that captures the three overarching categories of resilience (individual, family and external) as many differ significantly and specifically focus on measuring individual factors (Wagnild & Young, 1993; Windle et al, 2008; Bromley et al, 2006). These factors include: 1) positive individual factors (e.g., positive self-concept, motivation, social ability), 2) social family support (e.g., parental warmth, encouragement, close relationships with family), and 3) supportive environment outside of the family (e.g., access to peer support, role models, community cohesion) (Janousch et al, 2020; Hjemdal et al, 2006).

The READ had initially been developed in Norway as an adaptation of the Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA; Friborg et al, 2003). Hjemdal et al (2006) adapted the 33 items on the RSA scale to develop the READ, and items less relevant for adolescents were deleted. The original five-factor structure of the READ consists of; (a) Personal Competence (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy, ability to uphold daily routines), (b) Social Competence (e.g., communication skills, flexibility in social matters), (c) Structured Style (e.g., preference of an individual to plan and structure their daily routines), (d) Family Cohesion (e.g., family support and family attitude towards life in times of adversity) and (e) Social Resources (e.g., access to social environments outside of the home) (Hjemdal et al, 2006). The READ has been validated in several countries, such as; Norway (Hjemdal et al, 2006; von Soest et al, 2010; Moksnes & Haugan, 2018; Askeland et al, 2019), Italy (Stratta et al, 2012), Mexico (Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014), Ireland (Kelly et al, 2017) and Spain (Pérez-Fuentes et al, 2020), as well as

samples from Germany and Switzerland (Janousch et al, 2020). Such studies have identified different structures to Hjemdal et al (2006)'s original and have excluded items from their final solutions (Stratta et al, 2012; Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014; Moksnes & Haugan, 2018; von Soest et al, 2010; Janousch et al, 2020; Askeland et al, 2019; Pérez-Fuentes et al, 2020).

Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s study, set in Mexico with a sample of 840 adolescents (aged 12-17) identifies a five-factor solution using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). However, the authors also remove six items. The five-factor structure differs from the original in two dimensions. Firstly, Social Competence (SC), Family Cohesion (FC) and Social Resources (SR) remain relatively the same, whereas Personal Competence (PC) comprises of four instead of eight items, measuring mainly self-confidence among participants. Secondly, the remaining PC items and a handful of items from the Structured Style (SS) factor are combined in a new factor titled 'Goal Orientation' (GO). Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s study reports good reliability of the READ with their sample as the Cronbach's alpha scores of each factor range from 0.649 to 0.827. Similarly, Pérez-Fuentes et al (2020) find in their study in Spain, with a sample of 317 students (aged 13-18), that Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s 22-item five-factor structure version of the READ demonstrates good fit indices. Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s version consists of: (a) Goal Orientation (3 items; e.g., 'I know how to achieve my goals'), (b) Personal Competence (4 items; e.g., 'Self-confidence helps me overcome difficult moments'), (c) Social Resources (3 items; e.g., 'I have some friends and relatives that value my qualities'), (d) Family Cohesion (5 items; e.g., 'We share in our family the opinion of what is important in life'), and (e) Social Competence (5 items; e.g., 'I always find something fun to talk about'). The inclusion of Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s version of the READ in the second section of the online questionnaire enables detailed insights into the scope of protective factors that contribute to young women's resilience across multiple levels. This reflects Ungar & Theron (2020), who mention that given the complex nature of young people's resilience, a dynamic and multi-levelled approach is required when conducting research. Their version draws on the shortcomings of previous studies that aim to validate the READ with adolescent populations. The study also reports high internal consistency measures. This helps the researcher to evaluate different resilience factors with relatively few items and gather a more nuanced understanding of young people's resilience for both future research and intervention. Further justification into the application of the READ is also outlined in Chapter Two – Literature Review.

Locus of Control Scale

The third section of the questionnaire consisted of the Locus of Control Scale (Lumpkin, 1985; Rotter, 1966). This study uses Lumpkin (1985)'s 6-item version of the Locus of Control Scale originally devised by Rotter (1966) who uses a 23-item forced-choice scale, due to practicality reasons. The scale includes three 'internal' items (e.g., 'When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work') and three 'external' items (e.g., 'Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck'), reflecting 'internal' and 'chance' dimensions (Levenson, 1973). Lumpkin (1985)'s 6-item scale is measured on a 5-point, Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). If a participant scores highly on the 3 items relating to the 'internal' items, they are more likely to have an internal locus of control, and if they score highly on the 'external' items, they are more likely to have an external locus of control. Lumpkin (1985) has validated the 6-item version of the scale with 4,720 people and reports good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.68. This compares positively with the range of 0.65 and 0.79 reported by Rotter (1966)'s and 0.66 by Bugaighis & Schumm (1983)'s 6-item scales.

3.5.3. Qualitative Methods

The explanatory sequential mixed methods approach is a useful way of combining qualitative and quantitative data and analyses in a sequence of phases (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The quantitative data enabled the researcher to collect participant background demographics, family information, and resilience and locus of control information. Qualitative data was collected through ABR methods to give a voice to participants to explain their experiences of resilience and enable the researcher to uncover potential unnamed processes. ABR methods are a useful set of methodological tools that are widely adopted by researchers across multiple different disciplines, and during all phases of research, including data generation, analysis, interpretation, and representation (Leavy, 2015). Many resilience researchers recommend the application of visual methodologies in research with young people, as according to Theron (2016a, p.643), these methods have the potential 'to afford comfortable, discursive spaces in which they [young people] can share their insights' (Liebenberg, 2009a; Liebenberg & Theron, 2015). This section presents an explanation into how the reflective art workshops were conducted during the second phase of data collection.

Reflective Art Workshops

Prior to conducting the reflective art workshops, the researcher maintained the role of participant observer to build deeper connections with the female college students. Initially, it was explained to the participants that the researcher was a doctoral candidate at Newcastle University, not an 'esteemed' guest. The researcher's relationship with the college student ambassadors blossomed over the following week, as they began to engage in informal exchanges, such as discussions about stories from home, their aspirations and career goals. These decisions, which included regularly coming onto the college campus, sharing experiences and stories, and creating an environment where the young women were able to teach the researcher about their local language and culture, helped to address the conflicting nature of the researcher's positionality. Through building rapport, developing connections, and collaborating with participants, they began to consider the researcher as a friend who valued both their knowledge and insights, and would feel more comfortable in sharing their personal narratives of resilience with (Morris & Paris, 2022).

Four reflective art workshops were conducted with four college societies (Art, Happiness, NCC and LGBTQ+ societies) in April-May 2022. The intention of the workshops was to provide participants with the opportunity of eliciting their stories of resilience, by reflecting on their experiences of tackling or overcoming challenges that they may have been faced with during their lives. Participants had the option to express their thoughts, feelings, and emotions through non-verbal (artistic expression) and/or verbal (participating in discussions) means. Each workshop consisted of two individual sessions which were attended by approximately 7-10 students each. These sessions shared the same objectives and were the same in structure. The second session gave the option for existing participants to return and continue their artworks and discussions or enable new participants within the society to join. For example, as the workshops were conducted within the college's exam season, the second session enabled students who belonged to that society, but had missed the first session, to participate in the research study. In total, 28 college students participated across all the reflective art workshops, with ages ranging from 18-21, as students were primarily within their second or third year at the college. Many participants reported that engaging in the workshops helped them to distance themselves from the stress associated with exam season. Written and verbal consent was obtained from all participants prior to the start of each workshop. It was also made clear that participants would not be judged by the researcher, or the group, based on their artistic skills, and that this skillset would not influence the findings.

The workshop sessions ranged from 1.5-2 hours. This included sufficient time for introductions, engaging in artmaking and group discussion. Each session was conducted in the society's private allocated room at the college (e.g., the art room). The researcher began by introducing themselves, discussed the overall objectives of the project, and provided an explanation into the session's activities to those who were interested in participating. Participants were then welcomed to introduce themselves to the researcher and the group. A brief discussion ensued prior to starting the session regarding participants' understandings of resilience, and what they thought supports individuals in overcoming difficult circumstances in their lives. As a warmup activity, the researcher asked the question – “*What does resilience mean to you?*” and encouraged participants to submit three responses on Mentimetre²⁹ using their mobile devices. Figure 3 condenses all responses over the different groups into a word cloud that summarises participants' perceptions of resilience. The key themes that were discussed within the groups related to resilience as a source of ‘*power*’ (e.g., empowerment and strength), ‘*adaptation*’ (e.g., adapt, growth and overcoming failures), ‘*optimism*’ (e.g., positive thinking and positive change), ‘*persistence*’ (e.g., motivation, determination and setting goals), and the importance of ‘*social support*’ (e.g., grandmothers, family, friends).

Figure 3: Participants' Resilience Word Cloud

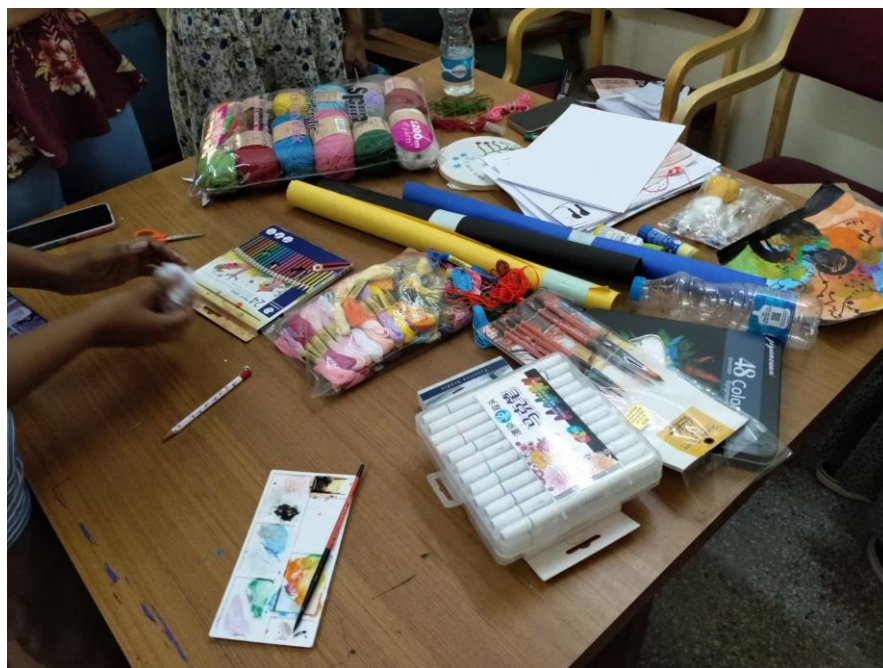


(Mentimetre, 2022)

²⁹ Mentimetre is an interactive presentation and/or education tool that enables educators, or researchers, to gather responses from individuals and groups (e.g., students or research participants) using quizzes, polls, and word clouds (Mentimetre, 2022).

Following this, the researcher presented three examples of resilience artworks created by the ‘Creative Resilience’ UNESCO project with women in STEM (see UNESCO, 2021). To avoid potential replications, the researcher selected artworks that presented little alignment to the intentions of the workshop and were only used to exemplify the various artistic techniques that participants could use to express themselves creatively (e.g., weaving, collage, and stencil printing). It was clear that participants had prior knowledge of the concept of resilience which had been filtered through the college’s ethos, extra-curricular activities, and personal experience. Group rules were established which included no guests allowed in the sessions, showing respect to yourselves and other group members and if participants felt uncomfortable at any time during the sessions, they could provide a code word to change the topic or stop discussions entirely. The final rule was to honour each participants’ confidentiality during and outside of the sessions. A variety of visual art materials (e.g., pens, paper, paints, and embroidery threads) were placed on the table in front of the participants (see Figure 4). The groups were given little directive on what to use as flexibility is often considered as an important component for self-expression within ABR (see Strand et al, 2022). Participants, therefore, had the freedom to use whichever materials they felt comfortable using. This also reflected the openness that participants had to explore any topics they felt were relevant to the study.

Figure 4: Reflective Art Workshop Equipment



The workshops focussed on how young women tackled and/or overcame significant challenges in their lives, yet the sessions were loosely structured. Similar to a collection of qualitative-based resilience research, particularly those that employ ABR methods, the researcher asked the same question at the start of each session: *“What are the key factors/resources that support you in tackling and/or overcoming difficult circumstances in your lives?”*. This led to discussions around experiences of adversity, and if and/or how they tackled this adversity. To identify potential cultural or contextually specific factors that were associated with resilience, the researcher asked an additional question during the sessions: *“How do you think your socio-cultural context impacts your ability to feel resilient when faced with a challenge?”*. This was inspired by Hebbani & Srinivasan (2016)’s resilience study in Bengaluru, which seeks to understand how elements of Indian culture is perceived to influence young adults in maintaining positivity after exposure to adversity. The authors find that through prompting a question that is focussed on culture, it helps to facilitate in-depth discussions regarding how religious beliefs, traditional social structures, and elements of the family environment, influence young people’s abilities to seek strength in difficult situations (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016). This question allowed the authors to identify the wider processes at play that work to influence resilience. The researcher clarified key components of the questions if they were asked (e.g., socio-cultural context). Participants were given the chance to lead and participate in the sessions, and the researcher often prompted further discussions with questions based on the topic of conversation. Discussions were primarily delivered in English, however, occasionally participants would switch to Hindi if they were unsure of the term used in English or did not wish to say it in front of the researcher. College student ambassadors (often the presidents or vice-presidents of the society) volunteered as a translator for the group, and a discussion prompter if required.

All participants were encouraged to create artworks and simultaneously engage within the conversations around resilience if they felt comfortable. Much of the resilience research that adopts ABR methods with groups of diverse youth, note difficulties capturing rich descriptions of resilience through the sole use of semi-structured interviews (Theron, 2016a; Theron & Malindi, 2010). Such difficulties prompt the incorporation of visual methodologies, alongside interviews and focus groups, given the potentialities of tactile ABR methods in offering comfortable and informal spaces to share insights (Liebenberg, 2009a; 2009b; Liebenberg & Theron, 2015; Theron et al, 2011a). Visual art techniques, such as draw-and-write methods, are often used by researchers to encourage participants to create a

drawing regarding their understanding of resilience and explain what their drawing conveys about resilience (e.g., Theron, 2016a; Guillemin, 2004). It is perceived to be ‘a non-threatening, powerful means of extracting young people’s understandings particularly when research foci include abstract phenomena or subjects about which discussion is taboo’ (Theron, 2016a, p.643; Mitchell, 2011). Therefore, following inferences from previous resilience studies, the researcher used ABR methods as not a replacement for verbal discussion, but rather used it as a tactile technique to facilitate discussions and create an environment where participants could concurrently talk and draw (Liebenberg, 2009b). This generated group discussions that welcomed contribution from all its members. However, participants were not pressured to talk in the sessions and were reminded that they could instead focus on their artwork. It was clear from body language and verbal participation that as the sessions progressed, participants became more comfortable and confident in discussing topics within the group setting. The researcher welcomed participants to explain and contextualise their artwork to the group once they had finished. Some participants voluntarily held their artwork up to the group, explained why they had created it, and the story that it conveyed, and discussed whether their artwork fully captured what they had intended to illustrate. All participants titled their creations and included their name on the back of the artwork, which was helpful when matching up discussions with artwork during the later stages of data analysis (see Section 3.6). The researcher strived to ensure that the environment, in which the research was conducted, was welcoming, secure, and a space where participants had the opportunity to reflect and express themselves within a supportive community. At the end of each session, the researcher photographed each of the artworks and stored copies of them securely on their personal laptop for future analysis (see Appendix 7). The following section outlines how the quantitative and qualitative data were analysed once the data collection phase of the research process had been completed.

3.6. Analysis

The previous section provided an overview of the quantitative and qualitative methods that were employed during data collection. The following section outlines the approach that the researcher took in the analysis phase of the study. It explains the processes of both quantitative and qualitative data preparation and the tools employed to analyse the data.

3.6.1. Quantitative Analyses

Once the quantitative data from the online questionnaire had been collected and stored onto Qualtrics, the data were then transferred to SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and checked by the researcher's supervisors for data entry errors. Data cleaning is a critical step during the data analysis process and increases the reliability of results (Van den Broeck et al, 2005; McCabe et al, 2012). Descriptive analysis of background factors and family information were performed using measures of the central tendency and frequency distributions to build an understanding of the nature and background of the sample. For example, descriptive statistics relating to frequencies of age categories, caste classifications and religious groups, as well as groupings concerning parent employment status and education which were separated into father and mother sections. The scores from participants' responses to the READ and Locus of Control scales were also totalled to provide approximate variables measuring these scales which were used for further data analysis.

A variety of statistical techniques were included during this phase of data analysis. These included Spearman's rank correlation, factor analysis techniques (e.g., Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)), which were used to respond to the research questions. Despite the fact that Pearson's correlation coefficient is often acknowledged as a beneficial test to analyse the strength and direction (positive or negative) of the association between two variables (Emerson, 2015), a debate exists regarding the use of such parametric tests with discrete data (such as the Likert-type scale responses included in the questionnaire). Humble (2020, p.5) extends on Norman (2010)'s assertion, stating that 'parametric tests tend to give better results [than nonparametric tests] even when statistical assumptions, such as the data needing to be normally distributed, are violated to an extreme degree'. The Pearson's correlation coefficient was considered to explore the relationships between the variables included within all sections of the questionnaire. However, there were numerous outliers in the data as Pearson's correlation coefficient is particularly susceptible to being affected by outliers (Humble, 2020). Therefore, it was necessary to use Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Spearman's rho), a non-parametric test, as this is relatively unaffected by outliers in the data (Gauthier, 2001).

The quantitative data analysis techniques are relevant to the explanatory sequential design approach to mixed methods, as well as the critical realist ontology and post-positivist epistemology for this research study. SEM is considered as a post-positivist technique in that it is based on the ‘fundamental assumption that things exist in the world independent of our knowledge of them but our means to explore this reality are imperfect’ (Brown et al, 2021, p.490) as latent variables cannot be directly observed or measured. The error terms (which indicate how much of the variance is caused by other variables) are clearly presented within a SEM diagram, which adheres to a post-positivist stance by explicitly stating the results of the SEM in terms of likelihood, as opposed to certainty. In relation to critical realism, according to Brown et al (2021, p.490) ‘SEM focusses on building and testing models of hypothesises (theoretical) relationships between measured variables and latent constructs, thereby generating multivariate evidence of causal mechanisms’. Therefore, SEM offers an efficient method to apply the theory of stratification (Bhaskar, 2008), by delineating the pathway of covariates’ relationships with one another and with the dependent variable in a way that reveals more information regarding the underlying mechanisms at play. The foundation of SEM is path analysis, which enables the researcher in this study to hypothesise potential associations between resilience variables, including their causal relationships based on the strength and direction of the correlations (Brown et al, 2021).

3.6.2. *Qualitative Analysis*

Qualitative data analysis concerns how the researcher moves from the data to understanding, explaining, and interpreting the phenomena in question (Lewins et al, 2010). Due to the nature of this research study, thematic analysis was employed as an analytical approach to examine the qualitative verbal data produced from the reflective art workshops. Braun & Clarke (2006, p.79) define thematic analysis as ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data’ and explains that the themes in the data can be identified through inductive or deductive methods. The researcher selected an inductive thematic analysis approach, which is used to enable research findings to emerge from frequent, dominant, or significant themes that are inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies (Thomas, 2006). Thomas (2006) outlines that an inductive approach aids the researcher in condensing raw data, supports them in establishing clear links between research objectives and the data, and helps to develop a model or theory regarding the underlying structure of the processes evident within the data. This approach

was used to analyse transcriptions of the reflective art workshop discussions, to identify, interpret and describe the data produced by participants in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The qualitative data were analysed by the researcher based on a three-stage procedure that is suggested within the literature (see Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). As Braun & Clarke (2006) point out, patterns are identified in the data through a rigorous process of data familiarisation (making notes and transcribing the data for analysis) and reducing the data into themes through a process of coding. The procedures for qualitative analysis largely follow Braun & Clarke (2006)'s approach which is further detailed in this section.

During qualitative data collection, the researcher wrote ethnographic notes during the visits to the college campus and typed them up on the same day in the form of a reflective daily diary. This follows Braun & Clarke (2006)'s recommendation that taking notes or marking ideas is particularly useful before beginning the formal coding procedure. Observation notes were then arranged into common themes, as opposed to the chronological order of the reflective art workshops. Below each of the entries, the researcher's own thoughts and considerations were included to support the coding process. The themes that emerged from the initial coding procedure helped to shape the direction of the reflective art workshops.

The reflective art workshops were conducted in English. In some instances, the college student ambassador for each society would act as a Hindi interpreter if there had been a language barrier. The workshops were audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher upon their return to the UK, when qualitative data collection had been completed in May 2022. The transcript aimed to be a verbatim account of all the verbal, and non-verbal dialogue, which is highly recommended when conducting thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Edwards & Lampert, 1993). However, in some cases, the researcher had been unable to transcribe certain portions of the recording due to background noise or participants talking over each other. An example of a reflective art workshop transcript is outlined in Appendix 8. Despite speaking fluent English, some participants often spoke in Hindi to communicate with their peers, or with the ambassador, after the researcher had asked a question to the group. This was not able to be identified by the researcher at the time but may have been a method for participants to clarify what the researcher was asking, especially among those who were not confident in their English-speaking abilities. Whilst a large portion of data had been picked up by the researcher's Hindi-speaking colleague, who helped to transcribe the qualitative data, some potentially useful data was inaccessible. This is one of this study's limitations (see Section

5.5), however, it is not uncommon for this to happen when conducting research across different languages (Halai, 2007).

Once all the audio data and reflective notes were transcribed, word by word and line-by-line coding was conducted for the verbatim comments made within each reflective art workshop, and recordings were re-listened to again as and when necessary. Quotes are outlined as block paragraphs in Chapter Four – Results to distinguish the quotes from the main text and to direct the attention of the reader to the voices of participants. Participants were encouraged to summarise their artwork and explain what they were trying to portray through their image. Following much of the resilience literature, that adopts visual art techniques (e.g., Theron, 2016a; Theron & Malindi, 2010; Lys, 2018; Shand, 2014), it was decided that the qualitative data produced from the workshop's group discussions, and participants' verbal descriptions of their artworks, would be analysed using the thematic analysis process, as opposed to the researcher subjectively analysing the artwork themselves. This reflects a 'reflexive methodological position' (Guillemin & Drew, 2010, p.184), which supports integrative techniques that incorporates interviews or participants' own images (Stanczak, 2007, p.11). According to Stanczak (2007, p.7), reflexive epistemologies, within the context of visual arts research, 'hold that the meaning of the images resides most significantly in the ways that participants interpret those images, rather than as some inherent property of the images themselves'. In this case, participants are actively engaged in the production and interpretation process, are considered as 'producers' of knowledge, and are the most relevant individuals to elicit meaning to the image that they have created (Guillemin & Drew, 2010, p.184). As Guillemin & Drew (2010, p.184) outlines, this also limits potential concerns regarding subjective, researcher-led interpretations of their drawings, as seen elsewhere in resilience research (see Theron, 2016a; Theron & Malindi, 2010). This reflects Gauntlett & Holzwarth (2006, p.86)'s argument, who declare that 'the interpretation has to come from the person who made the artefact. My own guesses or speculation [as researcher] about someone else's meanings are just that – guesses and speculations'. Whilst the researcher is reliant on the participant in making sense of their own image, the researcher maintains their role as they are 'best able to undertake the overall analysis and interpret the data within the context of the other data and the overall theoretical frame' (Guillemin & Drew, 2010, p.184; Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006). In this study, the participant played a reflexive role in generating and interpreting their own image, as their explanation is perceived as the most important to address the overall research interest (Guillemin & Drew, 2010). This supports the researcher

in capturing local indigenous knowledge and patterns of adaptation that may be invisible to western outsiders (Ungar, 2003, 2008, 2011a). The researcher played a key role in the overall interpretation and analysis of the data. Using the thematic analysis process to examine workshop discussions and summaries of participants-produced artworks was identified by the researcher as the most relevant approach in this study as it aligns with Ungar (2011a)'s SER theory.

In the analysis process, the researcher ensured that the artwork matched their verbal summaries. The researcher subsequently re-evaluated the coded data and applied data triangulation to define strong categories that were common across the different data sources. During this stage of analysis, the researcher then began to construct the final report in accordance with the theory emerging from the data. The researcher was then able to equate early findings to ensure that understandings were based on the data, as opposed to pre-existing assumptions and hypotheses. The researcher re-visited the codes to identify significant broader patterns of meaning (potential themes related to resilience). Creswell (2014, p.223) states that 'The use of different concepts or variables on both sides, quantitative and qualitative, may yield incomparable and difficult to merge findings'. Therefore, whilst using thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data, the researcher considered the emerging themes within the context of the factors that arose from initial quantitative analysis. Participants' artworks are presented throughout the results chapter and are used to provide a visual representation of the themes, and personal narratives that emerged from the workshop discussions.

Despite the fact that the utilisation of computer-aided packages, such as NVivo, are particularly useful when conducting qualitative data analysis, they simultaneously have their drawbacks. For example, Stroh (2000, p.241) states that 'Researchers can be distanced from their data, relying on perceived automation of analysis, rather than retaining the closeness of the data so vital to qualitative data analysis'. The researcher felt that there was a potential hazard of becoming distanced from the texts and data if they had utilised a computer package, therefore, it was not chosen as a qualitative analysis tool in this study. The selected avenue for data analysis enabled the researcher to identify common experiences among participants and supported the development of a larger picture of female resilience, one that was relevant to the three research questions and identified themes that emerged from

experience. The quotes and artworks employed within this research study help to build on the findings from the quantitative data to portray a glimpse of the wider story being told.

Overall, an inductive approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) enabled the researcher to make sense of the complex data relating to participants' reflective experiences of resilience. This approach was highly efficient in collecting themes that are linked to form a co-ordinated picture or explanatory model of young women's resilience. This helps to reinforce the philosophical foundations that are applied to this research study, which sets out to uncover relationships in phenomena and produce findings that are likely to be true (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The following section draws on this further by outlining the philosophical position that is followed by the researcher in this study.

3.7. Philosophical Position

It is a widely held view that philosophical standpoints implies how researchers comprehend the world around them, as well as explaining the purposes of this understanding (Cohen et al, 2007). Despite philosophical ideas remaining largely hidden in research (Slife & Williams, 1995), they still influence the practice of research and, therefore, must be identified (Creswell, 2014), to justify why the researcher has selected different methods in their study. Creswell (2014) identifies the significance of cautiously selecting a philosophical worldview, or research paradigm, as it is an established framework which acts as a foundation for social research and provides pathways for understanding the experiences and actions of human subjects (Blaikie, 2007). Mills et al (2006, p.26) states that 'To ensure a strong research design, researchers must choose a research paradigm that is congruent with their beliefs about the nature of reality' and it is an intrinsic aspect of ontological and epistemological foundations of research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This influences 'what should be studied, how research should be done, how results should be interpreted' according to Bryman (1988, p.14). This section explores post-positivism as the chosen philosophical position employed by the researcher in this study.

3.7.1. Positivism

Post-positivism is a research paradigm which has evolved from the positivist paradigm. Therefore, to begin, positivism will be briefly explored. Positivism is viewed as an umbrella term for a host of philosophical ideas or perspectives which are prone to include or overlap with empiricist, behaviourist, and naturalist positions, in which positivism embraces any

approach that applies scientific method to human interaction (Grix, 2010). According to Gray (2014, p.20) the central premise of positivism is that the world is 'knowable' as 'reality exists external to the researcher and must be investigated through the rigorous process of scientific inquiry'. Therefore, to work towards finding the 'truth', positivists use statistical methods to confirm or reject the proposed hypothesis to identify the causality, or absence of it, between the variables (Saks & Allsop, 2019). Jupp (2006, p.34) asserts that positivism is the 'methodological underpinning of survey research and experimental approaches' where statistical modelling is preferred as the data is perceived as reliable, representative, and easily replicated. Similarly, Clark (1998, p.1243) states that 'truth in positivist inquiry is achieved through the verification and replication of observable findings concerning directly perceivable entities or processes'. Positivists deal with facts rather than values, as the natural and human sciences are seen to share logical and methodological underpinnings (Gray, 2014). This scientific research approach is designed to make descriptive or exploratory inferences based on empirical information about the world to get closer to the 'truth', otherwise known as 'the goal is inference' as King et al (1994, p.16) outlines.

McEvoy & Richards (2006) identify two notable limitations associated with positivist methodologies. Firstly, they account for observable events, as opposed to how observations are influenced, and secondly, they do not contemplate the interactions between the mechanisms and the contexts in which they occur (McEvoy & Richards, 2006; Collier, 1994). Hjørland (2005) proposes arguments against positivism and suggests that all human sense is shaped by cultural subjectivity and, therefore, cannot be captured through quantitative data collection methods alone. Despite quantitative methods used in this study being a beneficial tool for collecting large-scale statistical data, it has the capacity to 'bury the voice' of participants beneath anonymous data (Ragin, 1994, p.81). Rather, in the field of resilience research, employing qualitative data that account for diversity within individual contexts is critical 'to produce authentic results that reflect the lives of the people studied' (Ungar, 2003, p.89). This is especially in instances where participant voices could potentially be ignored, hidden or undervalued. In a positivist outlook, the researcher is seen as independent from the study, concentrating on facts as opposed to human interest, making this approach a deductive one. Positivists seek to generalise the observation of a particular phenomenon to the world at large, however, as Hjørland (2005) suggests, human behaviour and judgement is affected by specific cultural experience and phenomena, therefore, findings will vary from one setting to another. It is infeasible to generalise the findings from such a

diverse socio-cultural context in which this study collects its data from. The next section examines post-positivism, which draws on the shortcomings of positivism, and proposes that researchers seek findings which are likely to be true (Phillips & Burbules, 2000).

3.7.2. Post-Positivism

Post-positivism similarly seeks to uncover truth whilst simultaneously acknowledging the imperfections and bias that are prevalent within the social sciences (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). Subsequent to positivism, post-positivists claim that as researchers, we cannot be positive about our claims of knowledge when studying the behaviour and actions of human subjects. There it bases its values on ‘careful observation and measurement of the objective reality that exists “out there” in the world’, as according to Creswell (2014, p.7). Post-positivists adhere to the belief that objective reality can be observed, but only probabilistically (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Post-positivism utilises a mixed methods approach, which incorporates a deeper insight into data through the triangulation of a variety of different data sources (Bryman, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1994), which differs significantly from its predecessor. As opposed to establishing and verifying causal relationships through repeated empirical examinations, post-positivists rather infer that a causal relationship could exist and gathers data to support this claim. Post-positivists not only imply that false theories can be rejected, but that causal relationships cannot be definitively revealed (Corry et al, 2019). Cohen et al (2018, p.3) implies that post-positivism recognises the researcher’s fallibility but does not perceive it as a compromise of validity, as the ‘ability for falsification’ means that ‘finding that an answer we have accepted in the past is mistaken, is itself an advance in knowledge’. Therefore, it is within this commitment to verifying findings to the extent that they are ‘probably true’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.109), that post-positivism responds to the criticism of positivism, and provides a space for mixed methods approaches to research (Bryman, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Humble, 2017).

Basing this research study on the assertion that ‘Objectives, research questions, and design shape the choice of methodology, and methodology shapes the objectives, research questions, and design’ (Carter & Little, 2007, p.1323), it follows a critical realist ontology, which is informed by a post-positivist epistemology, shaping the choice of research methods employed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This research study follows a mixed methods approach that aligns with the chosen philosophical standpoint, including quantitative analysis of questionnaire data focussed on participants’ self-reported protective factors for resilience.

The quantitative data is contextualised and enriched by a wealth of qualitative data captured through the reflective art workshops which aimed to elicit in-depth narratives of resilience through artistic expression and facilitated discussions.

Nonetheless, ontology asks itself ‘what is the form and nature of reality?’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.108), and epistemological considerations arise from holding viewpoints about the significance of reality, or what can be known. Therefore, a justification of the ontological and epistemological frameworks employed in this research study is further outlined in the subsequent sections (3.8 and 3.9).

3.8. Ontology

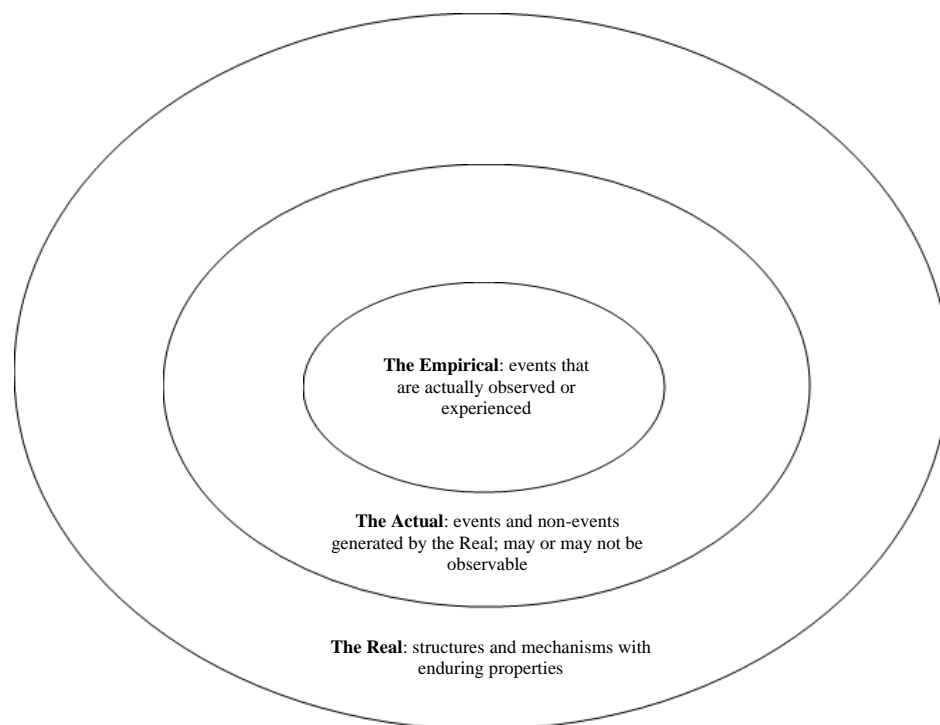
Crotty (2003, p.10) defines ontology as ‘the study of being’ and it ‘raises basic questions about the nature of reality and the nature of the human being in the world’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Blaikie (2000, p.8) offers a more comprehensive definition, suggesting that ontological claims are ‘claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other. In short, ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality’ (Blaikie, 2000, p.8). A researcher’s ontological position affects the way in which they undertake their research; therefore, the next section outlines and justifies the selected ontological position for this research study, prior to considering the epistemological stance.

3.8.1. Critical Realism

Critical realism operates as a philosophical grounding for science, acting as an alternative to positivist and interpretivist approaches. It supports the idea that the formulation of knowledge is subjective and is produced of natural and human dependent constructs of reality (Riley, 2007), and therefore, uncovers the varying stages of observation. A researcher that adopts a critical realist ontology believes that they can investigate causal relationships between phenomena as the world exists independently from the human mind. However, it cannot be accessed in its entirety, rather only through glimpses or fractional fragments (Letourneau & Allen, 2006). Naess (2015, p.1231) states that the main aim of the critical realist researcher, is therefore, to ‘explain observable phenomena by uncovering underlying causal mechanisms’. To fully comprehend a pattern of behaviour, and how it is produced by unpredictable causal mechanisms or powers, it must be scrutinised through real open

conditions that might not always be observable by level of appearances (Bhaskar, 2008). Therefore, the critical realist ontology is best described by Bhaskar (2008)'s concept of Stratification, which perceives the world as layered and differentiated into three overlapping ontological domains; the real, actual, and empirical. The researcher uses the stratification theory to examine resilience phenomena at play beyond empirically observed events to determine the resilience-supporting factors that occur across all domains of reality. The concept of Stratification is outlined in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Bhaskar (2008)'s Concept of Stratification



(Mingers, 2004, p.94)

Firstly, as Haigh et al (2019, p.3) outlines, the empirical refers to 'actual events-effects that can be, or have been, observed or experienced'. In the context of this research, narratives of resilience can be observed at the empirical level, through the artwork produced during the reflective art workshops, as well as from group discussions. Secondly, the 'actual' is comprised of events, and their effects that have been caused by the activation of causal mechanisms (e.g., gender, class) (Haigh et al, 2019, p.3). Elder-Vass (2013) notes that events cannot be constantly observed as their observer is not continuously present and these events occur at every level of existence beyond the researcher/observer. In this study, one example of the 'actual' domain would be observed through the findings produced from the resilience

portion of the online questionnaire (see Appendix 3). Participants may have perceived that their family was a cohesive unit, and integral for their resilience, yet it is not possible for the researcher to observe family behaviours and dynamics within the household environment. Finally, the ‘real’ refers to the domain that ‘consists of entities or structures which have properties that give them the power to activate mechanisms that can affect other structures (i.e., causal mechanisms)’ (Haigh et al, 2019, p.3). In this domain, unobservable causal powers, such as gender, culture, or caste, can trigger the actual level (Haigh et al, 2019), which can influence how individuals navigate and negotiate the resources they require for resilience. Whilst this cannot be directly observed, a model of it can be produced through responses to the questionnaire, and qualitative themes identified in the reflective art workshops. Overall, a critical realist approach sufficiently aligns with the objectives and aims of this research study, which involves gathering an in-depth understanding of the phenomena at play within the individual and their environment that promote and protect against the impact of exposure to adversity (Ungar, 2013). The researcher, therefore, selected ABR methods when collecting qualitative data as this approach complements a critical realist ontology.

This section explored the ontological position of critical realism and the concept of stratification, which applies directly to this research. Understanding the structures that influence resilience among young women are important to investigate if the sample’s social world is to be understood by the researcher. The following section explores the epistemological position that the researcher adopted for this study and how it complements a critical realist ontology. It also highlights how utilising ABR methods supported the researcher in navigating multiple positionalities and presented ways of expressing and sharing information between the researcher and participants.

3.9. Epistemology

If ontology is about what we know, then epistemology is about how we come to know what we know (Grix, 2004; Crotty, 1998). Therefore, examining the relationship between the knower and the knowledge poses the ultimate question of ‘How do we know the world, or gain knowledge of it?’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.31). The philosophical assumptions that are derived from the researcher’s epistemological stance influence and guide the research practice, including the chosen methodological approach (Carter & Little, 2007). It also effects how rigour is evaluated, and how they can lead to different views of the same social

phenomena (Grix, 2004). According to Carter & Little (2007), there are three main influences that epistemology has on research which will be explored in this section, in light of the critical realist ontology and post-positivist epistemology employed within this research study (Humble, 2017).

The Researcher's Presence in Social Research

Epistemology is seen to influence the relationship between the researcher and the participant during data collection and analysis (Carter & Little, 2007). Researchers may think of the participants as either active contributors or subjects being studied (Carter & Little, 2007).

This research aims to identify the relationship between variables by seeking objectivity, as opposed to subjectivity, avoiding bias where possible and limiting the influence of the researcher's prior knowledge, which may have an impact on how the data is both collected and analysed. In this context, the researcher's positionality is interwoven within the socio-cultural, gendered and power dynamics at play, therefore, they remained cautious of how their own identity (e.g., class, gender and nationality) could influence the research design, data collection, analysis and overall findings (Coemans et al, 2019; Kara, 2017).

Incorporating participant-produced artwork into the data collection processes aided the researcher in dealing with differences in power and facilitated the establishment of a more open communication (Liebenberg, 2009a). Through the discussion of their artworks, some participants situated themselves as experts of their own lives, supposed the role of the teacher in the research process and took ownership of their creations. This is similar to what Harper (2002, p.15) denotes as 'postmodern dialogue based on the authority of the subject rather than the researcher'.

On the other hand, suppression or exclusion of the researcher's voice, including their background and prior preconceptions are not always an advantage to the researcher (Lowes & Prowse, 2001), particular in arts-based research (Kamlongera, 2023). The researcher felt that it was important that their voice was included, not as a prevailing narrative, but as a reflexive account that acknowledged influence on the research process. Kamlongera (2023) highlights the complexity associated with navigating multiple researcher positionalities within the social sciences. The author emphasises that the inclusion of the researcher's perspective enables for greater transparency, particularly in how their biases, experiences, and cultural understandings can shape the research process (Kamlongera, 2023). Kamlongera (2023) & Milligan (2016) illustrate how a reflexive methodology that incorporates ABR methods can

facilitate the sharing of power with participants in creating knowledge about their realities, whilst recognising the researcher's role in the construction of knowledge. Co-creating research with participants can enhance rigour of data gathered during the data collection phase, therefore, the structure of the reflective art workshops were flexible, and followed the directive routes of participant's discussions. The researcher listened to participants' stories and descriptions of their artworks, and when appropriate, empathised with them, offered emotional support, and shared their own experiences. The ABR methods allowed the researcher to navigate the power dynamics involved when co-creating knowledge with participants, whilst considering shared, and at times, dissimilar circumstances. ABR methods also helped to address the question of representations (Goldman, 2007) by providing means for continuous reflection and clarifying what the researcher's voice represented, and whether and how participants' experiences were appropriately represented (Kamlongera, 2023). These considerations of researcher positionality traversed the processes that influenced the research design, data collection, and during data analysis and interpretation phases (Jones & Leavy, 2014, p.1-2). The researcher's voice is integrated within this research study's findings (Chapter Four) serving as a reflexive element to complement young women's lived realities of resilience and provide a more nuanced portrayal of the co-creative research process. According to Carter & Little (2007, p.1321) the communication between the researcher and participant encourages 'multiple ways of seeing'. Therefore, within different research contexts, and with a variety of participants from various cultures, religions and socio-economic backgrounds, more generative distinctive observations are more likely to be identified. As Ungar (2013) highlights, culture and context play a significant role in influencing the protective mechanisms made available to diverse populations, therefore, it was important for the research to inform an understanding of the setting and structures in which the variances are observed (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005).

Assessing the Quality of the Data

Epistemology is vital to the assessment of the quality of data and analysis (Carter & Little, 2007; Angen, 2000). Assessing the quality of the data can be particularly challenging when a mixed methods approach is employed, as different sources of data are evaluated in different ways. Bryman (2012) indicates that validity, reliability, replicability, and generalisability are the main criteria for assessing quantitative data. Cohen & Crabtree (2008) imply that seven principles are required for assessing the quality of qualitative data: prioritising ethics, the importance of the subject, understanding ability, appropriate methods, researcher reflexivity,

validity, and reliability. The authors conclude that due to the widespread nature of qualitative methods, it is often difficult to settle on a universal and defined criteria for assessing qualitative data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). In this study, the researcher assessed the quality of the data through asking for feedback on the transcript from participants and triangulating the data (see Section 3.3). The researcher also analysed data after the final point of data collection, used a predefined method for analysis, and included peer-evaluation as multiple sources and participatory feedback is seen to improve accuracy of research methods (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008).

Dissemination of Findings

The final influence of epistemology on research is the capacity to influence how the researcher communicates and disseminates the research findings (Carter & Little, 2007; Mantzoukas, 2004). From an objective point of view, the researcher may opt for ‘the presentation of a completed, coherent and unified analysis...in the objective scientific third person’ (Carter & Little, 2007, p.1322). On the other hand, the use of qualitative data may also encourage the researcher to report in the first person, recounting and reflecting upon their own experience of the research process (Carter & Little, 2007). In this subjective stance, the researcher tells their own story and explains the ‘struggles, defeats, and triumphs of the research process’ (Carter & Little, 2007, p.1332). This is often portrayed with less traditional methods, such as poetry, which is used to encourage the audience to become active interpreters (Carter & Little, 2007). The objective view would adopt a more coherent and unified analysis within the objective third person, with no information on the researcher themselves (Carter & Little, 2007). These suggestions, regarding writing, voice and representation are perceived as ‘incommensurable’ epistemic positions (Carter & Little, 2007, p.1332), but are internally consistent (Mantzoukas, 2004). Whilst the preface chapter is written in the first person, due to the focus of this study, and ensuring uniformity in the researcher’s voice, the majority of this thesis is written in the third person. The following section explores the validity and reliability of the research study.

3.10. Validity and Reliability

There are numerous types of validity and reliability within social science research. Cohen et al (2018, p.245) states that ‘Threats to validity and reliability can never be erased completely; rather the effects of these threats can be attenuated by attention to validity and reliability throughout the research’. This section delineates the importance of validity and reliability in

mixed methods research. It also outlines the steps taken to reduce the threats related to validity and reliability within this research study.

3.10.1. Validity

Validity is critical to conduct effective research and is defined as ‘a demonstration that a particular instrument in fact measures what it intends, purports or claims to measure’ (Cohen et al, 2018, p.245). Bryman (2012) outlines the different types of validity; measurement (construct), internal, external, and ecological validity, which are applicable to quantitative and qualitative research, and therefore, are explored within this section. Firstly, construct validity is defined as ‘the validity of inferences made about the nature and manifestations of theoretical factors’ (Cohen et al, 2018, p.246; Shadish et al, 2002). This is relevant to quantitative research and elucidates whether a questionnaire measures what it originally claimed to measure. Construct validity is often associated with reliability analysis of each construct in a questionnaire. This is outlined in section 3.5, which detailed the high internal consistency measures of the READ and Locus of Control scales used in the online questionnaire (see Appendix 3).

Secondly, internal validity refers to ‘the validity of inferred and found relationships between elements of the research design and outcomes’ (Cohen et al, 2018, p.246; Shadish et al, 2002). In line with this study’s critical realist approach, the researcher works towards identifying truth in findings which enhances likelihood. Therefore, if a causal relationship is hypothesised, this can subsequently be investigated through the application of data triangulation to verify whether there is an authentic relationship and the strength of it can be evaluated. For quantitative data analysis, SEM offers a clear visualisation of the investigated path relationship between the variables at play, with regression coefficients and error terms indicating the likelihood of certain variables affecting others (Humble, 2020). However, there are a multitude of complications that can impact the internal validity of quantitative research. Firstly, Cohen et al (2018) outlines that it is important that researchers avoid attributing outcomes to an intervention when other external factors may have caused the change. In this study, this is averted using SEM as the value of the error term is clearly presented in the diagram which represents the variance that is not caused by the variable being studied. SEM also clearly denotes the direction of the relationships between the variables. Secondly, Cohen et al (2018, p.252) states that ‘instrument reactivity’, which is defined as the ‘effects that the data-collection instruments exert on the people in the study’, is a further complication when it

comes to internal validity. Instrument reactivity could occur through social desirability bias, when participants respond to questions with aspirations for their future behaviour or how they perceive themselves to behave, rather than their actual behaviour (Cohen et al, 2018). In this instance, reactivity can be reduced by the researcher considering how participants from dissimilar backgrounds and positions in hierarchy respond to different situations they face in the research process. In the qualitative portion of this study, the researcher gathered the data within a setting that the participants were familiar with and among a close group of peers. This served to mitigate reactivity and enhance the study's validity.

Thirdly, external validity is often associated with 'generalisability', which is defined as 'the view that the theory generated may be useful in understanding other similar situations' (Cohen et al, 2018, p.248; Maxwell, 1992). This refers to generalising the study's findings with 'specific groups or communities, situations, or circumstances validly, and, beyond, to specific outsider communities, situations, or circumstances' (Cohen et al, 2018, p.248; Maxwell, 1992). In contrast to internal validity, external validity is relevant solely to quantitative data analysis. In this research study, it was not possible for the researcher to employ randomised sampling methods, therefore, it is infeasible to generalise the findings of this study to other contexts. Though this does not render the data useless even if the findings do not apply to the whole population, as they are still advantageous when considering comparable solutions and contexts to those in which the research was conducted (Humble, 2017).

Finally, according to Brock-Utne (1996, p.617), ecological validity in educational research 'concerns examining and addressing the specific characteristics of a particular situation'. This often requires a thick and rich description (Geertz, 2000) as the overall intention of ecological validity is 'to give accurate portrayals of the realities of social situations in their own terms, in their natural or conventional settings' (Cohen et al, 2018, p.264). Ecological validity is, therefore, weakened if the research process does not correspond with participants' normal lives. In the context of this research study, it is not entirely natural for participants to attend arts workshops and reflect on the challenges and strengths that they have experienced in their lives. However, in the workshops, the researcher aimed to provide a comforting and secure environment where participants could openly share their experiences with each other through verbal and/or non-verbal means. Whilst the researcher gave prompts throughout the duration

of the sessions, the discussions were participant-led which enabled the researcher to observe participants within their habitual environment and listen closely to their narratives.

In extension to this, with regards to improving the validity of qualitative research, Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest four key criteria which correspond with those used for quantitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is often referred to as ‘the truth value’ (‘replacing the quantitative concepts of internal validity’) (Cohen et al, 2018, p.248). This study gathers in-depth insights and reflections on experiences from a sample of female college students who are affected by the issues pertinent to the research questions. Therefore, it is certain that the participants’ contributions during data collection are useful in achieving the aims of this study. However, it is possible that participants’ responses were always not entirely truthful, as some accounts may be influenced by others. Therefore, it is important to gather qualitative data from a variety of voices to build credibility into the overall picture of reality. Lincoln & Guba (1985) outlines that credibility can be addressed in qualitative research through peer debriefing, member checking and triangulation, each of which were employed in this study (see Section 3.11). According to Cohen et al (2018, p.253), member checking is referred to as ‘respondent validation to assess intentionality, to correct factual errors, to offer respondents to opportunity to add further information...and to check the adequacy of the analysis’. As the researcher did not have formal contact with participants after the workshops, member checking was conducted during the workshops through summarisation of participants’ comments repeated to them for clarification, particularly during points of uncertainty.

In addition, according to Cohen et al (2018, p.253), in peer debriefing the researcher is involved in ‘exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner akin to cross-examination, in order to test honesty, working hypotheses and to identify the next steps in the research’ (Cohen et al, 2018, p.253). The researcher distributed a copy of this thesis to a colleague from Newcastle University, who is familiar with women’s resilience, but is not connected to this project. The process of triangulation is described earlier in this chapter (see Section 3.3.1). LeCompte & Preissle (1993) also outline the importance of recording, storing, and retrieving data, so that the researcher can disregard rival explanations of events and situations arising from the data during the analysis stage. The researcher, therefore, used thematic analysis and coded the data into common themes so that they were easily identifiable at every stage of the research process.

Regarding transferability, the convenience sampling techniques that were employed in this study, indicate that the findings are not strictly generalisable across multiple contexts, however, are relevant to this sample of young women. The findings could influence further research to be conducted within similar settings in North India. The researcher aimed to ensure confirmability by enabling participants to lead the discussions during the workshops, thus reducing the impact of the researcher's preconceptions and assumptions on the data. This was also achieved through reflection on the researcher's presence in the research during analysis. As suggested by Cohen et al (2018, p.248), dependability is often associated with consistency ('replacing the quantitative concept of reliability') which is explored in the subsequent section.

3.10.2. Reliability

Reliability is considered as an umbrella term for 'dependability, consistency, and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents' and poses the critical question of 'Can we believe the results?' (Cohen et al, 2018, p.268). Despite the assertion that reliability adheres to a positivist perspective, as opposed to within qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), reliability is relevant to both quantitative and qualitative research. Carmines & Zeller (1979) outline three principal types of reliability: stability, equivalence, and internal consistency. Reliability as stability refers to 'a measure of consistency over time, over similar samples and the uses of the instrument in question', in which a reliable instrument is perceived as one that can yield similar data from similar respondents over time (Cohen et al, 2018, p.268). Secondly, Cohen et al (2018, p.268) states that 'reliability as equivalence may be achieved through inter-rater reliability', such as the agreement between all researchers who rate, code, and assess the same phenomenon (e.g., an agreement among researchers to enter the data in the same way). Thirdly, reliability as internal consistency refers to measuring to what extent the responses on a research instrument's items are related to each other and reflect the same theme (Higgins & Straub, 2006).

In this research study, it was not possible to conduct test-re-test reliability during the data collection phase to assess scale stability. The participants who completed the questionnaire came from relatively similar backgrounds, and there were minimal differences in the findings between them, suggesting that the scales included in the questionnaire are stable. There was only one researcher who was involved in the research process; therefore, inter-rater reliability does not apply in this instance. Finally, the READ (0.871) and Locus of Control (0.487)

scales overall reported good Cronbach alpha results, which is often referred to as the ‘coefficient of reliability’ (Cohen et al, 2018, p.270). This indicates that the scales included in the questionnaire produced reliable results.

The term reliability is often contested within qualitative research (see Winter, 2000; Stenbacka, 2001). Instead, terms such as ‘credibility’, ‘dependability’ and ‘trustworthiness’ are often used interchangeably with reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researcher’s personal bias is often found to influence the credibility of research findings, therefore, to enhance credibility, the researcher reported and acknowledged personal biases in sampling, and continued reflective methods to ensure adequate depth and applicability of data collection and analysis (Sandelowski, 1993; Morse et al, 2002). Participants’ verbatim descriptions of personal experiences (Slevin, 2002), and the triangulation of data sources were collectively used to paint a reliable picture of reality within the context that this research study took place in. The final section of this methodology chapter outlines the ethical procedure that this study followed to ensure best ethical practice.

3.11. Ethics

Ethical issues arise at every stage of social research. It is the responsibility of the researcher to consider the effect on research participants (Cohen et al, 2018). Diener & Crandall (1978, cited in Bryman, 2012, p.135) outline four issues that arise with regards to ethical considerations in research: 1) whether there is harm to participants, 2) whether there is a lack of informed consent, 3) whether there is an invasion of privacy, and 4) whether deception is involved. These issues cannot be ignored as they relate directly to the veracity of research and the disciplines involved (Diener & Crandall, 1978). Questions surrounding ethical considerations in social research bring forward the role of professional bodies, such as the British Educational Research Association³⁰ (BERA). This research follows the BERA guidelines which symbolise the ‘tenets of best ethical practice’ (BERA, 2018, p.iii), and the guidelines put forward by Newcastle University’s Ethical Committee. Ethical approval was granted by the Ethical Committee prior to conducting data collection. As this study conducts research with human participants, within a developing country context (Sultana, 2007), there are numerous ethical issues that require consideration. This section outlines how this research study follows BERA (2018)’s guidelines, which includes gaining access to participants,

³⁰ BERA provides clear guidance for researchers on how to ensure that a proposed research project meets the stringent ethical standards required of high-equality academic research (BERA, 2018).

conducting cross-cultural ethical research, minimising risk, voluntary informed consent, incentives and benefits of research, data storage and analysis and participant debriefing and dissemination. BERA (2018, p.2) states that ‘ethical decision-making becomes an actively deliberative ongoing and iterative process of assessing and reassessing the situation and issues as they arise’. Therefore, the researcher continuously considered the ethical guidelines throughout the duration of the research study, as this is perceived as best ethical practice for research.

Gaining Access to Participants

BERA (2018, p.10) states that ‘researchers should think about whether they should approach gatekeepers before directly approaching participants’. The college in New Delhi acted as a gatekeeper organisation within this study, due to its existing associations with Newcastle University. The researcher was able to distribute the online questionnaire via Qualtrics to female college students in March 2020, who had consented to participate in further external research. A letter of agreement was provided by the college confirming the researcher’s intention to access their premises and students for the purposes of their doctoral research. A member of staff at the college, who had previously worked on a Newcastle University research project, was able to put the researcher in contact with college student ambassadors who would support them in accessing further participants within their respective societies. The researcher spent the initial week at the college conducting formal and informal observations and building rapport with participants prior to data collection. As many society members had friends outside of their societies, and who were interested in participating, a large portion of participants acted as additional gatekeepers for the reflective art workshops.

Cross-Cultural Ethical Research

It is the responsibility of the researcher to consider any potential ethical issues that could arise when conducting research in an international context, such as India. The BERA (2018, p.14) guidelines state that ethical procedures that are undertaken outside of the UK require ‘careful negotiation, adaptation, and sensitivity’ (p.14), within different social, cultural, and political contexts. BERA (2018, p.14) recommends that researchers should work with a local person, as a ‘co-researcher’, as it is important to establish adequate levels of trust with prospective participants. The college student ambassadors acted as voluntary interpreters during their respective societies’ reflective art workshops. The ambassadors translated the outline of the research project to participants into Hindi to confirm their understandings of

the researcher's intentions and enable them to feel more comfortable during the sessions. If participants did not feel confident in their English-speaking abilities, or simply did not want to participate verbally, ABR methods provided them with the choice to participate in the workshops verbally and/or non-verbally.

Minimising Risks

Firstly, regarding the researcher's safety, there were aspects of this study which without prior planning and due care during the data collection stage, could have presented potential risks. In April-May 2022, the researcher was able to conduct physical data collection in New Delhi, India, as Covid-19 travel restrictions eased. The researcher ensured that all immunisations were up-to-date and that necessary precautions were taken to avoid infections and transmission of the virus. Following New Delhi's Covid-19 guidelines, the researcher wore masks in public spaces, including during data collection visits to the college and on public transport. Transport around New Delhi required attention to safety and the researcher regularly followed the advice of college staff whilst using public transport. Secondly, BERA (2018) outlines the importance of minimising risks when conducting research with human participants:

“Researchers have a responsibility to think through their duty of care in order to recognise potential risks, and to prepare for and be in a position to minimise and manage any distress or discomfort that may arise...Researchers should make known to participants any predictable disadvantage or harm potentially arising from the process.”

(p.19)

There was no risk to participants in giving consent for their data to be used as all of the data were anonymised and stored securely in both digital and hard forms. A data management plan was used to ensure this (see Appendix 7). All participants were notified of their right to withdraw at any time during the study and received reassurance that their responses would be anonymised throughout the research process. Participants titled their artworks after the sessions and wrote their name on the back of the artwork, which enabled the researcher to match them up with their summaries and discussions, whilst concealing their identities when using the artwork in the results chapter of this thesis.

The research proposal presented no physical risks to the participants. No component of the process entailed participants taking any major risks that were abnormal to their daily lifestyle. However, there were minor potential risks to participants who were sharing personal or sensitive information about their lives, in relation to overcoming challenges throughout childhood, adolescence or young adulthood. Young women's stories of resilience often involved deeply personal, and sometimes upsetting experiences relating to adversity (e.g., conflict, gender-based harassment and bereavement). Therefore, it was the researcher's priority to ensure that participants' autonomy and well-being were supported throughout the data collection process and create a supportive and non-judgemental space where participants could freely express their emotions. It was critical that participants did not feel the pressure to share information that they did not wish to share with the group or the researcher. Therefore, the researcher made it clear at the start of each session that participants could share any information that they felt comfortable with and had the right to withdraw at any time or omit to answering certain questions or prompts that were posed by the researcher or other participants. The researcher did not direct any questions or prompts to individual participants.

Kuri (2020, p.211) states that arts-based researchers must 'avoid misrepresenting their qualification, education, and training and that they only engage in parts of the study in which they are qualified', therefore, the researcher refrained from offering medical advice or recommendations to participants during the workshops. ABR emphasises the requirement of the researcher to develop safe grounds to create a secure physical and emotional environment where artmaking and creativity can flourish (Kuri, 2020). To navigate power dynamics between the researcher and participants, it was important to create a collaborative and participatory environment where they felt like they had control over their own narratives as opposed to feeling pressured to conform to the expectations of the research process. Therefore, the researcher conducted the workshops within a familiar space to participants (in a private room allocated to that society) and strived to ensure that the workshops' atmosphere fostered comfort, trust, and inclusivity, as well as space for play, fluidity, and imagination exploration (Neilsen, 2008). ABR methods also enabled participants to express themselves beyond the constraints of language, particularly among those who might struggle to articulate their emotions verbally, and those who did not feel entirely confident in their English-speaking abilities. The reflective art workshops aimed to provide a platform for society members to share their experiences, listen to each other and offer support among themselves.

The researcher also made it clear that participants' artworks and narratives would remain anonymous. In a close-knit urban setting like New Delhi, anonymity of the data was of upmost priority to avoid potential stigma or backlash from contacts known to the participant. The researcher anonymised the visual data by ensuring that any identifying details (e.g., faces, locations and names) were removed or blurred prior to its inclusion within the thesis. The researcher also avoided any assumptions or leading interpretations of the images, instead encouraging participants to describe the artworks in their own words. This not only prevented misinterpretation of the images, but provided young women with the agency to shape how their stories were conveyed. Participants also had the option to contact both the researcher and college management through the contact details listed on the information and consent sheet if they had any queries regarding their involvement post-data collection (see Appendix 4 and 5).

Voluntary Informed Consent

Informed consent concerns participants' autonomy and respects the right to freedom and self-determination (Cohen et al, 2018). Diener & Crandall (1978) outline that informed consent gives participants the choice whether or not to participate in the research once they have been informed about it and what it requires. Informed consent also raises the question of who the appropriate party is to provide consent. Therefore, whilst the college's principal had given consent for students to participate in the study, it was also important that the students themselves understood that they had the right for their consent to be requested and could decline to participate. Participants were required to provide voluntary informed written consent before they took part in the study. This was necessary to enable the researcher to incorporate participants' verbal data and artwork into the written thesis.

Prior to conducting data collection, the researcher distributed a consent form document to all students which consisted of a checklist to give consent and displayed the researcher's contact details (see Appendix 5). As participants were aged 18+, seeking parent permission was not applicable. In any case participants did not have proficient English literary skills to read the document, it was read orally by the college's student ambassador. Participants were reminded that they could consent and withdraw if needed at any time throughout the workshops. Translation of the consent form was initially undertaken by a UK-based Hindi speaker who is known to the researcher and was subsequently checked and adapted. All participants received detailed written information explaining the aims of the study, what would be required of them

if they took part, how long it would take and their right to withdraw at any time during the process. There was no information related to the study withheld from the participants for the sake of the research design. A reminder of the research study's aims and objectives were also delivered by the researcher at the start of each workshop, ensuring that each participant fully understood the purpose of the research and how their visual artworks would be used, allowing them the option to share only what they felt comfortable disclosing. Verbal consent was required by participants prior to the commencement of the workshops, even if written consent had been given. This enabled participants to make an informed decision to engage within the research process or withdraw voluntarily. As part of an ongoing informed consent process, the researcher often checked in with participants to ask how they are doing and to answer and address any potential questions or concerns that arose during the workshops.

Incentives and Benefits

Regarding incentives and benefits in research, BERA (2018, p.19) warns researchers that they should be used with good sense, 'such that the level of incentive does not impinge on the free decision to participate'. BERA (2018) also discourages the use of payment for participation in educational research, therefore, no financial incentives were offered to participants. After the workshops, the researcher wrote each society a personalised thank you letter for participating in the study, as well as to the college principle and member of staff who supported the researcher and acted as a gatekeeper. When the researcher arrived back in the UK, participant artwork was scanned and digitally sent to each respective college student ambassador's secure email address who then distributed the artworks to their society members who participated in the study. This enabled participants to review their creations and take ownership of their artwork.

Despite there being no direct benefits for participants, the workshops supported numerous participants in realising their personal transformations towards resilience. Creating opportunities for participant feedback is an ethical consideration among arts-based researchers to address unanticipated distress and concerns about representation (Howard, 2004). Therefore, post-workshop discussions revealed that participants valued reflecting on their personal victories (small or large) and seeing how far they had come from experiencing difficult life events. Participants also reported emotionally benefitting from participating in the workshops as it enabled them to both distance and distract themselves from the stress surrounding examinations. A collection of participants took interest in continuing the

reflective art workshops as social events within their respective societies, especially around exam season. Overall, participants provided positive verbal feedback on the structure of the workshops. The college did not sponsor this study in any way and no financial transaction of any kind took place between the college and the researcher.

Data Storage and Analysis

BERA (2018) outlines the importance of participant confidentiality and anonymity within educational research:

“The confidential and anonymous treatment of participants’ data is considered the norm for the conduct of research. Researchers should recognise the entitlement of both institutions and individual participants to privacy and should accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity.”

(p.21)

Participants were asked to provide their names to enable the researcher to identify their pieces of artwork, and so that they could be identified if they wished for it to be excluded from analysis after data collection. All participants were anonymous in the final thesis report and all information shared during the data gathering process remained confidential. For the protection of the participants involved, all names have been changed and the name of the college is not featured in this study. Once the data collection process was completed, the researcher kept the hard and digital data in secure storage. Photo scans of participants’ artwork and quantitative datasets were saved securely on password protected hard drives and on a secure cloud storage system. These datasets were also backed up to a password protected external hard drive. Hard copies of raw data were kept securely at the researcher’s home. The digital audio data was deleted from the recording device after it had been uploaded onto the secure cloud storage system. A back-up copy of digital data was also made on an external hard drive and stored securely in the researcher’s home with the physical data, which were written up on SPSS in the weeks following data collection. After data analysis and thesis write-up, the data sets were retained for potential future research. Appendix 7 outlines the data management plan followed by the researcher in this thesis.

Participant Debriefing and Dissemination

When conducting social science research, it is critical to consider a strategy for sharing findings and recommendations with participants following analysis, particularly since

participants are often interested to receive feedback (Purvis et al, 2017). There are two strands of participant debriefing that require consideration in this study. Firstly, the researcher disseminated the findings to the college, which was distributed through a written letter to the principle and passed onto participating students (see Appendix 6). The principal of the college suggested that this could also take place through a video seminar for staff and students to showcase the findings and recommend suggestions for the future delivery of the arts-based workshops in the college. Secondly, the researcher produced an abridged version of the final report. The BERA (2018, p.32) guidelines suggest that when research is conducted within other contexts, in which English is not a prevalent language, ‘researchers should seek to make fruits of their research available in a language that makes it locally as well as internationally accessible’. Therefore, with the support of the UK-based Hindi-speaking colleague, the final report was translated into Hindi and distributed to the college.

3.12. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the methodological approach that has been used for this research which employs a mixed methods approach to investigate the factors and processes that influence young women’s resilience in the context of New Delhi, India. It provided a description of the research questions and the study’s research design. This included a justification for the adoption of a mixed methods approach, as well as discussing sampling techniques, instrument design and the analysis procedures that were used. It also provided a description of the ontological and epistemological positions that this research follows. The efforts undertaken to pursue high standards of validity and reliability have been detailed. This chapter finished with the procedure that the researcher followed to ensure best ethical practice. The following chapter (Chapter Four – Results) presents the initial findings in descriptive statistics prior to answering the three research questions in detail.

Chapter Four: Results

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings from the quantitative data elicited from the online participant questionnaires during Phase I of the data collection process (April 2020), and the qualitative data produced from the reflective art workshops during Phase II in New Delhi, India (April-May 2022). The overall objective of this research study is to investigate the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in the context of an all-female college in New Delhi, India. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the protective factors that are associated with young women's resilience?
2. How does young women's locus of control orientation influence their resilience?
3. To what extent do young women's socio-cultural contexts shape the protective factors that are promotive of their resilience?

The first research question (RQ1) uncovers the key protective factors that contribute to young women's resilience and considers the role of the individual, familial and the external environment. It aims to understand whether there are potential relationships between the protective factors and how they are supportive of positive adaptation despite exposure to adversity. It applies the quantitative data from the online questionnaire, as well as qualitative data collected through reflective art workshops, which consists of group discussions and participant-produced artworks with associated descriptions. This research question seeks to present an understanding of the diverse number of protective factors which represent young women's resilience. The second research question (RQ2) considers locus of control orientation as a notable factor affecting resilience. It explores whether exhibiting an internal or external locus of control is more likely to influence the resilience process. Like RQ1, quantitative and qualitative data are used to formulate the response to this research question. The final research question (RQ3) investigates the extent to which young women's socio-cultural contexts shape the protective factors of resilience. It extends on the first two and uses Ungar (2011a)'s SER perspective to consider the broader processes at play that underpin resilience. It focusses on whether there are contextual and culturally specific factors of resilience, and whether they act as potential enablers and/or inhibitors in the resilience process. Qualitative data that were elicited through the reflective art workshops forms the response to the final research question. Overall, the three research questions aim to

demonstrate the potentially varied, and complex resilience pathways of young women in the context of New Delhi, India. Excerpts from the reflective arts workshops can be found in Appendix 9. A selection of participants' visual artworks are incorporated within this chapter, and the remainder is located in Appendix 10.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

This section examines the background information of the participants, which consists of their demographic information and household characteristics, before turning to each of the research questions. Initial quantitative data was gathered from young women who attended an all-female college in western Delhi, India and answered the online questionnaire in April 2020 (see Appendix 3). The average fee for Undergraduate courses, such as English, Hindi, Maths, Sanskrit and Journalism, for example, between the financial year of 2020-2021 was 10465 Rs (Rupees), and courses like Psychology, Computer Programming, Music, and a Master's in Hindi (postgraduate) ranged from 11965 to 13065 Rs.

Of the 567 participants who participated in the questionnaire, 89.7% (n=506) were aged between 18-20 years old (Figure 6), whereas the remaining 10.3% (n=58) were aged 21+ (3 missing responses). This is not surprising as the college offers primarily Undergraduate courses with an uptake of 18+, with the course lasting an average of three years. Despite the decline in the 21+ age category, it is possible that there may be students continuing their undergraduate studies, studying for a Master's degree, or have previously deferred their course to a later date. 91.3% (n=493) were Hindu's, and 3.5% (n=19) were Muslim. As the question did not provide an option for participants to choose if they did not practice a religion, this may explain the nine students that selected 'Other', and the 27 missing responses to this question.

Figure 6: Participant Age

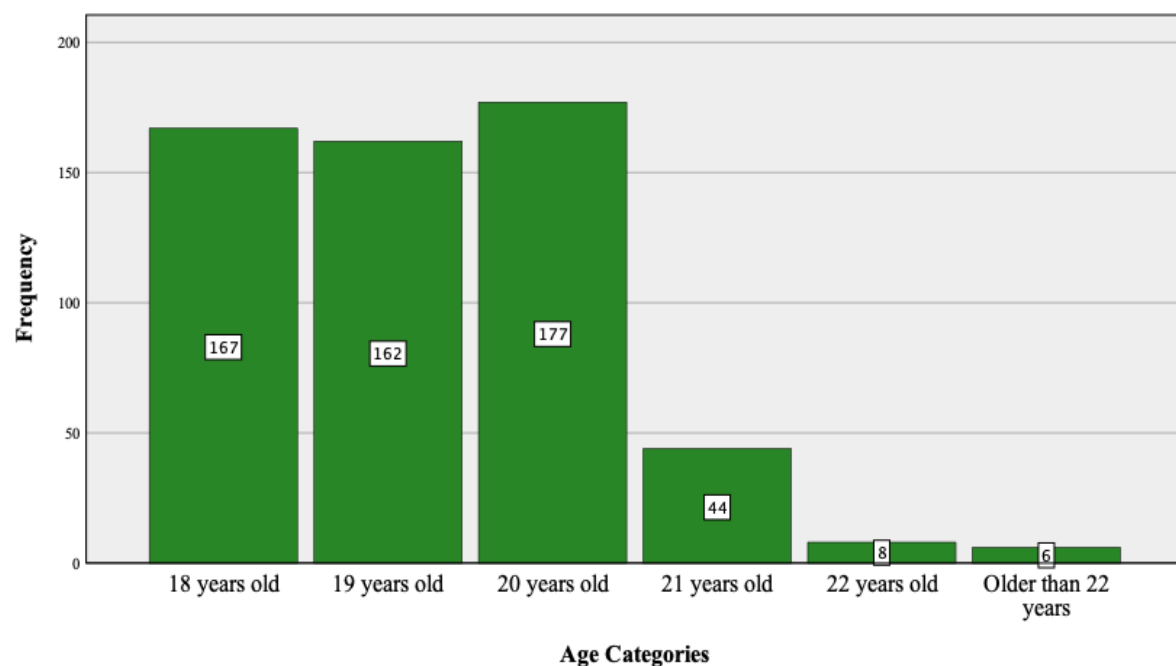
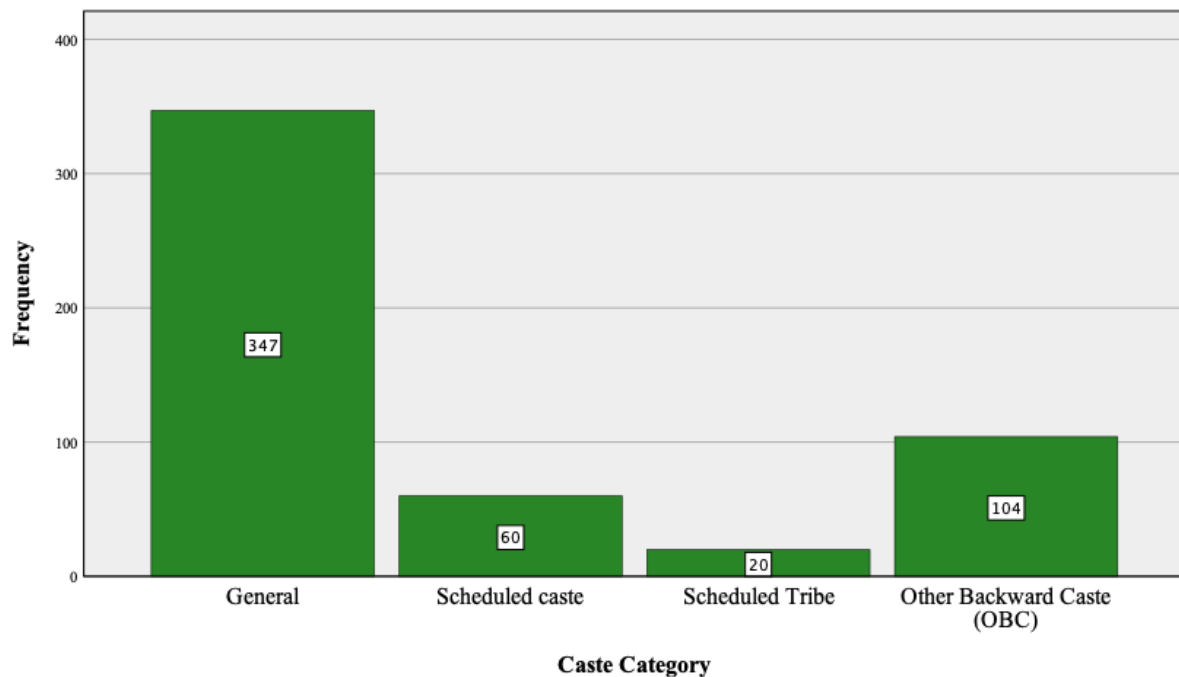


Figure 7 reports the percentage of participants' family caste categories. 65.3% (n=347) of the sample belong to the General Caste, 19.6% (n=104), 11.3% (n=60) and 3.8% (n=20) belong to the Other Backward Caste (OBC), Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories respectively (36 missing responses). This indicates that 30.9% (n=164) of participants were more likely to come from marginalised backgrounds and 3.8% (n=20) are part of a tribal community. It is possible that the proportion of participants who belong to lower caste categories may be due to the institution reserving 22.5% of their seats for women who come from SC/ST backgrounds (15% for SC and 7.5% for ST). In addition to this, 27% of seats are reserved in every undergraduate course for candidates belonging to the OBC category. This follows Article 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution of India which prioritises the reservation of a proportion of seats, in central government-funded higher education institutions, to the socially and educationally backwards sections of society (Sitapati, 2017). This is reflected in the college's 2021 prospectus for new admissions, which stresses that the institution strives to provide young women from disadvantaged backgrounds with an equal access to education through the allocation of reserved seats.

Figure 7: Participant Caste Categories



Regarding English reading and conversational skills, the findings indicate that participants were more confident in their English conversational skills, as over half of participants (54.7%, n=310) reported that their conversational skills were ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’. However, this is not a similar finding for English reading skills, as 82.5% (n=459) ranked their reading skills as ‘Poor’ or ‘Terrible’ (14 missing cases for both English reading and conversational skills questions). Regarding SES, most participants (78.5%, n=437) reported that their family home was situated within an urban area, whereas the remaining 21.5% (n=120) families lived in rural areas. In regard to family possessions are the wealth indicators:

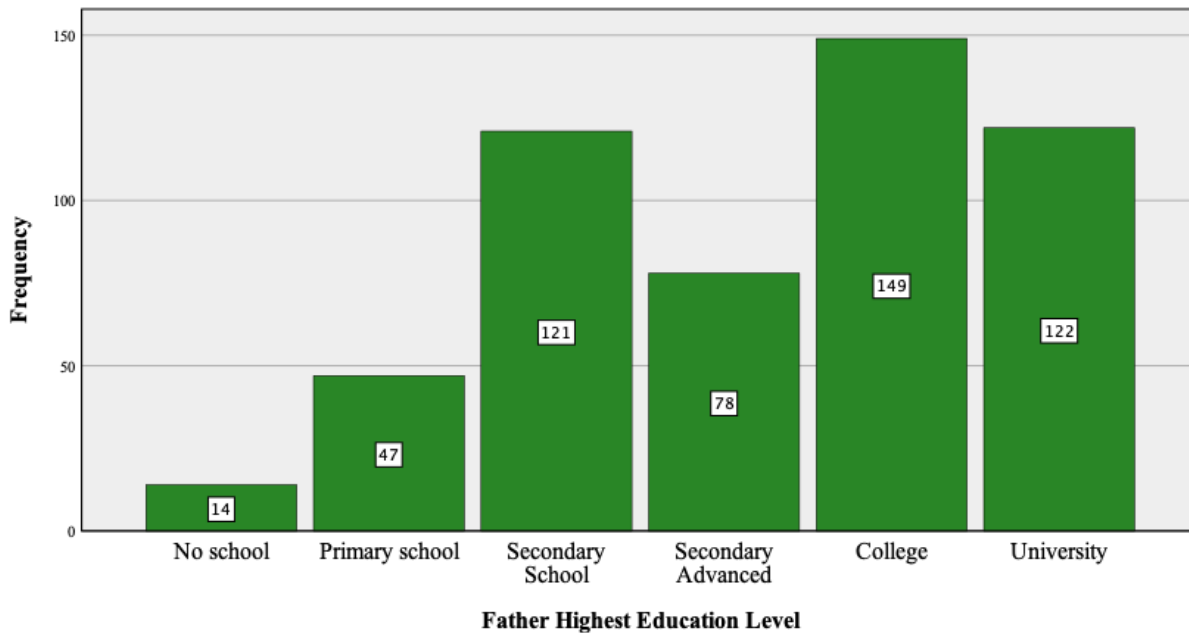
- 38.8% (n=220) of participants’ families owned a Car or Jeep
- Around one third did not own a Scooter or Motorcycle
- Just under half owned a Bicycle
- 81.1% (n=460) had electricity
- 10.1% (n=57) of participants’ families owned Cattle
- Just over half owned a computer
- 73.8% (n=401) of homes were made of paved brick, cement, or cement half-baked
- 52.9% (n=287) of homes have carpet/tile flooring and 37.2% (n=202) had cement/concrete/wood floors.

Concerning parental employment, professions were categorised into key themes that emerged from the data. Initial insights showed that fathers were more likely to obtain a source of income (87.6%, n=465). Table 2 shows that 16% (n=85) conveyed that their fathers were either deceased or did not work. Most fathers worked in skilled, or semi-skilled professions. The largest category was ‘entrepreneur’ (24.5%, n=130), followed by ‘service and sales workers’ (18.8%, n=100). At the low-income end of the scale, 3% (n=16) were ‘farmers’, and 0.4% (n=2) were ‘cleaners or helpers’. 2.8% (n=15) of participants reported that whilst their father was employed, the job was not specified (36 missing responses). Figure 8 illustrates the highest level of qualification gained by the primary male carer which suggests that at least 28.1% (n=149) achieved a college degree, whilst 23% (n=122) achieved a university-level standard (undergraduate) qualification (36 missing responses).

Table 2: Father's Job Category

	Frequency	Percent
Government & Armed Forces	84	15.4
Manager	21	4.0
Professional	65	12.2
Entrepreneur	130	24.5
Technician	8	1.5
Clerical support workers	11	2.1
Service and sales workers	100	18.8
Religious workers	1	0.2
Plant and machine operators	3	0.6
Farmers	16	3.0
Cleaner and helpers	2	0.4
Dead or does not work	85	16.0
Undisclosed	15	2.8
Total	531	100.0

Figure 8: Father's Highest Education Level

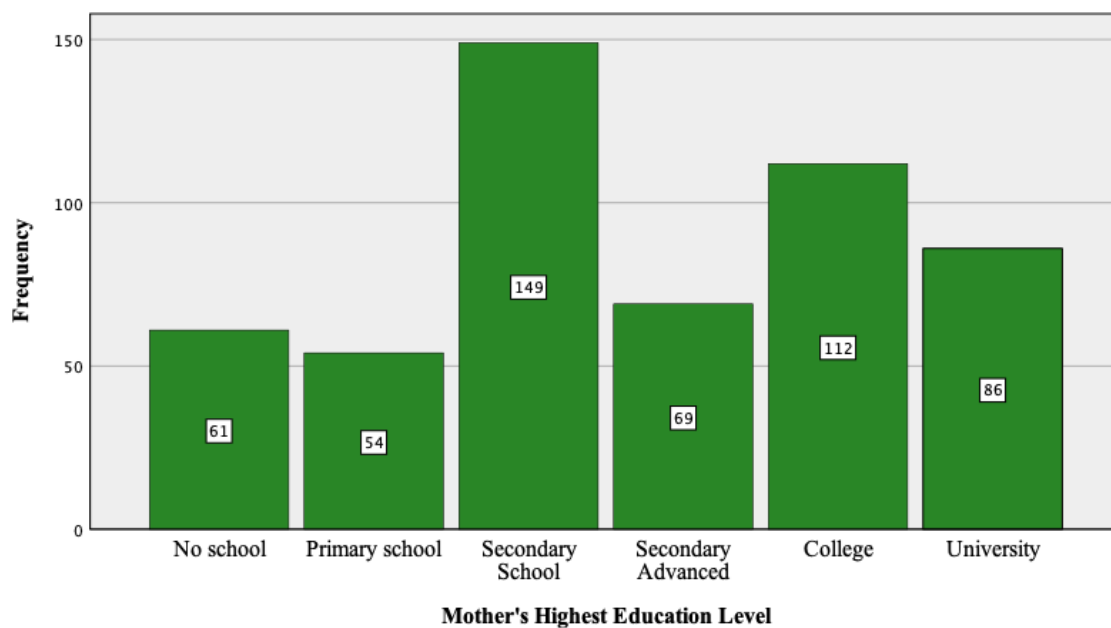


The majority of participants' mothers had no income (79.1%, n=420). Table 3 shows that a large portion of mothers were not employed or were deceased (59.2%, n=313). Despite not being a paid source of income, the largest employment category was 'housewife' (23.3%, n=123). This is followed by 'professional' (7.8%, n=41) (e.g., professors), and 'government & armed forces' (3.2%, n=17) (e.g., civil servant or policewoman) employment categories. 2.8% (n=15) of participants reported that their mother is employed but did not specify the job (41 missing responses).

Figure 9 illustrates the highest level of qualification gained by participants' mothers. It suggests that 78.4% (n=416) of mothers achieved Secondary School and higher qualifications, with 16.2% (n=86) achieving a university-level standard (undergraduate) qualification. 10.2% (n=54) reported that Primary School was the highest form of education for mothers, and 11.5% (n=61) stated that their mothers did not go to school. Whilst the majority of participants reported that their mothers received an education, it cannot be ignored that the education levels are substantially low as compared to fathers. This potentially explains why Table 3 shows that mothers had low-skilled jobs or had no employment at all (e.g., housewife) (39 missing responses).

Table 3: Mother's Employment

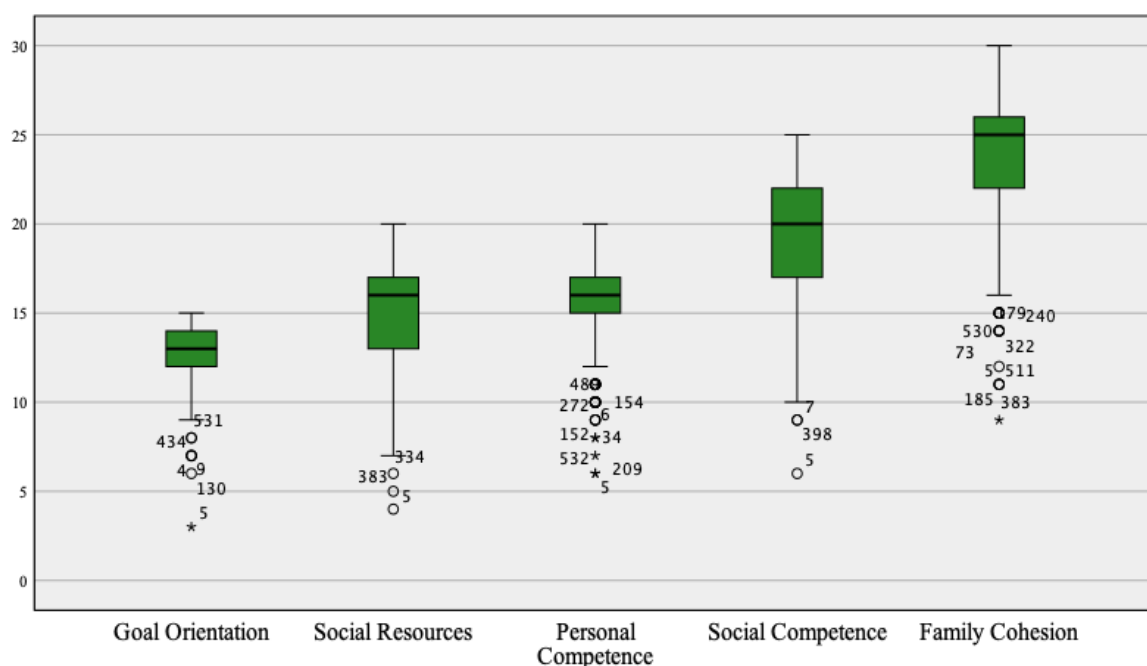
	Frequency	Percent
Government & Armed Forces	17	3.2
Professional	41	7.8
Entrepreneur	11	2.1
Technician	1	0.2
Clerical support workers	1	0.2
Service and sales workers	6	1.1
Plant and machine operators	1	0.2
Cleaner and helpers	1	0.2
Housewife	123	23.3
Dead or does not work	313	59.2
Undisclosed	15	2.8
Total	529	100.0

Figure 9: Mother's Highest Education Level

The numerical addition of the Likert-scale (1-5) for each of the five READ factors; Goal Orientation (GO), Social Resources (SR), Personal Competence (PC), Social Competence (SC) and Family Cohesion (FC), provided a total score for each, and an overall score of resilience. Figure 10 shows the combined scores of the five protective factors on a box plot. With a maximum score of 15 available, the mean totalled scores indicate that participants scored relatively highly on statements that were related to GO (12.93 ± 1.59). For SR the mean score was slightly lower, which totalled 15 out of a maximum score of 20 (15.2 ± 2.84),

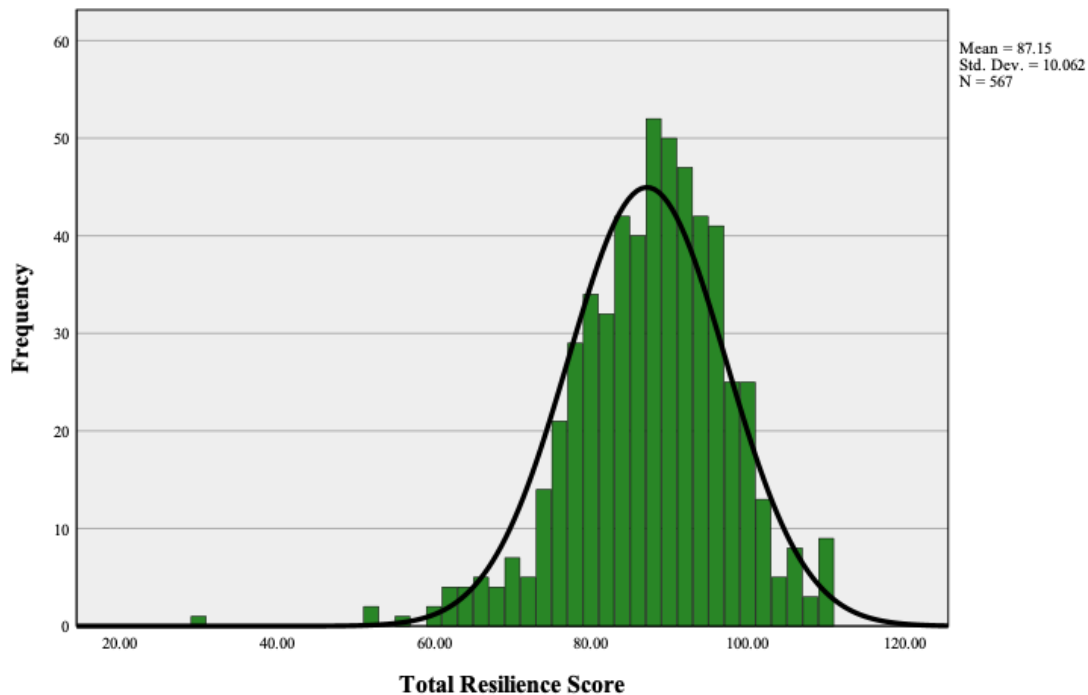
indicating that participants perceived themselves to obtain adequate social resources. The mean totalled score for FC was approximately 24 out of 30, implying that participants shared similar values in their family and received adequate social support from their relatives (23.96 ± 3.62). However, there were multiple outliers. With a maximum score out of 25 for SC, the mean score was 20 (19.38 ± 3.26), whereas for PC, with the total score lower at 20, the mean score was 16, indicating that good humour, social and communication skills, attributes that are seen to influence resilience, were present among the sample of participants.

Figure 10: Box Plot: Distribution of Total READ Factor Scores



Total scores from the five READ factors were then combined to form an overall resilience score. Figure 11 shows the total resilience score for the 567 participants. The histogram shows that the data is symmetrical and evenly distributed, with the mean score totalled at 79.54 (79.54 ± 9.09). This shows that participants generally perceived themselves to be resilient. Out of a total score of 120, only 3% scored lower than 60, and 48% scored between 80-120. Few participants scored very low on the scale, and few scored very high.

Figure 11: Frequency Distribution of Total READ Score



The following section presents the response to the first research question which investigates the key protective factors that contribute to young women's resilience. This research question lays the foundation for the investigation of additional driving factors that influence the resilience process, such as locus of control orientation (RQ2), and the influence of the wider socio-cultural context (RQ3) in New Delhi, India.

4.3. Research Question 1: What are the Protective Factors that are associated with Young Women's Resilience?

This research study focusses on investigating the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in the context of New Delhi, India. The first research question (RQ1) begins by uncovering the key protective factors, that operate over multiple interacting systems, which are promotive of young women's resilience. This research question is comprised of three sections (Figure 12). The first section analyses the quantitative data by using Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (EFA & CFA) to identify a suitable model that represents the three higher order categories of protective factors. The second section examines the associations between the factors using bivariate correlational analysis and employs a structural pathway model to further explore the relationships. The third section uses qualitative data to support the quantitative findings, that have been identified in the first

two sections, to gather a further understanding of the protective factors that influence resilience. This section emphasises that access to relational resources are perceived as instrumental in the resilience process. The findings from this research question help to guide the structure of RQ2 and RQ3.

Figure 12: Research Question 1 Structure



RQ1: What are the protective factors that are associated with young women's resilience?

4.3.1. Measuring the Protective Factors

Given the complex nature of young people's resilience, it is important to understand the variety of protective processes at play that operate over multiple levels of reality. This section begins by outlining how the quantitative data from the READ was reduced into a manageable statistical model using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), prior to conducting Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to confirm the EFA's estimates and support the researcher in analysing a path relationship between the observed variables (Humble, 2020).

Factor Models of READ Factors (EFA)

The initial section of the first research question applies the *Resilience* portion of the online questionnaire (see Appendix 3), which uses Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s 22-item adapted version of the READ (Hjemdal et al, 2006) to measure the factors that contribute to resilience. The mean and standard deviations are tabulated to inspect the self-rating of the 567 students regarding the READ (Table 4). The READ shows a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.871 which demonstrates that the instrument is reliable and presents a sufficient level of covariance among the items, relative to the variance (Collins, 2007).

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of 22 items (READ) (n=567)

	READ Statements	Mean	SD
FC1	We share in our family the opinion of what is important in life	3.92	.921
FC2	I feel comfortable with my family	4.34	.874
FC3	My family is in agreement most of the time	3.34	.969
FC4	My family sees the future in a positive way, even when very sad things happen	3.99	.924
FC5	We help each other in my family	4.33	.750
FC6	We like to do things together in my family	4.04	.848
SC1	I am able to make people feel comfortable around me when I am in a group	4.17	.835
SC2	I can easily make new friends	3.58	1.100
SC3	I'm good at talking to new people	3.69	1.003
SC4	I always find something fun to talk about	3.75	9.29
SC5	I always find something encouraging to say to other people when they are sad	4.20	.759
PC1	I feel competent	3.81	.780
PC2	Most of the time I know what is best for me when I have to choose among several options	3.70	.910
PC3	Self-confidence helps me overcome difficult moments	4.17	.765
PC4	When things are going bad, I tend to look for the good that can come out of it	3.98	.827
SR1	I have some friends and relatives who frequently encourage me	3.86	.863
SR2	I have some friends and relatives who really care about me	3.95	.965
SR3	I always have somebody available when I need it	3.46	1.077
SR4	I have some friends and relatives that value my qualities	3.94	.874
GO1	I achieve my goals if I make a good effort	4.52	.737
GO2	I do my best when objectives and goals are clear to me	4.37	.698
GO3	I know how to achieve my goal	4.04	.841

Prior to conducting factor analysis, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity is used, which indicates whether correlations in the data are appropriate for factor analysis (Humble, 2020). A significance level that is lower than 0.05 infers that the items on the scale are related, and therefore, are suited to factor analysis (Ferguson & Cox, 1993). For the READ, there is a KMO result of 0.88 and the results from the Bartlett's Test ($\chi^2 (231) = 3580.707, p < 0.001$) indicate that these data are suitable for factor analysis. EFA is then used to test for the smallest number of interpretable factors required to explain the 22 items of the READ questionnaire. Table 5 shows that an initial estimation reveals the existence of five components with eigenvalues greater than 1,

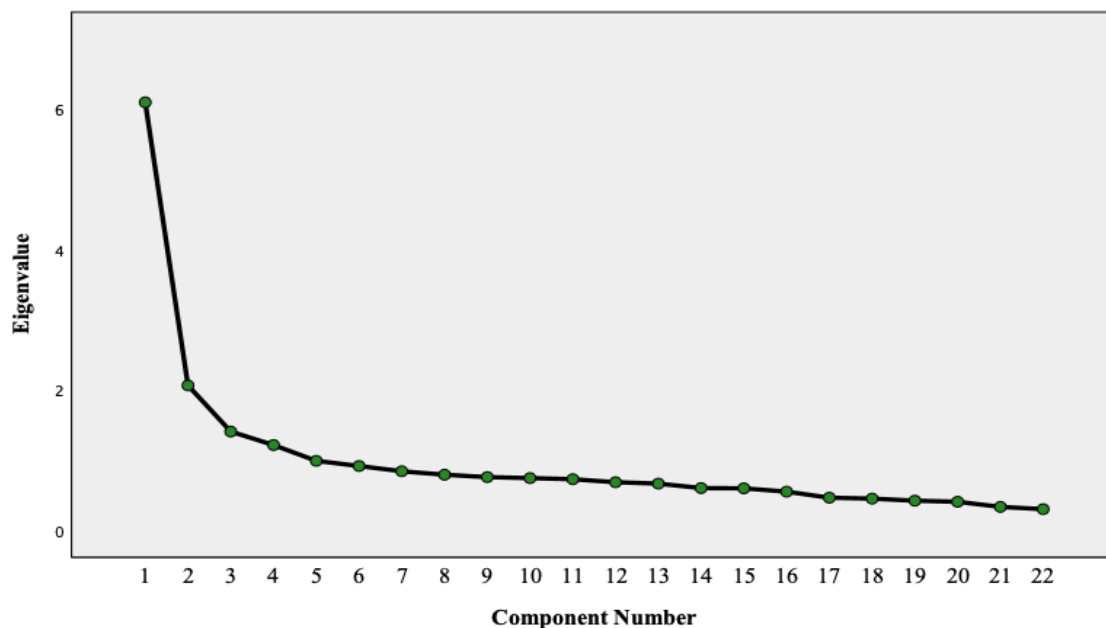
accounting for 53.52% of the total variance. The Scree test, which is perceived as a good indicator when there is a large sample size (Gorsuch, 1983), is outlined in Figure 13. This also follows the Kaiser criterion that delineates that an eigenvalue greater than one should be retained (Kaiser, 1970), therefore, a five-factor solution can be regarded as an adequate representation of the data.

Table 5: Exploratory Factor Analysis for READ Factors

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.102	27.738	27.738	6.102	27.738	27.738
2	2.064	9.382	37.121	2.064	9.382	37.121
3	1.406	6.391	43.511	1.406	6.391	43.511
4	1.214	5.517	49.028	1.214	5.517	49.028
5	.988	4.492	53.520	.988	4.492	53.520

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Figure 13: Scree Test of Eigenvalues



The first READ factor ‘*FC*’ includes five variables relating to *Family Cohesion*, (e.g., ‘I feel comfortable with my family’) obtains an eigenvalue of 27.738%. This factor encompasses ‘the shared values and support an individual feels in relation to their family’ (Kelly et al, 2017, p.2). The second factor ‘*PC*’ includes five variables relating to *Personal Competence*, (e.g., ‘Self-confidence helps me overcome difficult moments’) obtaining an eigenvalue

9.382%. This factor relates to an individual's self-esteem, self-efficacy, and their overall capacity to carry out day-to-day tasks in everyday life. The third factor '*SR*' refers to *Social Resources*, (e.g., 'I have some friends and relatives who really care about me') which describes an individual's ability to access external support, such as support from friends or relatives. This factor obtains 6.391% of the total variance and consists of four items. The fourth factor, '*SC*', *Social Competence*, (e.g., 'I can easily make new friends') obtains 5.517% of the total variance and refers to an individual's extraversion or the ability to engage in good communication with people and consists of five items. Finally, the fifth factor '*GO*' is described as *Goal Orientation* (e.g., 'I achieve my goals if I make good effort'). Goal Orientation refers to the focus of an individual on reaching a specific objective or accomplishing a given task. This factor obtains 4.492% of the total variance and comprises of three items. Table 6 shows the factor structure that was uncovered using EFA, with a PCA extraction method and a Varimax rotation.

Table 6: PCA Factor Loadings for READ Factors

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
<i>FC</i>					
FC1 Share same opinion	.652				
FC2 Feels comfortable	.744				
FC3 Family in agreement	.421			(.361)	
FC4 Sees future in positive light	.642				
FC5 Helps each other	.681				
FC6 Does things together	.686				
<i>PC</i>					
PC1 Feels competent		.578			
PC2 Knows what is best for themselves		.619			
PC3 Self-confidence		.621			
PC4 Looks for the good		.551			
GO3 Knows how to achieve goals		.548			
<i>SR</i>					
SR1 Encouraging friends and relatives			.797		
SR2 Caring friends and relatives			.822		
SR3 Somebody available when needed		(.414)	.425		
SR4 Valuing friends and relatives			.693		
<i>SC</i>					
SC1 Makes people feel comfortable				.685	
SC2 Makes new friends easily			(.399)	.692	
SC3 Good at taking to people			(.470)	.645	
SC4 Finds something fun to talk about			(.467)	.479	
<i>GO</i>					
GO1 Achieves goals with good effort					.680
GO2 Does their best with objectives and goals					.602
SC5 Finds encouraging things to say				(.309)	.531

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation. Rotation converged in 9 iterations. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy 0.888, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity chi-square 3580.707, *df* 231, sig .000. Note: Only loadings of magnitude above 0.3 are shown. Bracketed items are not included in future CFA model.

Structural Representation of READ Factors (CFA)

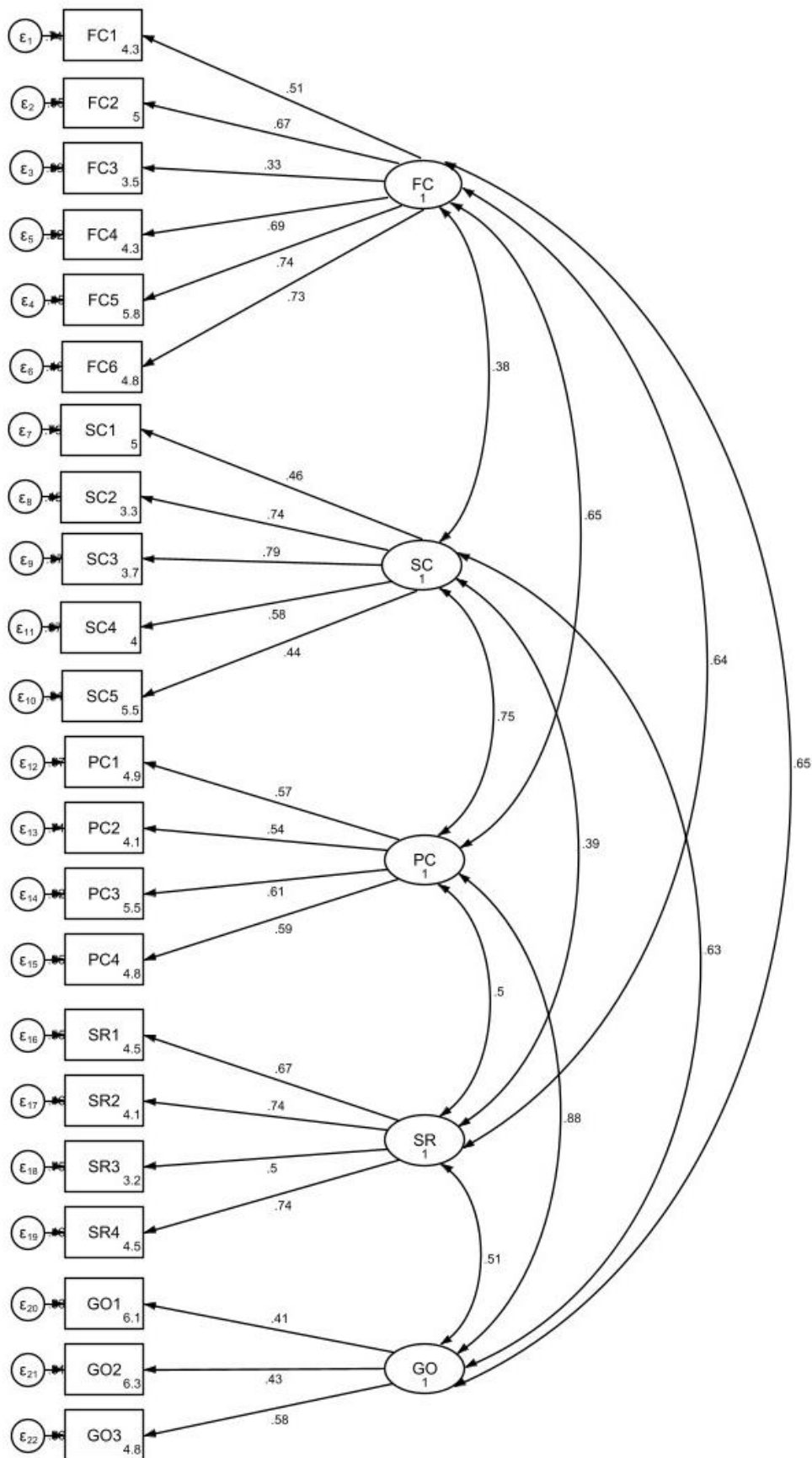
To provide further support for the five-factor solution, produced by EFA, and identify potential associations between the factors, CFA was conducted using SEM. A SEM diagram enables the resilience conceptual model to be estimated for data fit using proposed goodness-of-fit metrics in the study (Leithead & Humble, 2020). SEM pathway analysis is an efficient statistical tool for evaluating the succession of dependent relationships and verifying cause-and-effect relationships between constructs (Hair et al, 2010). CFA was conducted using the statistical package STATA. Several fit and comparison-based indices (e.g., chi-square) are employed to determine which model provides the best fit for the data (Bentler, 1990; Steiger, 1990; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Brown, 2006).

As Dixon et al (2016, p.238) suggests ‘To minimise Type I and Type II errors one should use a combination with S-RMR or the RMSEA’. Good models should have an S-RMR < 0.08 or the RMSEA < 0.06 with the fit index values > 0.9 (Humble, 2020). As Brown (2006) suggests, a range of CFI and TLI of 0.9 and 0.95 may indicate acceptable fit if other fit measures provide evidence for a good model fit. Regarding the RMSEA, Brown (2006) also states that a close fit is indicated by values less than 0.05 and an acceptable fit between 0.05 and 0.08.

Regarding the CFA of the READ, the RMSEA and S-RMR is < 0.06, and the CD, TLI and CFI is > 0.8, suggesting that the model is an acceptable fit³¹ (Hoyle, 2012). Fit indices and regression tables for the SEM are outlined in Appendix 11 (Table 48 & 49). The SEM diagram, presented in Figure 14, indicates that whilst there are other factors at play (as outlined by the error terms), there are notable relationships between the five READ factors, thus, confirming a five-factor model of resilience as produced by EFA.

³¹ The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA, 0.052), Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR, 0.051), Coefficient of Determination (CD, 0.995), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI, 0.896) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI, 0.911). The χ^2/df ratio is less than 3, which also indicates that the model is a good fit for the data (Hoyle, 2012), meaning that there is no considerable distance between the observation data and the model's prediction.

Figure 14: Five-Factor Structural Equation Model of READ Factors



The SEM shows that there are positive and statistically significant relationships with varying strengths between all the five READ factors. High correlations between the factors indicates that the factors share variance and are measuring similar dimensions. The five key factors incorporate all three overarching protective factors (1) *Individual Attributes* (PC, SC, and GO), (2) *Attributes of the Family* (FC), and (3) *External Environment* (SR) (Hjemdal et al, 2006). The following section explores the associations between the factors in further detail in order to construct a resilience pathway model. This is followed by qualitative data insights to support the factor groupings and gather a more nuanced understanding of how young women interpret resilience given their own experiences.

4.3.2. *Relationships between the Protective Factors*

Figure 15: Research Question 1 Structure



RQ1: What are the protective factors that are associated with young women's resilience?

The previous section focussed on measuring the protective factors of resilience to construct a model that is representative of the young women participating in this research study. EFA and CFA techniques showed a consistent pattern of five factors: Family Cohesion (FC), Social Competence (SC), Personal Competence (PC), Social Resources (SR), and Goal Orientation (GO). This five-factor solution is in accordance with the higher order categories of resilience as items concerning individual attributes, attributes of the family, and the external environment were included (Hjemdal et al, 2006; Garnezy, 1993; Rutter, 1990; Werner, 1989, 1995). All READ factors showed high internal consistency, which provided evidence for acceptable reliability. This second section of the response to the initial research question (Figure 15) uses correlational analysis to examine the associations between the five READ factors. Secondly, a structural pathway model is used to investigate the causal relationships that exist between the factors. Qualitative insights are used to interpret the protective factor groupings in the final section of this research question.

Relationships between the READ Factors

Bivariate correlational analysis is used to examine the intercorrelations between the five READ factors (FC, SC, PC, SR and GO) produced from EFA and CFA. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Spearman's Rho) is used to create a ranking order for the five READ factors, and measure the relationships between them (Humble, 2020). Table 7 outlines the correlations between the factors.

Table 7: Spearman's Rho for READ Factors

		Correlations				
		FC	SC	PC	SR	GO
Spearman's Rho	FC					
	SC	.461**				
	PC	.732**	.829**			
	SR	.697**	.436**	.569**		
	GO	.766**	.742**	.968**	.603**	

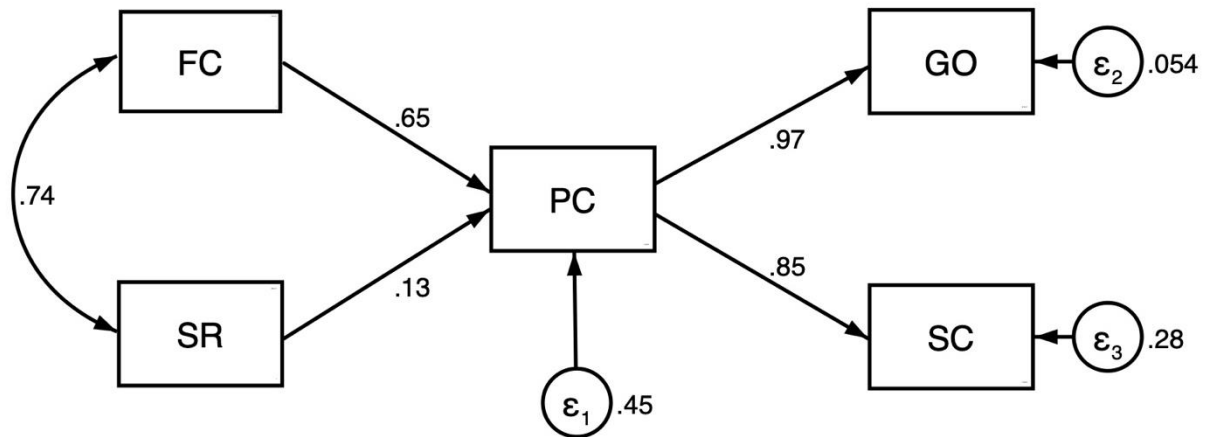
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

There are numerous statistically significant correlations, varying from moderate to strong, between all the READ factors. PC especially has several strong correlations with all READ factors. The largest are the strong correlations (Cohen, 1988) between PC and GO ($r_s = 0.968, p < 0.01$) and with the SC ($r_s = 0.829, p < 0.01$) factor. This indicates that participants who report high levels of positive self-concept (e.g., self-esteem and self-efficacy) are more likely to exhibit excellent communication skills and set realistic goals for themselves. There is also a strong correlation between FC and SR ($r_s = 0.697, p < 0.01$), which implies that an individual is likely to have both access to resources inside and outside of the family environment. FC has strong correlations with GO ($r_s = 0.766, p < 0.01$) and PC ($r_s = 0.732, p < 0.01$), indicating that access to a supportive family unit is likely to support the development of personal competencies, and goal orientated behaviours. The remaining correlations vary from moderate to strong and are all statistically significant. The factor correlations indicate that if young women have access to attributes and/or resources in one domain, they are likely to have access to additional attributes and/or resources in other domains (e.g., exhibit both personal and social competencies).

Looking more deeply into these relationships, a SEM is used to depict the causal interrelations that exist between the five READ factors. The variables were obtained through

the CFA, by means of the predictions command on STATA, and used in the structural pathway model outlined in Figure 16. Disturbances between GO and SC were correlated. The S-RMR is < 0.08 , and the TLI and CFI are > 0.8 which suggests that the model is an acceptable fit³². Fit indices and regression tables for the SEM are shown in Appendix 11 (Table 50 & 51).

Figure 16: Structural Path Model for READ Factors

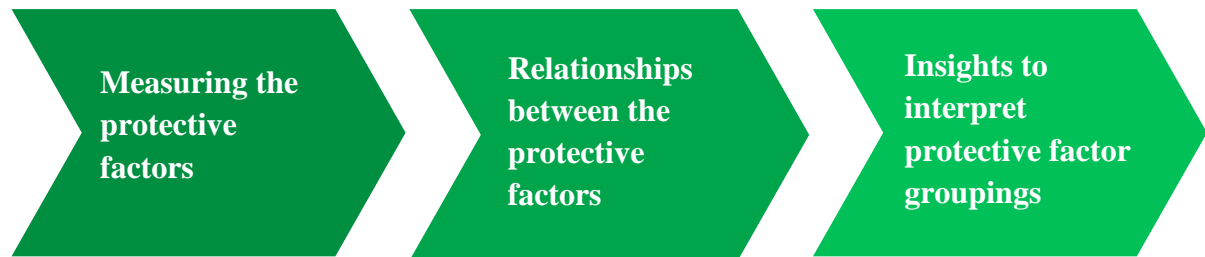


The pathway model shows that FC and SR are positively correlated ($r = 0.74, p < 0.01$). There is a significant likelihood that FC ($\beta = 0.65, p < 0.01$) predicts PC. Whilst small in size, it is likely that SR ($\beta = 0.13, p < 0.01$) also predicts PC. The model additionally illustrates that PC is likely to predict GO ($\beta = 0.97, p < 0.01$) and SC ($\beta = 0.85, p < 0.01$) factors. These directional relationships indicate that having access to relational resources (FC and SR), inside and outside of the family environment, contributes to a young woman's personal competence (PC). In turn, this make it more likely that the young woman feels able to realistically plan and strive towards achieving their personal goals and objectives (GO) and feels more socially competent (SC). Having established a link between the three domains of resilience (individual, familial, and external), the following analysis presents the qualitative insights to interpret the protective factor groupings and shed light on the relationships between them. It explores the extent to which access to relational resources (e.g., family and peer support) act as key drivers in the resilience process.

³² The fit indices of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA, 0.296), Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR, 0.049), Coefficient of Determination (CD, 0.554), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI, 0.859) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI, 0.937) indicate that the model is an acceptable fit. The χ^2/df ratio is less than 3, which also indicates that the model is a good fit for the data (Hoyle, 2012), meaning that there is not considerable distance between the observation data and the model's prediction.

4.3.3. Insights to Interpret Protective Factor Groupings

Figure 17: Research Question 1 Structure



RQ1: What are the protective factors that are associated with young women's resilience?

This research study adopts an explanatory mixed methods approach, therefore, qualitative data collected from the reflective art workshops are used to supplement the quantitative findings. The final section of this research question presents the qualitative insights to support the interpretation of the protective factors that have been identified in the previous sections (Figure 17). Themes emerging from the thematic analysis include the influence of positive attachment to family members, peer relationships, support from college staff members, and perceived personal attributes. Given that resilience is supposed as a multi-dimensional construct, the interlinkages that exist between these key themes are also explored. Extracts from group discussions and summaries of participant artworks are presented in this section, alongside visual artworks to support their quotations.

Positive Attachments to Family Members

The prominent role that the family plays in the lives of the young women was heavily emphasised throughout all the reflective art workshops. Many conveyed a belief in the primacy of the family unit, and the importance of strong emotional attachments between family members. Frequent, and supportive interactions between members of the family, especially with parents and/or caregivers, helped to foster a sense of connectedness and provided many young women with positive social engagement, guidance, support and mentoring in times of difficulty. Access to a web of emotional, financial, and material support from immediate (parents and siblings), and extended family members (grandparents, cousins, aunties, and uncles) were perceived to be critical relational resources for supporting young women's health and well-being. At time, it provided psychological protection against a variety of stressors (e.g., relationships problems, academic stress, experience of verbal harassment).

Having access to loving, caring, and warm relationships with parents and/or caregivers, and feeling secure within these relationships, acted as a vital source of empowerment among participants. Mothers were often reported as a significant source of emotional support, especially after exposure to adverse situations, such as sexual harassment. One participant, Bhakti (aged 18) mentioned that they had recently experienced verbal harassment on the bus home from college (see Figure 37 - Appendix 10). She had approached her mother for emotional reassurance, with the impression that she had experienced a similar situation. Her mother provided her with numerous strategies on how to deal with the event if it were to happen again. Whilst she felt hesitant, the guidance she had received from her mother helped her to feel more mentally equipped and comfortable travelling on public transportation again. Other participants reported similar circumstances and also mentioned that their mothers elicited helpful strategies after experiencing harassment. This included reporting the assault to the principle of the college, raising their voice to make others aware of the attack, or *“fighting back against the abuser”* (Ritu, aged 19).

Some participants reported that they looked up to their mothers, as many understood that they had made significant sacrifices to support their daughters. One participant, Sonali (aged 21), acknowledged the difficulties that she faced in her past, which had marked her road to resilience. She mentioned that her mother’s psychological strength and resilience was reflected in her own ability to combat negative life situations. Sonali used a tree as a metaphor to represent her own interpersonal strength and endure, which had been strongly influenced her mother. The tree used in Sonali’s artwork (Figure 18) could symbolise grounding, inner-strength and resilience that has developed over time, which has remained consistent and grown stronger throughout the changing seasons. The transition between night and day may also represent transformation, indicating that resilience is an ongoing process. Sonali presented her artwork to the group and described what it had intended to convey:

“I think I am strong, I can’t be blown over, no matter what the challenge is. Weakness means the little things can take you down...but strength means that your roots grow deep underground. Like my mum, I’m strong. She’s gone through a lot, and she’s helped me face everything...Trees are standing there no matter the season...no matter what I face, I am still there. The tree always stands tall. I like to see myself as that.”

(Sonali, aged 21)

Figure 18: ‘The Tree of Strength’



Another participant, Geeta (aged 21), mentioned the unconditional support that she receives from her mother, which she believed had played a pivotal role in contributing to her optimistic outlook on life. Through an open discussion of her problems, or reflecting on her day at college, Geeta valued the emotional connectedness between her and her mother, which has supported the positive perception that she holds of herself:

“For me, my mother means a lot. I share everything with my mother. Even after college, it’s like a therapy session for me. I need one hour with my mother every day and I will tell her everything that has happened to me that day and she gives me pointers on what to do...I value what is present to me at that moment, and that is her. It makes me feel so warm inside, and it makes me think I can face the world.”

(Geeta, aged 21)

The power of supportive female relationships, and positive female role modelling, was a consistent theme throughout the majority of the workshop discussions. Many participants mentioned that their mothers were the most influential people in their lives, especially among those who championed the message that dedication, perseverance, and hard work can enable

them to achieve a more autonomous future. Some mothers were considered as instrumental in building participants' confidence in their abilities to work towards achieving their career aspirations. Durga (aged 21) reflected on the frequent academic motivation that she receives from her mother. Her mother was regularly supportive of her educational choices, championed financial independence, and provided her with the freedom to engage in extra-curricular and social activities at the college. She felt that this was not only supportive of her self-concept, but had a positive influence on her academic achievement, and the belief that she could achieve the career that she desires for herself:

“I want to say something a little different. When I was a child, my mother would say that I had to study. You have to study to get the good grades as you need to be independent. You can't rely on anyone but yourself... You have to pick up when you fail. That's the kind of motivation I need. The fact that I can live my life the way I want to. I have the motivation, I mean the motivation I need to be independent, all from my mum...that's what drives me I think.”

(Durga, aged 21)

Witnessing young women's testimonies that emphasised the indispensable value of female relationships within the family resonated with me on a personal level. I could see direct parallels between our mother-daughter relationships, and the power of these bonds in cultivating resilience, not only through direct support, but by demonstrating persistence, resourcefulness, and being an unwavering confidant to support personal growth. However, some participants reported less intimate and supportive relationships with their mothers, and were, therefore, hesitant to approach them for advice on personal issues. This was coupled with concerns that mothers would restrict their mobilities, start an unnecessary argument, or would simply not understand them. Anvi (aged 20) spoke of how her mother was overprotective and controlling, which posed a significant threat to her perceived personal autonomy:

“My mum is pretty toxic...she likes to be in control of everything – what I do, the way I think or how I act...I can't even go to the park. I have to give a full thousand-word essay on why I am going. She asks like “*why?*”, “*who?*” and “*why are you taking your phone with you?*”.”

(Anvi, aged 20)

Positive attachments to other female family members (e.g., aunties, cousins, and grandmothers) were prominent across all workshops, especially when participants felt that their relationships with their mothers were strained. Maryam (aged 18) mentioned that during arguments with her mother, she would approach her auntie for support: “*My auntie really helps me...I go over to her house a lot, but I hide it from my mum. My auntie knows me well...she can calm her [mother] down if its needed*”. Geeta (aged 21) expressed that whilst she felt she had a positive attachment with her mother, she would often take advice and guidance on how to relieve tensions in their relationship from her grandmother, who lived with them in the family home:

“My grandmother is my bestie. My grandmother, or my ‘*noni*’, she is the only one that can control my mum. I was so fascinated, oh my god, like there is someone who is going to control my controlling mother. I used to enjoy that scenario. She [grandmother] is the supreme God...I can talk to her everyday about anything...I’d say that helped my mental health for sure, especially when things are quite tense at home.”

(Geeta, aged 21)

Fathers were also considered as key sources of resilience among the workshop participants. Despite many reporting that they would decide not to approach their fathers for moral support on personal issues (e.g., relationships and sexual health), they were often approached for educational and career advice. Fathers often encouraged participants to seize opportunities to shape their professional development (see Appendix 9 - (A) Jamila), such as applying for the college of their choice and to specialise in their desired subject fields. It was interesting to catch a glimpse into how traditional gender roles and societal norms can shape family dynamics, especially in the way that young women access support. Whilst there were some similarities with my own experiences, such as gravitating towards mothers for emotional issues, I was utterly engrossed in how they explained the cultural expectations of men in India, and how their fathers felt less comfortable with emotional conversations and showing vulnerability. Yet, fathers found different avenues to nurturing their daughter’s resilience, such as instilling a belief in their own competence, and challenging gender stereotypes. Reflecting on her relationship with her parents, Samira (aged 20) acknowledged that in comparison to her mother, her father was a stronger champion of her independence:

“My father was really supportive of me when I was choosing my subjects [college undergraduate degree]. My mother, she didn’t really want me to choose English as apparently it wouldn’t get me anywhere in life...I remember I was sleeping and I heard my parents fight about my career, and I heard my father say something like “*Do you really want her to resent us in the future?*”. It was nice to hear that he had my back. He’s my biggest supporter.”

(Samira, aged 20)

Mutual relationships between siblings emerged as a prominent protective resource. Some participants mentioned that if they felt as if an issue wasn’t major enough to warrant talking to their parents about, or simply didn’t want to upset or worry them, they would turn to their siblings for advice. In some cases, siblings provided mutual emotional protection during parental conflict. Brothers were important role models, acted as active listeners, and figures in the family who didn’t pass judgement and had their best interests at heart. Anvi (aged 20) mentioned that her older brother acted as her “*Knight in shining armour*” who would often distract her parents so she could sneak out of the family home, during her curfew that was imposed by her mother. Diya (aged 18) preferred seeking support from her brothers during the time in her life when she had been grieving the loss of her best friend due to Covid-19, which she ultimately blamed herself for. Diya’s artwork (see Figure 38 – Appendix 10) depicts a female crying with blue and red streaks of tears. The combination of crying, colour symbolism and emotional expression can provide a multitude of connotations regarding the emotions associated with grief, healing and resilience. Diya explained why she approached her brother for support, as opposed to her parents during the grieving period:

“I tell my things to my friends or then after that, my brothers, as they don’t question that much...my parents aren’t like that. They question you like “*how did this happen*”, “*how do you feel?*”, and “*tell me from the beginning*”. Like I don’t want that. I want to just talk and get my feelings off my chest. It basically turns into storytelling and it’s annoying...it feels good that my brothers are there and actively listening to you, even if they don’t say anything back. I trust them.”

(Diya, aged 18)

There was no mention of support from male extended family members.

Peer Relationships

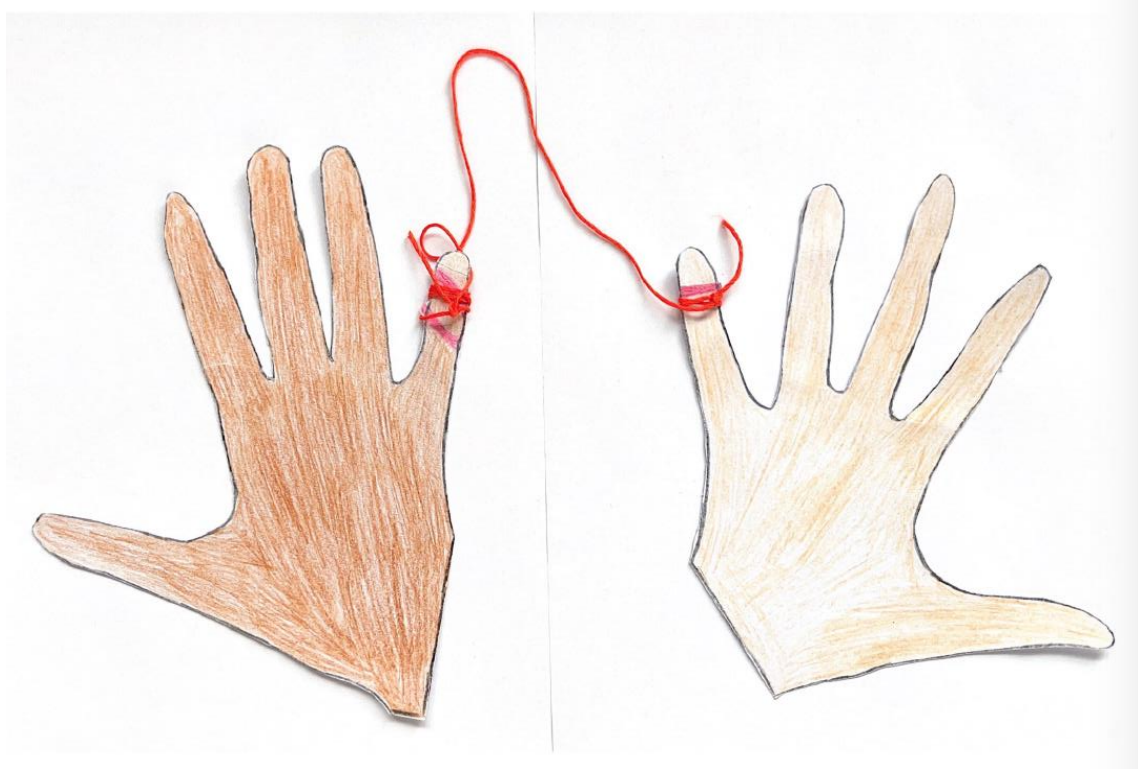
A notable theme that emerged across all workshops was the importance of access to strong and supportive peer networks. These were effective in promoting a positive self-concept, a sense of belonging and validation, and helped to combat feelings of isolation. The majority of participants expressed that emotional support from their close friends was critical in helping them to tackle risks that emerged within their personal lives. Close friends were referred to as trusted individuals who knew them well, were able to cheer them up, stood up for them during arguments, and were with them through “*thick and thin*” (Durga, aged 21). Some participants explained that whilst their parents were integral sources of support, as they got older and moved to college, peers were the first point of contact for guidance on how tackle more personal issues, such as navigating romantic relationships (see Appendix 9 – (B) Samira). Geeta (aged 21) described the constant support that she receives from her close circle of friends: “*My friends are like my family. Any time I have a problem, I talk to them...good female friends are hard to come by, but so important*”.

Samira (aged 20) drew a picture (Figure 19) of two hands connected by a single red thread, which represented the deep level of emotional connection that she shares with her close circle of friends at the college. The red thread between two hands can suggest that resilience is not something that can be achieved in isolation, but rather through access to a strong peer network and supportive relationships within it. The act of being bound by a thread can suggest a reciprocal relationship, where resilience is co-created. Samira held up her artwork, and spoke about the meaning behind it

“This is my ‘*clumsy*’ drawing of hands and connecting them [her friends] with red thread...I seek support from friendships and every kind of friendship I am part of. There’s this bond which supports you during times of trouble, that makes me feel better. It’s like this deep connection...like blood, and like family. They are there to support you, no matter what the situation is.”

(Samira, aged 20)

Figure 19: ‘A String from Me to You’



Peers were considered as ‘easily accessible’, ‘on hand to talk to’ and ‘always at the other end of the phone’ for reassurance and connectedness during the Covid-19 lockdown. Across all the workshops, participants emphasised the value of sustaining social connections with their friends through social media (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, and Snapchat) and online video platforms (e.g., Zoom). Jaya (aged 19) explained that she felt it was important to stay connected with her friends as it helped to buffer the psychological effects of the initial Covid-19 lockdown:

“Anytime I felt any kind of stress during the lockdown, I just called up my friends. I ring up and I go “*Blah, blah, blah*” and she just says, “*Jaya, everything will be fine, don’t worry*”. I need that reassurance... I tell her that I am worried about Covid and my family and everything is just so bad online. I just say everything about my day, and it makes me feel so relaxed. Like she will just listen and sometimes give advice if I need it... That made me less anxious during that time, especially when I was thinking that the world is going to end.”

(Jaya, aged 19)

Participants also felt that peer motivation was a driving factor towards academic engagement and achievement. Mani (aged 20) explained that the unwavering support that she receives from her peer network has positively influenced her ability to cope with the stressors of her second-year examinations (see Appendix 9 – (C) Mani). This included regular encouragement, recommending effective coping strategies, and positively influencing study efforts. Some participants recognised the instrumental role of peer support during particularly difficult moments in their lives (e.g., bereavement, sexual harassment, and suicidal ideation). Anvi (aged 20) reflected on the time when she had failed her high-school examinations, which resulted in a downwards spiral of her mental and physical health and well-being (see Figure 39 – Appendix 10). Anvi spoke of how support from her peers was instrumental in rebuilding her self-belief, which helped to facilitate her psychological journey towards recovery:

“My friends, they make me promise that, no matter what, I will think about them if I ever go back to that dark place of mind [suicidal ideation]...Recently, I have been so down, like I wanted to go back there, it’s a periodic thing that happens...It tells me to do it [self-harm], and I say, *“No, I won’t, because I made a promise to my friend, she would be upset if I did something to myself”*.”

Anvi went on to explain her artwork to the group (Figure 20):

“What I have realised is that communication is the key for believing in yourself. If you are talking to someone, like we are doing right now, it feels so nice. My emotions are released into the atmosphere. That burden on my shoulder is being lifted. It feels lighter...the colours are just breaking through the cracks in your soul. Through the people you love, and the things that you love to do.”

(Anvi, aged 20)

The background of Anvi’s artwork is filled with vibrant and overlapping colours which might symbolise a variety of emotions and experiences, such as optimism, strength and vulnerability, reflecting the complex nature of resilience. The black figure in the centre, wearing headphones, could symbolise how Anvi uses music as a tool for emotional self-regulation and escapism, and provides a safe space for reflection. The phrase ‘Believe in Yourself’, and the surrounding hearts, might signify an encouraging internal dialogue, one

that emphasises the value of self-empowerment, positive affirmations and access to a supportive peer network for resilience.

Figure 20: ‘Colours in the Cracks’



Social connections with ‘online friends’ or ‘online strangers’, also emerged as a protective factor of resilience in the workshop discussions. The Covid-19 lockdown presented an opportunity for many participants to join online ‘fandoms’ or communities to develop new social connections. Two participants explained that they belonged to an online community where they could communicate with like-minded individuals who shared similar interests (e.g., music, dance and tv shows). Those who felt that they either struggled to create or maintain friendships at the college, mentioned feeling more comfort in talking with their ‘online friends’ as it fostered a sense of belonging and validation. Jamila (aged 20) spoke about how joining an online community positively supported her mental health and well-being during the lockdown:

“I feel like in Covid-19, I was able to make more friends. During school time, I wasn’t that extroverted, but Covid made me reach out more to talk to people. Online it was easy to make friends, because in person, people can judge you based on your body or the way you dress, but online it’s just text, isn’t it? When I got to interact with other people, I got to know the interests that I have.”

(Jamila, aged 20)

One participant mentioned that they preferred talking to strangers online about their problems as it brought them the reassurance that they wouldn’t be judged, or have rumours spread about them at school: *“I go to strangers to share my stuff. They don’t know me, and I don’t know them...they just listen”* (Anvi, aged 20). However, in some instances, peer relationships did not contribute to positive psychological adjustment. Chatti (aged 18) reflected on her experience of being bullied throughout her adolescent life, which had negative implications of her ability to trust and confide in others. In place of seeking relational support, Chatti mentioned that she placed greater value on expressing her feelings through creative outlets (e.g., drawing, sewing) (see Appendix 9 – (D) Chatti).

It was clear that the arts-based activities facilitated an environment that fostered self-expression and vulnerability and created a non-judgemental space for interaction. This reflected the relational bonds that existed between the young women, and which were also flourishing right before my very eyes. It emphasised how working together, eliciting experiences, and offering support not only builds trust and mutual respect, but strengthens the social bonds that build and develop resilience. I felt myself becoming immersed in the safe, supportive and nurturing environment that the young women had built for themselves which extended far beyond that creative space.

College Staff Support

Many participants explained the importance of having access to a supportive team of college staff members (e.g., teaching and administration staff) for their resilience. Female teaching staff were described as sources of personal and academic encouragement and were influential in the development of self-esteem, optimism, and instilled the belief that they could achieve their career aspirations. Older participants often referred to one female professor in particular who actively elicited academic advice, cultivated positive interpersonal relationships with students, and nurtured their professional development. One participant, Siya (aged 21),

described that she felt that her history lecturer acted as her “*life lesson coach*”, who often took time to listen to her, and suggested coping techniques (e.g., self-care) to deal with personal issues. However, many participants voiced their frustrations due to the lack of academic support received from college teaching and administration staff during the Covid-19 lockdown. Many older participants, especially those who were nearing their final year examinations, explained that lecturer absence, poor communication, and connectivity issues, not only caused a significant disruption to their studies but affected their perceived progression towards achieving their career goals.

Individual Attributes

Some participants explained that they felt that their resilience came from the confidence in their own abilities to cope with stressors, regardless of influence from relational resources. Young women’s own persistence, perseverance, determination, and a belief in a better future for themselves, were acknowledged as key strengths in supporting their journey towards resilience. Some participants valued the motivational ‘pep talks’ that they gave to prepare themselves for their day ahead. Anvi (aged 20) explained that her daily mantras helped her to show up in the face of adversity: “*Whenever I wake up, I see myself in the mirror and say, “you can do it, you are the baddest bitch alive, and nothing can destroy you”*”. Anvi also spoke of how making proactive decisions, such as ending toxic relationships that brought her emotional pain, reinventing herself at college, and saying ‘yes’ to more opportunities, helped her to regain control over her own life:

“In college, like in 12th...I was very done with being depressed...That is a very scary thing...but at that moment when I passed [re-sat high school examinations] and everything, I said “*Let’s just throw everything out and let’s start again*”. I have got a new chance at life, so let’s do it. So, when I came to college, I started saying “yes” to everything...if my friends could see me now, they’d have a heart attack...”

(Anvi, aged 20)

Some participants mentioned that humour and positive thinking acted as protective elements. Aditi (aged 18) spoke of how she took the humour from her negative experience of adversity and manufactured it into something that she could laugh about with her friends: “*It’s better just to laugh at yourself in those dark moments*”. Diya (aged 18), who was still dealing with the grief associated with the death of her best friend, mentioned that whilst it wasn’t feasible

on its own, optimism supported her in feeling that she could eventually work towards resilience, even if it seemed unachievable at that present time. Others spoke of how forgiveness and letting go of the past have helped them in their resilience journeys. One participant, Siya (aged 21) mentioned that simply writing down their stressors on a piece of paper, and throwing it away, brought with it a sense of empowerment, self-control, and ownership over her adversity (see Figure 40 – Appendix 10). For some, part of moving forward was the acknowledgement of emotional pain, and who may have caused and exacerbated it. Anvi (aged 20) made a conscious decision to release her feelings of resentment towards her parents:

“I may not have my parents for support, but it’s ok because they are doing their best as how they are supposed to. I don’t blame them. I used to blame them, like this happened because of them, but now we grow up, and I say it wasn’t them, it was just the situation.”

(Anvi, aged 20)

It was extremely moving to witness how individual attributes alone can contribute to resilience, revealing the strength and resourcefulness inherent in the group of young women who participated in each of the workshops. Bearing witness to Anvi’s pep talk, Aditi’s ability to take humour from a negative situation, Diya’s optimism in dealing with grief and Siya’s inventive coping strategy to tackle stress, underscores the collective effort of the young women in harnessing their strengths and embracing potential to foster resilience. As with the statistically significant associations between the READ factors presented earlier (Figure 16), the importance of relational resources and its relationship with the development of individual attributes emerges from these qualitative data. This strengthens the case for the role of interpersonal resource access as key driving factors toward young women’s resilience.

The first research question has uncovered the key protective factors that are promotive of young women’s resilience and considered the role of the individual, familial and the external environment. It also examined the interconnected relationships that exist between the protective factors. The pathway analysis model indicated that individual attributes are moulded and facilitated by relational resources. This highlights the significance of access and availability to supportive social ecologies in supporting young women’s resilience. Whilst individual attributes were sometimes described distinctly, attachment to family members,

peer support and role models (e.g., college teaching staff) were often regarded as instrumental for the resilience process. The ways in which young women navigated towards specific relational resources were, however, dependent on the type of stressor they were experiencing and the perceptions that the resource would be promotive of their resilience at that period in their life. In essence, there are multiple protective factors at play that influence young women's resilience across multiple domains, thus, emphasising the dynamic, and multi-dimensional nature of the construct. The following research questions extends on these results further by exploring whether there are potentially underlying protective processes that contribute to young women's resilience. The next research question (RQ2) examines the role of locus of control orientations on resilience.

4.4. Research Question 2: How does Young Women's Locus of Control Orientation Influence their Resilience?

The previous section considered the variety of protective factors that promote young women's resilience at individual, familial and external environment levels. The second research question (RQ2) (Figure 21) extends on the first by investigating whether there are additional psychological factors, such as locus of control (internal and external) that have significant influence on resilience. The first section inspects the quantitative data to identify the differences between young women's locus of control orientations. The second section examines the relationships between locus of control and READ factors using bivariate correlational analysis and a SEM to further explore these relationships. The third section presents the qualitative data to complement the quantitative findings outlined in the previous sections. In essence, this research question explores resilience at the individual level by considering whether an internal or external locus of control is more likely to determine young women's quality of positive adaptation post-adversity.

Figure 21: Research Question 2 Structure



RQ2: How does young women's locus of control orientation influence their resilience?

4.4.1. Measuring Locus of Control Orientations

The response to the previous research question showed that there are a variety of personal competencies that contribute to young women's resilience. Consequently, the analysis of quantitative data in response to this second research question reveals whether adopting an internal or external locus of control has greater influence in the acquisition of protective factors that are promotive of resilience. This section begins by analysing the differences between young women's locus of control orientations.

The initial section of the second research question applies Lumpkin (1985)'s 6-item *Locus of Control* section of the online questionnaire (see Appendix 3). Locus of control is categorised into two distinct domains – Internal Locus of Control (belief in one's own ability) and External Locus of Control (belief that things happen due to luck or chance). These two domains are comprised of 6 items in total. A score of 1 indicates that the participant strongly disagrees with the statement, and a score of 5 shows that they strongly agree. The scores for both internal (*InternalLoC*) and external (*ExternalLoC*) locus of control are totalled to provide a theme for analysis and the maximum score available across each category is 15. The mean and standard deviations are tabulated to inspect the self-rating of the 567 students regarding the Locus of Control scale (Table 8). The scale shows a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.487 which outlines that that instrument is reliable (Collins, 2007).

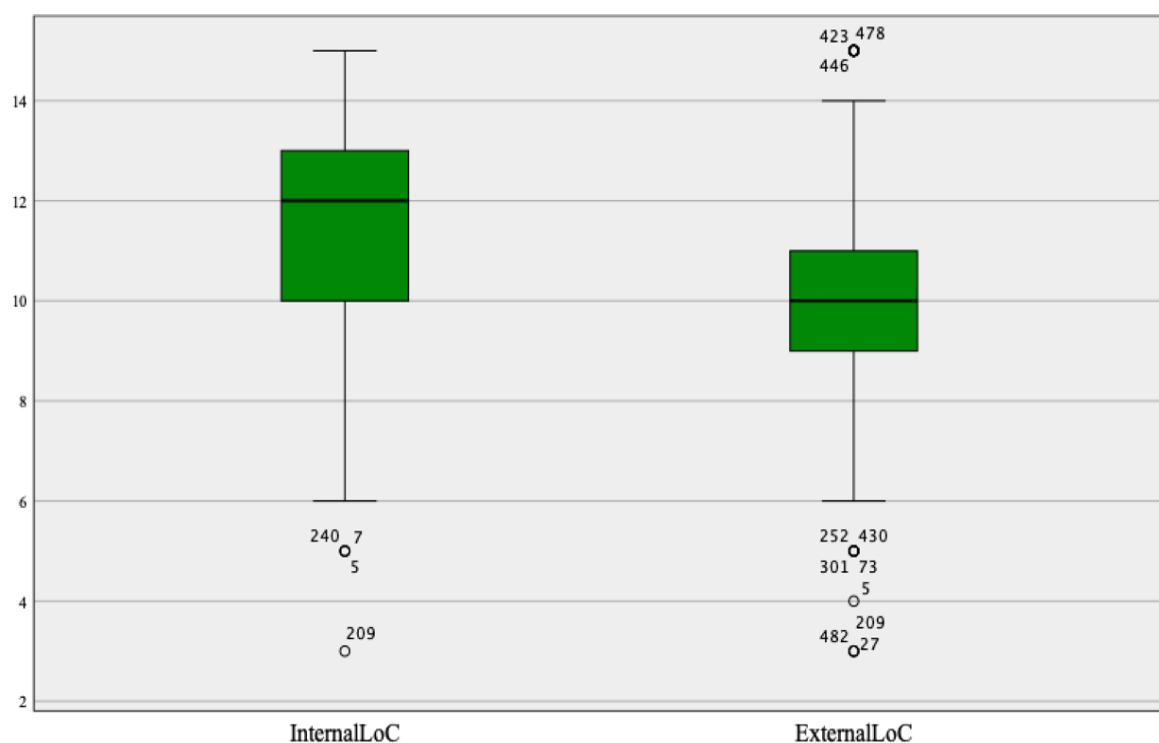
Table 8: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of 6 items (Locus of Control) (n=567)

Locus of Control Statements		Mean	SD
Int1	When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work	3.86	.829
Int2	Getting people to do the right things depends upon ability; luck has nothing to do with it	3.73	.940
Int3	What happens to me is my own doing	3.95	.840
Ext1	Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck	2.75	1.030
Ext2	Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time	3.62	.914
Ext3	Many times, I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me	3.55	.900

With a mean score of 4 (3.95 ± 0.840), the largest internal locus of control variable is Int3 ('What happens to me is my own doing'), whilst the largest external variable is Ext2 ('Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time') with a

mean score of 3 (2.75 ± 1.030). The mean score for *InternalLoC* and *ExternalLoC* is 12 (11.53 ± 1.807) and 10 (9.92 ± 1.979) respectively. Figure 22 shows the distribution of the *InternalLoC* and *ExternalLoC* scores on a box plot. Young women generally report higher scores on the items relating to an internal locus of control as compared with external locus of control. This indicates that the young women commonly perceive themselves as exhibiting a greater level of personal control and a belief in their own capabilities. The following section analyses the quantitative data further to investigate whether a relationship exists between locus of control and resilience.

Figure 22: Box Plot: Distribution of Total Locus of Control Factor Scores



4.4.2. Relationship between Locus of Control and Resilience

Figure 23: Research Question 2 Structure



RQ2: How does young women's locus of control orientation influence their resilience?

This section examines the relationship between locus of control (internal and external) and the protective factors of resilience (Figure 23). First, a correlational analysis (Spearman's Rho) is used to assess the associations between internal (*InternalLoC*) and external (*ExternalLoC*) locus of control with the five READ factors (FC, SR, SC, PC, and GO) that were uncovered in RQ1. Secondly, a SEM presents a visual representation of the relationships between locus of control orientations and the protective factors.

Relationship between the Locus of Control and READ Factors

Bivariate correlational analysis is used to examine the relationships between locus of control orientation and the five READ factors (Table 9). There are statistically significant, positive relationships of varying strengths between *InternalLoC* and *ExternalLoC* with FC, SC, PC, SR, and GO. The strongest are the moderate, positive correlations (Cohen, 1988) between *InternalLoC* and the PC ($r_s = 0.495, p < 0.01$) and SR ($r_s = 0.489, p < 0.01$) factors. This indicates that if young women hold an internal locus of control, they are more likely to have access to social resources and exhibit a higher positive self-concept. Whilst there are numerous positive correlations, which are statistically significant, between *ExternalLoC* and the READ factors, the correlation sizes are considered as weak. For example, the weak relationship between *ExternalLoC* and SR ($r_s = 0.199, p < 0.01$) and GO ($r_s = 0.148, p < 0.01$) implies that those who adopt an external locus of control are less likely to have access to social resources and exhibit goal orientated behaviours. Table 9 suggests that whilst the protective factors of resilience are positively associated with both an internal and external locus of control, if an individual holds a greater internal locus of control, they are more likely to demonstrate higher scores for each protective factor.

Figure 24: Structural Path Model for Locus of Control and READ Factors

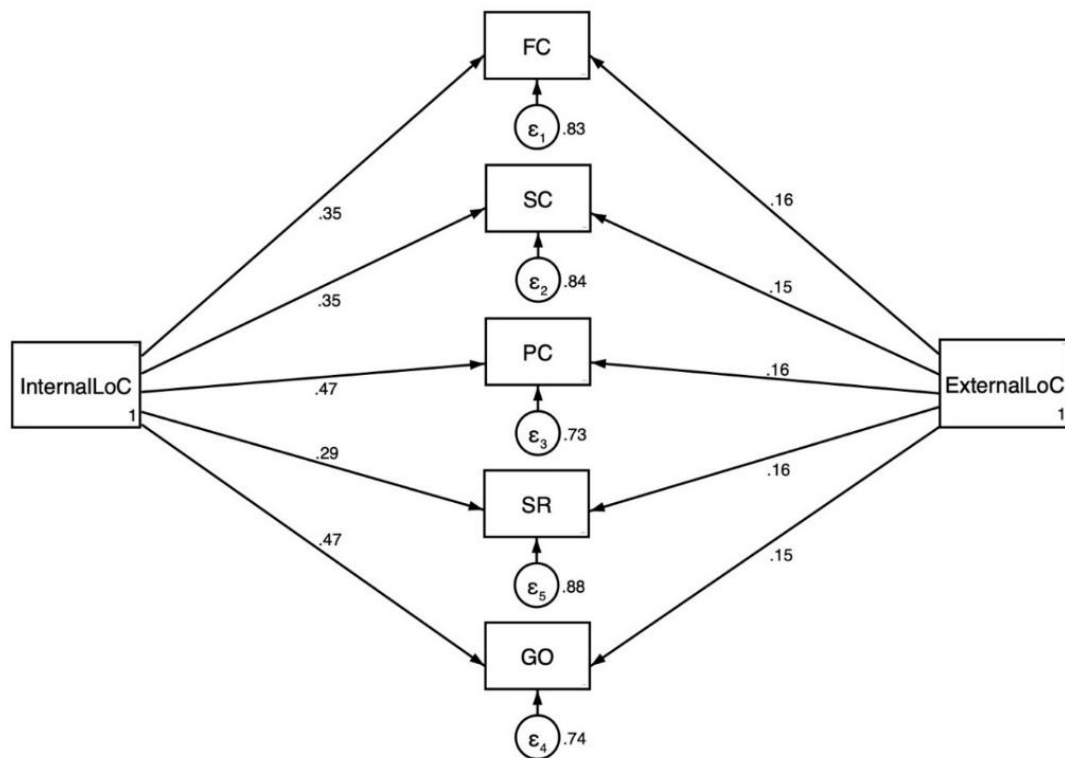


Table 9: Spearman's Rho for Locus of Control and READ Factors

		Correlations				
		FC	SC	PC	SR	GO
Spearman's Rho	InternalLoC	.376**	.375**	.495**	.489**	.315**
	ExternalLoC	.209**	.202**	.226**	.199**	.148**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

In extension to Table 9, a SEM is used to examine the correlations between the locus of control and READ factors in greater detail. The variables are obtained through CFA using the predictions command on STATA and are presented in the structural pathway model outlined in Figure 24. The SRMR is < 0.08 which suggests that the model is an acceptable fit³³ (Humble, 2020). Fit indices and regression tables for the SEM are shown in Appendix 11

³³ The fit indices of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA, 0.750), Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR, 0.315), Coefficient of Determination (CD, 0.558), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI, -0.675) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI, 0.163) indicate that the model is an acceptable fit. The χ^2/df ratio is less than 3, which also indicates that the model is a good fit for the data (Hoyle, 2012), meaning that there is not considerable distance between the observation data and the model's prediction.

(Table 52 & 53). As outlined previously, the SEM illustrates that whilst there are other factors at play, there are relationships that exist between the factors.

The SEM shows that there is a significant likelihood that an *InternalLoC* improves all five READ factors, especially PC ($\beta = 0.47, p < 0.01$), and GO ($\beta = 0.47, p < 0.01$), in contrast to the relationship between *ExternalLoC* and PC ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.01$), and GO ($\beta = 0.15, p < 0.01$). This suggests that those who hold an internal locus of control are likely to feel personally competent and exhibit goal orientated behaviours, in contrast to holding an external locus of control. There is also a significant likelihood *InternalLoC* improves FC ($\beta = 0.35, p < 0.01$) and SC ($\beta = 0.35, p < 0.01$). Those with an internal locus of control are more likely to have access to support from family members and feel more confident in engaging in social interactions. Whilst the model shows directional relationships, which are statistically significant, between *ExternalLoC* and the five READ factors, these relationships are relatively weak in size. The relationships indicate that there is a stronger relationship between an internal locus of control and protective factors that are promotive of young women's resilience, as opposed to an external locus of control. Those who are internally controlled are more likely to access and mobilise personal attributes and social resources that support their resilience processes. The themes that emerged from thematic analysis of the qualitative data, that build on the quantitative findings, are presented in the final response to this research question.

4.4.3. *Insights to Interpret the Relationship between Locus of Control and Resilience*

Figure 25: Research Question 2 Structure



RQ2: How does young women's locus of control orientation influence their resilience?

The final response to this research question presents the qualitative insights, collected from the reflective art workshops. The themes that emerged from thematic analysis of qualitative

data complement the quantitative research findings outlined in the previous section to further explore the relationship between locus of control and resilience (Figure 25). Extracts from group discussions are presented in this section.

Young women's clear motivation for believing that they could make things happen for themselves, through the decisions that they make and the strategies that they use daily, was a key theme that arose from the workshop discussions. Setting short- and long-term academic goals, and working hard in their studies, were widely supposed as important approaches to support them in overcoming academic obstacles and help to instil a belief that they could achieve their desired occupational goals once they graduated. Short-term goals were referred to by participants as being manageable steps to help them prioritise their studies and track their progress. This included creating a study routine, spending more time resting, and using exam cards to revise. Participants often referred to long-term goals as ambitions they wanted to accomplish in the future, which required time and planning. This included achieving a desired degree classification, passing their Master's degree entry examinations, attaining their dream job and becoming financially independent.

Some participants spoke of how they felt that access to social support (e.g., immediate family, relatives, peers, and college teaching staff) helped to bolster their feelings of personal control, inner strength, and determination, especially regarding academic achievement. Geeta (aged 21) mentioned that her long-term career goal, that she had set for herself, was to become a PhD candidate in Psychology. She acknowledged that the support that she receives from her grandmother has been influential in bolstering her self-confidence and belief in her own academic abilities:

“I want to do a PhD after I finish my final year. I think that no matter what tries to stop me, I still have the belief that I can achieve what I want to do. I am in control of my own life, and nothing can stop me when I get that idea in my head...Noni [grandmother] helped me get here, she's always been there, and helped improve my work ethic...Giving it your best and doing what you want as best as you can is all that matters in the end.”

(Geeta, aged 21)

Some participants expressed feelings of powerlessness and a lack of self-control over their future, notably due to the effects of the Covid-19 lockdown on their education. Many

acknowledged that the lockdown stimulated anxious behaviours, and the government restrictions not only resulted in missed academic opportunities but contributed to a sense of uncertainty and a perceived loss of control over their futures. For some, this outlook had persisted beyond the easing of the restrictions. However, among these participants, many valued the support from family members or their close circle of friends and credited it as an important coping resource during periods of emotional doubt.

Many participants reported that controlling parents, who placed significant pressure on young women to succeed, infused a belief that their future was beyond their own control which consequently impacted their motivations to complete their studies. Some disclosed that their parents had restricted or blocked their academic subject choices entirely, based on their own preferences for their daughter's careers prior to attending the college. Ananya (aged 18) explained that she felt a lack of autonomy over her career path due to her parents playing an overbearing role in choosing her college degree:

“I wanted to study like commerce, or arts and humanities, as I wanted to be an English teacher, but my parents were like “no”...they forced me to take science, so I took science, but it wasn't what I wanted as it was forced on me...I didn't have that confidence or drive that everyone else has because it's not what I want to do...that's the thing about Indian families, they want you to become doctors or lawyers.”

(Ananya, aged 18)

Yet a collection of participants mentioned that despite their parents not granting them with a high level of academic independence, they still felt motivated to work hard in their studies to attain the future that they desired for themselves. Upon reflection, Navya (aged 18) acknowledged that whilst her parents had obstructed her subject choices, she admired her own ability to work hard to achieve her goals, irrespective of her parents' views:

“My parents entirely blocked me from choosing the subject I wanted to do, it made me sad, but I think my best quality is the goals I set for myself, and I work really...hard to work towards them. I have the self-confidence. I have faith in myself that I can achieve the goals. I may take a lot of time, and it may take a lot of crying...but somehow, I reach it, and when I do, I definitely reach it.”

(Nayva, aged 18)

The qualitative data presented here suggests that access to supportive social connections can be influential in facilitating locus of control orientations. It implies that perceived social support can enhance feelings of personal control among the sample of young women. This aligns with the findings from RQ1 which reinforces the significance of access and availability to supportive social ecologies (Ungar, 2011a). In this perspective, cultivating an internal locus of control can have a noteworthy influence in the ways in which young women search for techniques to approach difficult circumstances (e.g., set clear goals and objectives) and how they positively adapt to adversity.

To conclude the response to the second research question, the findings suggest that an internal locus of control is a key attribute of resilience. Young women who cultivate a higher internal locus of control are more likely to exhibit higher resilience levels, as those compared to those with an external locus of control. It is likely that an internal locus of control is bolstered by access to a network of supportive social resources (e.g., family, peers, college teaching staff) who are critical actors in promoting a sense of autonomy, belief in one's own abilities, and determination to achieve future aspirations. Whilst those who exhibit a higher external locus of control are likely to have access to social support, which may be more meaningful when coping with adversity, they are less likely to demonstrate intrapersonal attributes compared to their internally controlled counterparts. The final research question considers the extent to which wider contextual and cultural processes influence the protective factors identified in the first two research questions.

4.5. Research Question 3: To what Extent do Young Women's Socio-Cultural Contexts Shape the Protective Factors that are Promotive of their Resilience?

The previous research question explored whether young women's locus of control orientations influence the protective factors that comprise of their resilience. Ungar (2011a)'s theory posits that an individual's development is influenced by a series of environmental systems, that not only range from immediate surroundings (e.g., family, peers, teachers), but broader societal structures (e.g., informal social structures, cultures, religion). The first and second research questions focussed on examining the protective factors at the individual, familial, and external environments. The third and final research question extends on this to explore the additional layer of protective processes (culture and context) as outlined by Ungar (2011a).

This research question is divided into two sections (Figure 26). The first section explores the influence of contextual factors (physical and wider social environments) on shaping the resilience process. This includes the influence of the social environment of the college, access to professional services, and availability of supportive community networks. The second section focusses on the socio-cultural aspects of women’s resilience, such as the influence of religious beliefs and spirituality, family cohesion, and wider socio-cultural attitudes and norms. This research question employs thematic analysis of qualitative data to facilitate a deeper understanding of the broader and complex processes that shape the form of the protective factors identified previously. It includes extracts from group discussions and summaries of participant-produced artworks. The findings work towards providing a further insight into the factors and processes that underpin young women’s resilience in New Delhi, India.

Figure 26: Research Question 3 Structure



RQ3: To what extent do young women’s socio-cultural contexts shape the protective factors that are promotive of their resilience?

4.5.1. Contextual Influences on Resilience Processes

The first section of the response to the third research question examines the contextual influences on the protective factors that promote young women’s resilience. Following Ungar (2011a)’s SER perspective, context is defined as ‘the broader social and physical ecologies that shape a child’s lived experience’ (Ungar, 2015, p.38), and refers to the structural domain (see Section 2.5). Thematic analysis of the qualitative data revealed three themes in relation to contextual processes that play a key role in shaping young women’s resilience, which include the social environment of the college, access to professional services, and availability of supportive community networks. These themes are explored further in this section.

Social Environment of the College

The majority of participants discussed the positive role of the college environment in promoting their autonomy, fostering identity formation, and facilitating access to supportive social networks, which were perceived as critical components of resilience. During the initial visits to the college, alongside supporting the academic progression of its students, it was clear that the institution places significant value on the holistic development of its students to tackle life's challenges. For many, attending an all-female college, which valued women's voices through their studies and engagement in extra-curricular activities, evoked a sense of personal freedom. A source of hope throughout the Covid-19 lockdown, was the idea that once the college campus re-opened, they would be able to re-connect physically with their peers. Ashwini (aged 20) explained how she valued the supportive social climate of the college:

“I used to go outside a lot with my friends, but then I was stuck in with my family, and I was not allowed to go anywhere. I used to just sit in my room with my computer and do my classes online. My parents didn't want us to go outside. I cried and cried. I literally begged for the college to be open again. All of these people sitting here make me very happy....”

(Ashwini, aged 20)

During the discussions, many participants spoke of how the college teaching staff acted as key champions of their professional development. Teaching staff were often recognised as providers of meaningful learning experiences and supportive classroom environments. This encouraged positive student-teacher interactions, stimulated provoking discussions, and opened access to interpersonal relationships with classmates. Warm student-teacher relationships encouraged participants to feel recognised, valued, and motivated. Teachers that devoted their time to their students, such as extending office hours, recommending academic reading and extra-curricular courses, or provided individual academic support during periods of difficulty, were considered to have a positive influence on participants professional identity development. Dhara (aged 18) mentioned that her professor worked with her, outside of teaching hours, to co-create targeted academic goals. She felt that this supported her self-discipline and motivated her to achieve her desired career pathway. Many female teachers were also perceived as important life mentors, or confidants, that not only pushed them to succeed, but elicited valuable life advice on how to deal with personal issues. For some,

teachers acted as sole sources of guidance, especially in absence of support from family members, or if they felt like they couldn't approach their parents for advice on a particular stressor. Sita (aged 18) explained that she confided in her class teacher, as opposed to seeking support from her parents, during an argument with one of her peers (see Appendix 9 – (E) Sita).

The college environment also provided an opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities and societies, which opened access to a wide variety of supportive social networks. Every participant, in each workshop, belonged to at least one society (e.g., art, dance, sport) which facilitated regular social events. Many participants talked enthusiastically about how their society leadership teams worked hard to deliver a number of self-care activities (e.g., music therapy, dance classes, counselling sessions) during the Covid-19 lockdown. Jamila (aged 20) explained that attending a virtual Zumba workshop, hosted by a society she belonged to at that time, helped her to combat the psychological effects of social isolation, and push herself out of her comfort zone:

“[Points towards her society member] Annika taught some Zumba steps, like dance therapy via a Zoom session. We followed the session, and it was really fun to watch. I love to dance, but I would never dance in public, I feel that people would judge me. She helped me break out of that tiny space of mine...Now, I can dance freely, even if I don't really know how to dance...It's really helped me to build this confidence that I didn't have in lockdown, when I felt like everything was piling up like all my housework and responsibilities that I needed to do...I love this society.”

(Jamila, aged 20)

Younger participants felt that social activities offered by societies supported their transition into college life and fostered a sense of belonging, especially if they had moved to Delhi from a different state. Many felt that the elder members of the society (e.g., presidents and vice presidents) were 'role models', who dedicated their time and efforts to provide guidance and support to its younger members. Sapna (aged 18) reflected on her experience of joining the LGBTQ+ society during her first year at the college. She felt that the society supported her in exploring her own sexual identity during a period of uncertainty, which helped her to feel accepted within a society that valued inclusivity among all its members (see Appendix 9 – (F) Sapna).

Access to Professional Services

Many participants reported that access to a mental health provider (e.g., therapist, psychologist) was instrumental for building their mental well-being and resilience. Mental health professionals provided emotional support during periods of psychological distress, such as during inter-familial conflict or academic stress. Through the provision of a safe and supportive environment, participants reported feeling confident in openly sharing their stressors and felt safe in the knowledge that their personal information would not be shared with others. Mental health professionals often elicited useful advice on how to cope with their stressors, and supported participants in building a sense of personal control and autonomy. Anvi (aged 20) mentioned that she experienced depression and suicidal ideation after failing her high-school examinations (see Figure 39 – Appendix 10). This led her to engage in self-harm, which at the time, she felt was a pro-active coping strategy. Anvi's painting conveys a visual representation of a figure with inner pain, with their body language suggesting that they are burdened by societal pressures or feeling trapped by overpowering circumstances. The words written inside and around the cloud are inherently negative suggesting a destructive internal dialogue. Anvi spoke of the positive experience that she had working with her counsellor during this period of her life:

“I give credit to my counsellor ... At first, I didn't want to see this counsellor, but actually, she was very helpful. She used to call me every day, like in the morning. My counsellor was there for me for three years straight... I used to go and see her and just rant it out... but I think those six years of trauma got out of my system, you know?”

(Anvi, aged 20)

Some participants mentioned that they attended online therapy sessions during the Covid-19 lockdown. Professional support was effective in recommending problem- and emotion-focussed coping strategies to cope with family bereavement, social isolation, and the anxieties that they had regarding their family's health. Some examples included 'keeping busy', listening to music and drawing and painting activities. Chaitra (aged 18) mentioned that she used crying as a coping strategy to deal with stressful situations. Her therapist helped her to transform what she had perceived as a weakness, into a strength, which fostered a sense of hope during social isolation (see Appendix 9 – (G) Chaitra).

However, a large portion of participants mentioned that the cost of therapy sessions, and the societal stigmas associated with mental health support, acted as significant barriers in accessing professional assistance. Geeta (aged 21), who was training to be a psychologist, voiced her frustrations regarding Indian society being unaccepting of its citizens in reaching out for help:

“Psychology is something in India that is not very popular. Counselling and all these things are not that much. People aren’t aware of all these things to be honest. When I said to my parents that I was going to take psychology, they were like looking at me like I was some sort of mad person... People feel ashamed of going to a psychiatrist because society will look down on you... You are not allowed to see a counsellor and talk about your problems.”

(Geeta aged 21)

Societal attitudes towards accessing services offering mental health support often intersected into the family environment. Some participants mentioned that they hid therapy sessions from their parents and used the money they had earned from part-time jobs to pay for them. Mahika (aged 18) felt that her parents were judgemental and dismissive of her choice to access professional support and turned towards YouTube counselling videos as an alternative (see Appendix 9 – (H) Mahika). In one workshop, an in-depth discussion surrounding the stigma’s attached to professional mental health support in India ensued for over an hour. It became increasingly evident to me that cultural stigmas and societal expectations shape their ability to access support. These are not isolated incidents, and rather, reflect broader systemic issues that propagate such stigmas. For some, access to professional mental health support was a difficult topic to talk about but instilled a sense of bravery to be able to share their experiences. One participant held a negative view of therapy; however, this had been influenced by the experience that she had with a counsellor during high school (see Appendix 9 - (I) Samira).

Supportive Community Networks

Access to supportive, safe, and cohesive community spaces were also recognised as playing a protective role in participants’ resilience, especially during the Covid-19 lockdown. Many valued participating in informal community groups, where they could meet with like-minded individuals and engage in sociable activities outside of the home and school environment. For

example, attending youth groups (e.g., art, dance, theatre) or political activist groups, provided an opportunity for participants to access and extend on their social networks, explore their hobbies and passions, and offload from the pressures of college work. Sonali (aged 21) explained that by attending a youth art group in her local community, it fostered a sense of connectedness to other women who shared similar interests. Aarna (aged 18) felt that her self-confidence had grown as a result of attending a weekly dramatic arts youth group:

“I go to this youth theatre group with some friends, down the road from my house. I’ve been going there since I was little...we create these cool plays and it helps us to connect deep within our bodies, within our bones...I can explore myself, and I can say what I think without the fear of being judged by anyone... It makes me feel safe as I am free to be who I want...I didn’t go for a few months which was sad because of Covid but when I went back, it brought back my confidence, and I could discover my strengths again.”

(Aarna, aged 18)

Connection to neighbours, and the sense of belonging to a supportive community also played an important protective role. Whilst the majority voiced their frustrations regarding how their neighbours regularly monitored their movements outside of the family home and questioned their relationships if they were seen with a boy, many acknowledged that it provided a greater sense of safety within their community (see Appendix 9 – (J) Durga). Community cohesiveness played an important role in supporting individual and family resilience during the Covid-19 lockdown. In March 2020, participants mentioned that community members joined together to offer material assistance (e.g., food and toiletries) to vulnerable families. Some members provided emotional aid (online or physical) to some families who had experienced bereavement, or whose members were suffering with the mental implications of social isolation (see Appendix 9 – (K) Anika). However, this finding was limited.

This section considered the role of contextual influences on young women’s resilience. It examined the social environment of the college, access to professional services, and availability to supportive community networks in shaping the protective factors that are promotive of resilience. The second section explores the perceived cultural influences on the resilience process.

4.5.2. Cultural Influences on Resilience Processes

Figure 27: Research Question 3 Structure



RQ3: To what extent do young women's socio-cultural contexts shape the protective factors that are promotive of their resilience?

The second portion of the response to the final research question explores the wider socio-cultural factors that are perceived to have an influence on young women's resilience (Figure 27). According to Ungar (2015, p.38), culture is defined as 'the everyday practices that bring order to our experience, and the values and beliefs that support them', and refers to the spiritual/cultural domain of resilience (Section 2.5). Thematic analysis of the qualitative data revealed three themes, which include the influence of religious beliefs and spirituality, family cohesion, and wider socio-cultural attitudes. These themes are explored further in this section.

Religious Beliefs and Spirituality

A large portion of participants acknowledged the importance of religious beliefs and spirituality in determining their resilience trajectories. Many felt that religion played an important role in their lives, which was reflected in the religious practices and rituals (e.g., prayer, fasting, visiting local places of worship) that were centred in the family home and community. One participant spoke about 'Puja', a type of religious worship among Hindu's, which involves worshipping the deities, either at home, outdoor public spaces, or visiting a 'Mandir' (Hindu temple), where food (e.g., fruits and nuts) and flowers are offered to the shrines of the deities. Some explained that from a young age, they were encouraged by their parents to dedicate a small shrine to a particular god, or goddess, that inspired them. Many valued spending time alone in prayer to sustain their spiritual and emotional connection to their deity, where they would express love, devotion and seek good fortune and health. When situations felt out of their own control, practicing religious rituals enacted a sense of hope, strength, and positivity.

Similarly, participants valued marking important life events through religious ceremonies and festivals (e.g., Diwali, Holi and Raksha Bandan). Partaking in these festivals brought forth a heightened sense of purpose, connectedness, and cohesion, especially when celebrated with family and community members. Jaya (aged 19) explained that she eagerly awaited celebrating Raksha Bandan³⁴ as it reinforced the emotional bond that she shares with her brother:

“[During Raksha Bandan] I feel closer to my brother, not just physically with the string, but emotionally...we are like, together on this spiritual level...it makes me think that we can get through everything by protecting each other.”

(Jaya, aged 19)

Many spoke of how their belief systems and relationship with a ‘higher power’ served as a protective element. For some, God(s) were not only considered as a source of positivity and security but acted as a close and supportive ‘friend’ who would listen to them about their problems. Anvi (aged 20) explained that she turned to God for advice on how to cope with inter-familial conflict (see Appendix 9 – (L) Anvi). For many, God provided reassurance, comfort, and wisdom that they needed to tackle adversity. Some felt that the difficulties that they had experienced throughout their lives were lessons that needed to be learnt and were all down to “*God’s Plan*”. However, many believed that their situations would not change without individual effort, and that whilst God was supportive in their resilience, they couldn’t solely rely on an external force.

Almost every participant mentioned that they regularly practiced Yoga (spiritual discipline rooted within Hindu philosophy) and Meditation to guide them through difficult life challenges. Yoga was often regarded as a therapeutic stress reliever and an effective tool to build emotion regulation and flexibility among participants. Maryam (aged 18) stated that: “[Through Yoga] *We can understand ourselves, how our bodies work, and we can feel our heartbeats*” (see Figure 41 – Appendix 10). Others mentioned that practicing Yoga every morning acted as a spiritual method to help them regain control over her stressors. During one of the workshops, I chose to draw a female figure practicing the ‘Crescent Lunge Pose’ (meaning Anjani – a Hindu Goddess) with words above it that read “*I bend, so I don’t*

³⁴ Raksha Bandan is a popular Hindu festival that celebrates brotherhood and love. A ‘*Rakhi*’ (a bracelet made of red and gold interwoven threads) is tied to the brother’s wrist to celebrate the relationship between brother and sister (BBC, 2023).

break”. I intended it to convey the idea of strength found in adaptability and being able to withstand challenges without feeling like I would ‘break’ under pressure. I shared my artwork and its meaning to the group and felt as a great sense of connection as we engaged in discussion of how we collectively practice Yoga for stress relief, emotional regulation whilst helping to improve core strength and stability. Many participants also discussed the role of Meditation in enabling complete detachment and escapism from stressors. Geeta (aged 21) spoke of the importance of scheduling time for yoga and meditation every morning, especially during the Covid-19 lockdown. Geeta’s artwork (Figure 28) depicts an image of a figure sitting in a meditative posture, surrounded by effervescent flowers and delicate circular designs. This could reflect the inner peace, strength and balance that Geeta possess to work towards resilience, which could be portrayed as an internal process of self-empowerment and external connection to culture. She summarised her artwork and explained how mindfulness techniques provided her with a sense of peace and time to reflect on her reality (Figure 28):

“I used to wake up early during Covid-19...I used to go to the terrace in the morning as there was a bit of sunlight and breeze. It helped me a lot and I still practice it...it gives you the mentality that everything is going to be fine, and you will overcome the things that are causing you stress...it gave me a moment to reflect on everything that was happening around me.”

(Geeta, aged 21)

Figure 28: ‘Mindfulness’



Three participants spoke of how their spiritual connection to the natural environment (e.g., open spaces, mountains, beaches) acted as an important source of resilience and mental well-being (see Figure 42 – Appendix 10). Local parks and open spaces acted as a ‘healing force’ and source of inner strength during the Covid-19 lockdown. Whether it was walking, running, or simply relaxing, these spaces served as a respite from the stress and pressures associated with their lives. Bhakti (aged 18), who felt that she faced chronic stress, explained that her spiritual connection to nature supported her in feeling grounded and hopeful during the first few weeks of the March 2020 lockdown. Bhakti’s artwork (Figure 29) suggests a message of emotional recovery, tranquillity and a connection to nature. Drawings related to nature (e.g., trees, hills and flowing water) could symbolise endurance, growth, and adaptability. Given New Delhi’s urban environment, the focus on nature as a source of healing indicates a longing for respite and finding relief in the calming natural environment. Bhakti explained her artwork to the group and the underlying message behind it:

“For me, coming close to nature really helped me a lot with stress, especially during the first [Covid-19] lockdown in 2020...Nature is something that I think is really powerful. I have a garden near my house where I used to sit with a pen and paper to draw. It was so silent...I think I am a nature girl...I used nature to escape, and it calmed me down, let me think about my feelings, and provided me with some sort of feeling that this will all get better.”

(Bhakti, aged 18)

Figure 29: ‘Nature Heals Everything’



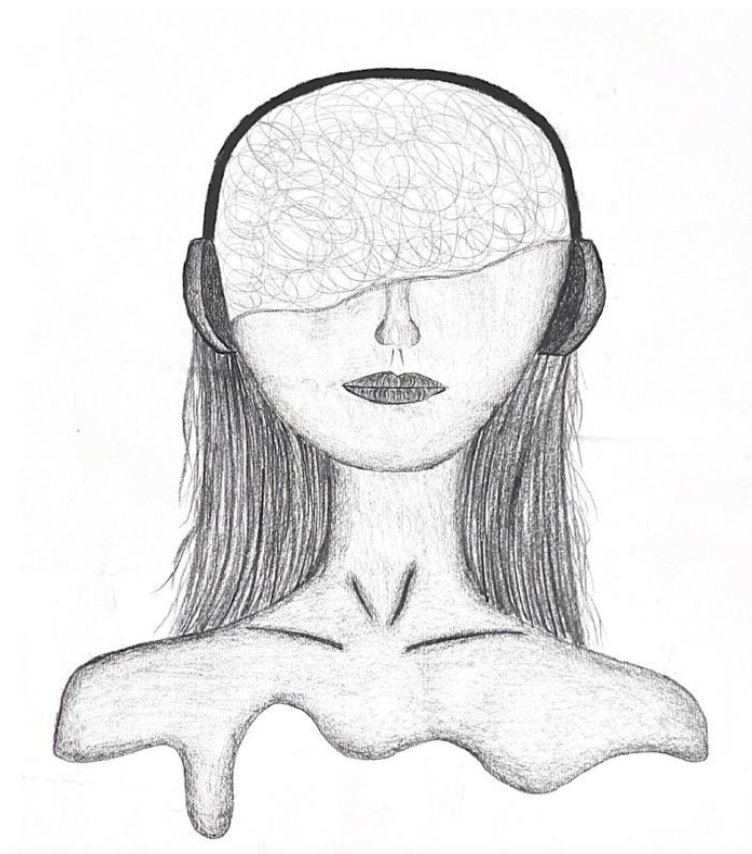
Participants also considered that a spiritual and emotional connection to music acted as a powerful resource of resilience during adversity. Listening to religious devotional music, such as Bhajan³⁵, or Pop music, and singing and playing instruments, helped to foster a sense of happiness, determination, and initiated emotional release (see Figure 43 – Appendix 10). Jaya (aged 19) explained that she takes time out of her day to listen to music, as it acts as a therapeutic tool for anxiety relief and stress management (see Appendix 9 – (N) Jaya). Participants described that they could relate to the lyrics that some of their favourite artists were singing, even if they were sad songs, which was seen to help them feel more understood in difficult situations. Whether simply listening, singing or dancing, there was a mutual agreement that music has not only fostered comfort and self-expression but has reminded us that we are not alone in our struggles. Haima's (aged 18) artwork (Figure 29) is a powerful representation of how she finds refuge in listening to Pop music and how she uses it to process and escape from the overwhelming noise symbolised by the static in her head. Haima showed the group her artwork and conveyed what it represented:

“[Points to artwork] It represents that I have a lot of things going on in my head...that's how I tune it out. Music is my everything...I keep on discovering new artists.”

(Haima, aged 18)

³⁵ According to the Siddiqi (2023) 'Bhajan is the generic name for any kind of Indian, usually Hindu, devotional song. It is completely text-led, its devotional nature underpinned by the words rather than by any specific musical style'.

Figure 30: ‘Static’



Family Cohesion

Across all workshops, participants emphasised the primacy of the family unit in influencing their resilience. Many explained the significance of a cohesive family environment, which is comprised of supportive relationships between all of its members. Some mentioned that their family was a ‘strong institution’, that could tackle adversities through their communication and teamwork. Feeling a part of a larger, supportive network of family members (immediate and extended), fostered a sense of belonging, and emotional wellness, especially when they were faced with stressors. Taking care, and looking after each other, sharing responsibilities in the household, and feeling emotionally and proximally close to family members, was perceived as having an important protective role. Sonali (aged 21) valued her role within the household. Caring for elder family members (e.g., grandparents) brought her a sense of purpose, strength, and well-being: *“It’s my role to look after my grandmother...seeing her happy...well, it makes me happy”* (Sonali, aged 21). However, when the conversations focussed on responsibilities during the Covid-19 pandemic, many participants reported the structural imbalances within their families. For example, if one family member had contracted the virus, and was unable to fulfil their roles within the household, it caused an

unequal distribution of responsibilities, which often occurred at the expense of the young women. Jaya (aged 19) explained the additional responsibilities that she was required to take on when her mother was diagnosed with Cancer in early March 2020. Jaya understood that she needed to take on the ‘housewife’ role, but it had simultaneously brought her stress as she juggled domestic care work with her academic studies:

“A stressful time for me was back in 2020, when my mum was diagnosed with Cancer...Being the only daughter, it was all on me to manage the house and balance my studies and college entrance exams...online classes were running, and I was burdened with cooking meals for my mother, brother, and father at the same time...”

(Jaya, aged 19)

Geeta (aged 21) mentioned that after the death of her grandfather in April 2020, she felt that she needed to fulfil her duty as a ‘daughter’ within her family, and to keep the unit strong. This involved her re-directing the attention away from her own mental well-being, and towards acting as a pillar of support for her parents: “...*being a woman in India, at the same time you have to be a daughter, you have to be a partner, then you have to be a sister, cousin, and friend*” (see Appendix 9 – (O) Geeta).

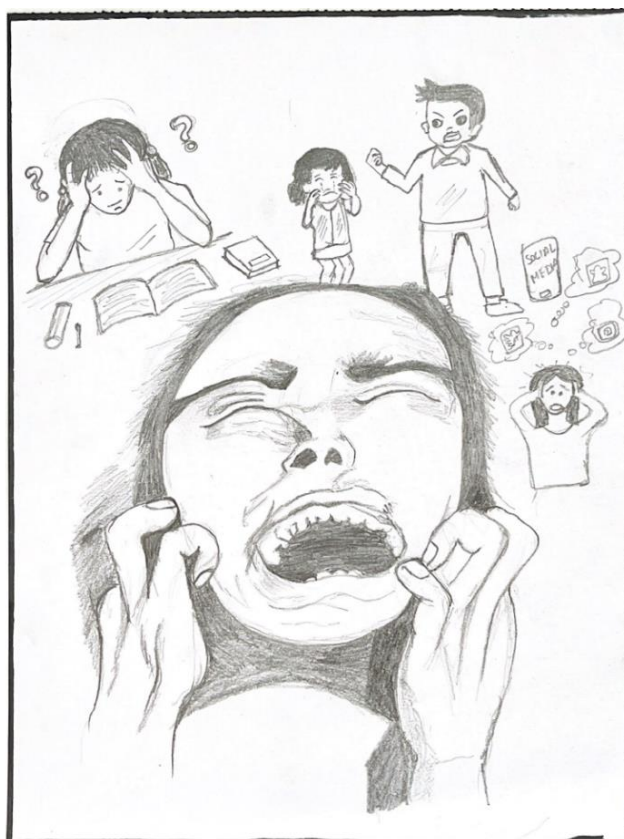
A small number of participants mentioned that dysfunctional family dynamics and/or inter-familial conflict between members, acted as obstacles to their resilience. Navya (aged 18) explained that her parents’ restrictive parenting styles, which included limiting her social freedoms, and placing significant pressure on her studies, had a negative effect on her mental well-being. Navya summarised her artwork, which conveyed the time when her parents had found, and destroyed, her private diary (Figure 31), which resulted in limited interactions with her peers and a breakdown in relationships with her family members. Navya’s artwork captures the raw emotional state of an individual contending with various external and internal pressures which highlights the complex challenges faced by many young women in New Delhi (e.g., academic, familial and societal). The screaming figure could symbolise how experiencing these challenges can lead to isolation, vulnerability and helplessness. Navya explained what her artwork conveyed to the group:

“I used to write in my diary a lot...one day I went out of the house, and I was checking my bag for something. I realised that they [parents] found my diary. I came home and I got to find that they read my diary, and they told me and then my dad

broke my phone. He made me de-activate all of my Instagram accounts, and now I have a curfew.”

(Nayva, aged 18)

Figure 31: ‘No Privacy’



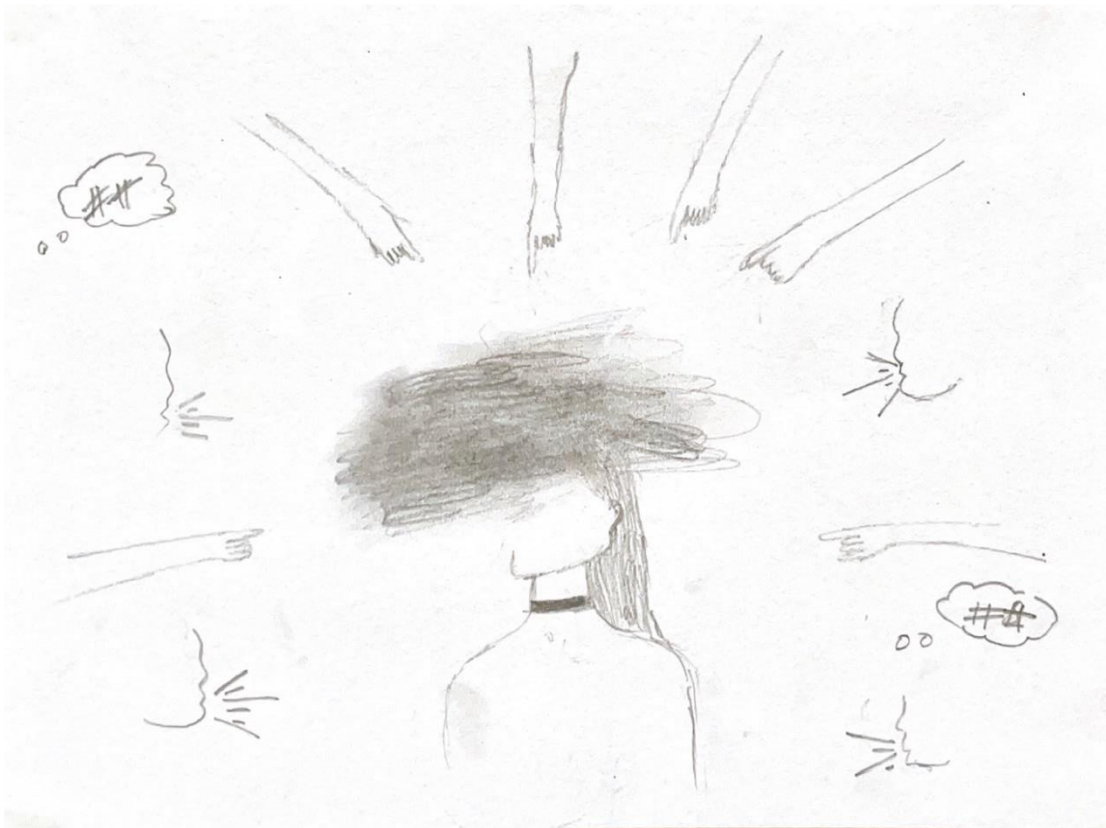
Another participant, Raya (aged 19) spoke of how her family environment was a hostile, uncomfortable, and distressing place to live following the disclosure of her father’s extra-marital affair. This led to the fracturing of relationships with her family, a loss of personal identity, and decline in her mental state. Raya’s artwork (Figure 31) incorporates a central figure with a blurred or clouded head, which might signify emotional confusion and distress in response to internal and external pressures. The static-like appearance, with no facial features, could also represent an inability to think clearly due to the judgement, blame and criticism, inflicted by her close social circle. Raya felt that her circumstance acted as an obstacle towards her resilience:

“My father was cheating on my mum. I was the only one that told my mum what he was doing. When I told her, my family ended up blaming me instead for breaking up

the family...It made me really sad...Everyone blames me, including my boyfriend, grandparents, and neighbours. It's not even my fault, but I feel so guilty."

(Raya, aged 19)

Figure 32: 'Blame and Shame'



Socio-Cultural Attitudes and Norms

Many participants perceived that wider socio-cultural attitudes and beliefs played an active role in shaping their resilience. During the workshop discussions, participants often mentioned their parents' preferences for their male siblings. Durga (aged 21) explained to the researcher that this was a commonplace for Indian families. She mentioned the economic, cultural, and social implications of having a son: "*A boy is seen as a fortune to the family...If there's not a boy, it's a stoop to the family*" (Durga, aged 21). Participants who reported a lack of emotional support, and prejudice from immediate and extended family members often attributed it to their families endorsing traditional gender role preferences. Male siblings were often rewarded with special privileges, such as having greater social freedoms and fewer household responsibilities. Haima (aged 18) spoke of the constrained relationship that she,

and her sister, have with her family, which has prevented them from seeking familial support during difficulties (see Appendix 9 – (P) Haima). Another participant, Diya (aged 18) explained how her brother was able to choose his choice of higher education. She was not awarded with the same opportunity (see Appendix 9 – (Q) Diya).

Many participants expressed through their artworks the multitude of stressors that they were facing on a daily basis (e.g., navigating relationships, academic and career stress, concerns regarding safety) (see Figure 44, 45 & 46 - Appendix 10). Across all workshops, participants reflected on the gender-based discrimination that they have faced in public and private spheres. Expectations to follow gender-based roles, safety in public domains, and the pressure to conform to Indian society's expectations of the 'perfect Indian woman', had negative implications on their personal autonomy. Based on her artwork (Figure 33), Geeta (aged 21) mentioned that she felt that she had a lack of identity living in Delhi. She stated that women, like herself, are scrutinised by wider society regarding how they look, what they wear, and how they act in public. Geeta's artwork summarises the complicated layers of contradictory burdens experienced by young women in India, reflecting the overarching societal control over their bodies, behaviours and identities. The faceless figures indicates the collective struggle to reclaim individuality, whilst the surrounding questions and judgements highlight the varieties of ways in which women's autonomy is constrained by society.

Figure 33: 'Where is our Identity?'



In relation, other participants spoke of how family and community members pass frequent judgements about their appearance. Jaya (aged 19) mentioned the emotional implications associated with the pressures of conforming to the ‘unrealistic beauty standards’ that society enforces on women and girls. However, a few minutes later, Jaya said that she chooses to completely disengage herself from these comments to protect her well-being (see Appendix 9 – (R) Jaya). Haima (aged 18) described how she is subject to regular judgements and negative comments passed by extended family members on her appearance. When summarising her artwork, she mentioned that societal standards upheld by family members, has prevented her from feeling comfortable in showing her true self in public. Haima’s drawing (Figure 34) depicts an image of a figure with butterfly wings, which is juxtaposed with a crouched, withdrawn posture signifying vulnerability. The artwork could also symbolise that despite Haima’s inner-strength, she is held back by social norms and expectations. The butterfly wings may also represent the potential for transformation, empowerment and freedom, as Haima mentioned in her explanation that she found a sense of autonomy within the grounds of the college:

“They [extended family members] even judge you for wearing jeans. Just your jeans. It’s like, we should cover our whole body as much as we can...It makes me feel sad, like, I can’t even wear jeans? They make comments like “*Honestly, what is she wearing?*”...I sometimes feel like I shouldn’t have come there [home]. I should have stayed here [at the college].”

(Haima, aged 18)

Figure 34: ‘Hidden



However, across the majority of workshops, many participants mentioned that despite these issues, they would still consider themselves as resilient, as these experiences had only made them stronger. Some attributed this to their individual competencies, such as their ability to remain optimistic, determined, and hopeful. When asked about what they would say to a younger version of themselves, Anvi (aged 20) said: *“Sit in the driving seat, I know it’s scary, but it’s your life...Don’t regret your actions. You will spend a lifetime doing so”*. Chaitra (aged 18) encouraged their younger self to persevere in the face of adversity: *“I’d just tell past me to “don’t lose yourself”. You will get everything that you’ve been praying for. Just keep going. You will get there eventually”*. Many recognised how access to supportive female figures (e.g., parents, peers) have helped them to feel resilient. Whilst some mentioned that they were often frustrated by their mothers restricting their mobilities, they appreciated that they are protecting them from what they may have previously experienced at their age. Annitya (aged 21) reflected on her experience of harassment (see Figure 47 – Appendix 10), which she did not wish to disclose, but mentioned that it was an incredibly tough period in her life which left her emotionally vulnerable. She felt that

engaging in arts activities with her mother, helped to process and communicate her emotions. Annitya (aged 21) stated: *“My mum is always there, she’s like “use your tears to paint!” ...Doing what I love, with who I love, has helped me to gain some perspective”*. Many participants also attributed their strength to their close network of peers, and society members, who shared similar experiences, stood by each other in times of crisis, and elicited valuable advice on how to cope with adversity. One participant, Lakshmi (aged 18) held up her artwork (Figure 35) to the group. The artwork symbolises a bold and hopeful portrayal of women’s resilience and evokes themes of resistance, empowerment and a journey towards gender equality. Whilst the drawing suggests the challenges faced by young women, it underscores young women’s remarkable abilities to resist, thrive and confront barriers to resilience and well-being in their everyday lives. Lakshmi proudly explained her artwork to the group:

“[Points to artwork] I wanted to show that women can do anything they want...when we come together, we are unstoppable.”

(Lakshmi, aged 18)

Figure 35: ‘Women Empowerment’



I found deep inspiration in the stories of these young women who have faced significant societal hardships but continue to embody resilience. Witnessing their strength and determination in overcoming obstacles highlights the extraordinary capacity of these women to adapt and thrive. Before going into the workshops, I felt like I needed to create some level of distance between myself and the participants, as I wouldn't be able to share similar experiences, and I didn't want to intrude. But I was wrong. There was an overwhelming sense of safety, comfort and empowerment in the workshop spaces, and during many occasions, I felt that some of my experiences could relate to theirs and add value to the discussions. Whilst coming from a different socio-cultural background, there was a shared sense of solidarity and understanding, as the workshops allowed us to relate to each other's stories. Of course, I couldn't provide professional support, but I could provide a space for young women to amplify their voices. Whilst many of the young women had mentioned they didn't feel resilient, it was clear that they have the incredible ability to navigate their difficulties with courage whilst supporting each other, which fosters a sense of community and collective strength. Being able to reflect on my own journey throughout all the workshops, I came out of it all feeling a sense of resilience which is what I hope they felt too.

The data presented in the response to the final research question extends on the findings from RQ1 and RQ2 and suggests that young women's wider socio-cultural contexts have a facilitative role to play in the protection against the negative impacts of adversity. The qualitative accounts indicated that there are numerous contextual (social environment of the college, access to professional services and supportive community networks) and cultural (religious beliefs and spirituality, family cohesion, socio-cultural attitudes) influences that play a critical role in shaping the protective factors that exist at the individual, familial and external levels. Young women emphasised the primacy of the 'collectivistic' family unit, the value of religious beliefs and spirituality, and the inherent strength of supportive female-led networks (e.g., supportive mutual relationships between female friends and family) in championing their resilience. Therefore, the findings reinforce the importance of access and availability to supportive social ecologies (Ungar, 2011a), however, further research is required to enhance this understanding.

4.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results in response to the three research questions that investigate the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience, in the context of an all-female college in New Delhi, India. The research questions were as follows:

1. What are the protective factors that are associated with young women's resilience?
2. How does young women's locus of control orientation influence their resilience?
3. To what extent do young women's socio-cultural contexts shape the protective factors that are promotive of their resilience?

The first research question initially set out to explore the protective factors that influence young women's complex resilience processes. Factor analysis methods uncovered a five-factor structure that represented the protective factors that are promotive of resilience: Family Cohesion (FC), Social Competencies (SC), Personal Competencies (PC), Social Resources (SR) and Goal Orientation (GO). These protective factors encompass the three higher order categories of resilience which are widely outlined in the literature (see Section 2.3.2), and operate over individual, familial, and external levels. Bivariate correlational analysis indicated that all protective factors had statistically significant and strong to moderate correlations with one another. The largest correlations were the strong associations between *Personal Competence* with *Goal Orientation* and *Social Competencies* factors. The SEM pathway diagram reinforced these findings and revealed that access to relational resources (e.g., support from family members, peers, and teachers) were likely to predict the development of individual attributes (e.g., communication skills, positive self-concept, goal-orientated behaviours) of resilience.

The qualitative analysis built on the quantitative findings to further explore the relationships between the protective factors. It demonstrated that young women's perceived access to support from family members, peers, and teaching staff were integral in aiding the development of personal competencies. The relational resource that the young women approach for support during adversity was dependent on the type of stressor they were facing at that time. Young women emphasised the importance of sustaining relationships with their peers, during the Covid-19 lockdown, to combat the mental health and well-being implications of social isolation and provide a sense of connectedness. For some, individual attributes were not entirely bound by, or dependent on access to relational resources. The

findings combine to show protective factors operate over multiple dimensions and can collectively work to protect young women against the negative impact of adversity.

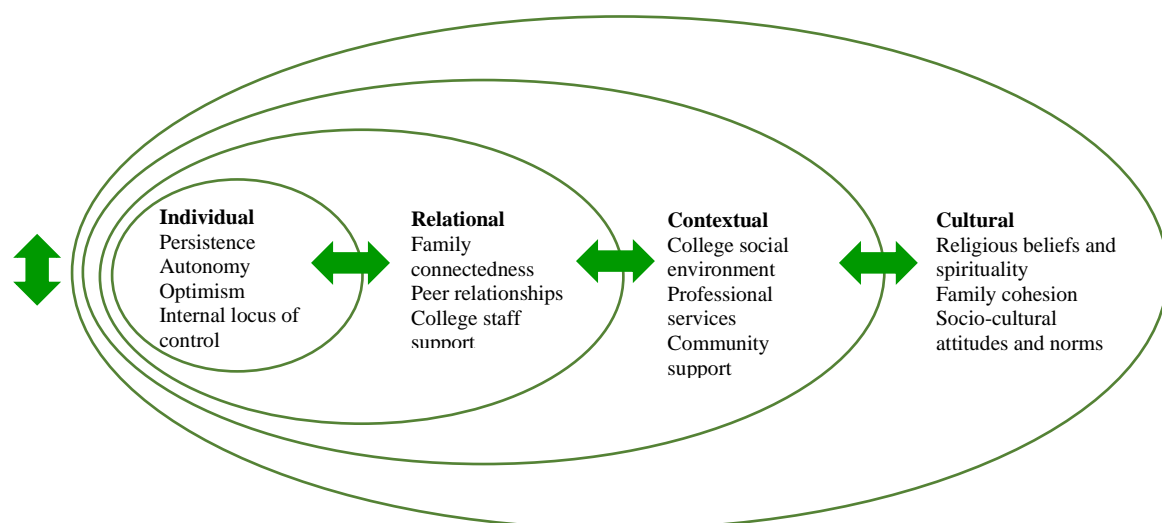
The response to the second research question built on the findings from the first, by exploring how young women's locus of control orientations influence their resilience. Young women reported higher scores on the items relating to an internal locus of control, as compared to an external, indicating that they had a greater belief that their life is dependent on their own capabilities and choices. Correlational analysis identified statistically significant, and positive relationships, varying from strong to moderate, between all five protective factors (*FC*, *SC*, *PC*, *SR* and *GO*) and *Internal Locus of Control*, whilst the relationships with *External Locus of Control* were weak. The SEM diagram reinforced these findings and revealed that young who exhibited an internal locus of control were more likely to have access to a variety of protective factors, notably personal competencies, goal orientated behaviours and relational resources. The qualitative analysis further complemented the quantitative findings. The results suggested that young women with a stronger locus of control mindset, are more likely to have access to supportive relationships and exhibit high self-efficacy and confidence in their own abilities. It is probable that those with an external locus of control mindset may value social support more to help them cope with adversity, in comparison to their internally controlled counterparts. Overall, the quantitative and qualitative findings highlighted the protective role of an internal locus of control, as compared to an external orientation.

Finally, the third research question extended on the findings from RQ1 and RQ2 to consider the extent to which young women's socio-cultural contexts contribute to their resilience. It examined whether wider contextual and cultural processes influence the protective factors that operate at individual, familial and external levels. The significance of the social environment of the college, access to professional services and availability of supportive community networks emerged as prevalent contextual influences within qualitative data analysis. For example, the college ecologies facilitated resilience through access to supportive social interactions and meaningful learning experiences. The analysis also identified several cultural influences on young women's resilience which consisted of religious beliefs and spirituality, family cohesion, and socio-cultural attitudes and norms. The final research question, therefore, builds on the findings previously identified in the first two, to suggest that young women's protective factors can be shaped by their wider social and physical environments. The findings reflect Ungar (2011a)'s SER perspective which

emphasises the extent to which resources within social ecologies can enable and/or inhibit young people's access to resilience-promoting resources.

Overall, the findings from the three research questions emphasise the multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of resilience. There are numerous protective factors and processes (individual, familial, external environment, and context and culture) that influence young women's resilience in the context of New Delhi, India. Therefore, the evidence suggests that resilience is not only an individual construct, but also a quality of the young women's environment (Ungar, 2011a). Individual attributes (e.g., optimism, inner strength, and internal locus of control), and relational resources (e.g., meaningful attachment to family members, peer support, community networks) can be further shaped by a set of broader cultural and contextual processes that are specific to Indian culture (Figure 36) (Ungar, 2011a; Tol et al, 2013; Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012). The findings highlight the complexity of young women's resilience. Further research is required to uncover the protective factors that exist across all levels of resilience, which can play a critical role in informing relevant resilience-building interventions and policies. Interventions that are tailored specifically to young women's requirements and socio-cultural contexts and target protective factors across multiple systems have the potential to support the development and maintenance of young women's resilience and mental well-being in the context of New Delhi, India. The final chapter draws the thesis together by presenting a discussion of these findings in comparison to the literature that is set out in Chapter Two - Literature Review.

Figure 36: Research Questions Findings Summary



(Adapted from Tol et al, 2013; Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012)

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings and compares them with the resilience literature. The structure of this chapter follows the path set out by the three research questions in Chapter Four. Each research question combines to investigate the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience, in the context of an all-female college in New Delhi, India:

1. What are the protective factors that are associated with young women's resilience?
2. How does young women's locus of control orientation influence their resilience?
3. To what extent do young women's socio-cultural contexts shape the protective factors that are promotive of their resilience?

The findings from each of these three research questions are outlined in this chapter, with a consideration regarding how they extend on the literature outlined in Chapter Two. This chapter also deliberates this research study's limitations and concludes with an insight into potential avenues for future resilience research with women and girls in developing country contexts, such as India.

5.2. Protective Factors and Promoting Resilience

1. What are the protective factors that are associated with young women's resilience?

The complexity of defining resilience is widely acknowledged in the literature (e.g., Luthar et al, 2000; Kaplan, 2005; Masten, 2007), which has produced significant challenges into how the construct is operationalised with young people. Despite there being numerous definitions that exist, such as the ability to overcome adversity (e.g., Rutter, 1990; Garmezy, 1991; Bonanno, 2004), or to 'bounce back' from stressors (e.g., Werner, 1989, Luthar et al, 2000; Luthar, 2006), there is an agreement among many researchers that there are three categories of overarching protective factors that are implicated in the development of resilience: the individual, the family, and the external environment (see Section 2.3). Following this, the first research question in this study focussed on uncovering the key protective factors that are promotive of young women's resilience in the context of New Delhi, India.

5.2.1. *Uncovering the Protective Factors of Resilience*

The initial section of the first research question focussed on identifying the protective factors of resilience among 567 female college students in New Delhi, India, using Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s 22-item version of the Resilience Scale for Adolescents (READ) (Hjemdal et al, 2006). First, factor analysis techniques (EFA & CFA) were used to identify the structure of the observed data and reveal the constructs pertaining to resilience. The results that emerged from factor analysis supported a similar factor structure, psychometric properties, and internal consistency scores, that are often identified in studies that validate the READ with young people in cross-cultural contexts (Askeland et al, 2019; Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014; Pérez-Fuentes, 2020; von Soest et al, 2010; Janousch et al, 2020; Kelly et al, 2017; Moksnes & Haugan, 2018; Hjemdal, 2007).

The SEM fit indices indicated that the data fit well into a five-factor structure, evidencing that Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s version of the READ is an adequate model to represent the sample of young women. The five factors that emerged from factor analysis were: Family Cohesion (FC), Social Resources (SR), Personal Competence (PC), Social Competence (SC) and Goal Orientation (GO). The factors and their respective items share a similar conceptual context to the five READ factors identified by Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014) and Pérez-Fuentes et al (2020). Internal consistency analyses provided evidence for acceptable reliability of the scale, with good values for all five factors and composite reliability ranging from 0.665-0.773 in four factors. Whilst the Goal Orientation factor had fair to good factor loadings, it also showed a composite reliability score of 0.474. Similar to Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s findings, this may be due to the factor only consisting of three items, as it had been adapted from the original Structured Style (SS) factor (Hjemdal et al, 2006) due to low reliability scores (von Soest et al, 2010; Moksnes & Haugan, 2018; Stratta et al, 2012).

The five-factor structure aligns with the three accepted higher order protective factor categories that are characteristic of resilience and reflect the findings of studies that validate the READ. Personal Competence (e.g., positive self-concept), Social Competence (e.g., communication skills, engaging in activities with peers), and Goal Orientation (e.g., setting and achieving realistic objectives and goals) formed the first protective factor category of *'Individual Attributes'*. Insights from the qualitative data implied that persistence, inner strength, determination, and forgiveness were acknowledged as key personal qualities that supported them in their resilience journeys. Personal pep talks, daily mantras, and

congratulating themselves on the small victories were considered as supportive in coping with daily stressors (Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Sleijpen et al, 2017; Malindi, 2018; Asakura, 2019). Similar to much of the resilience literature, remaining optimistic and obtaining a sense of humour were also acknowledged as important protective mechanisms in aiding the young women to reduce stress and cope with adversities (Sleijpen et al, 2017; Adegoke & Steyn, 2017, 2018; Malindi, 2018; Theron, 2020; Masten & Wright, 2010; Dumont & Provost, 1999; Olsson et al, 2003). For example, self-defeating humour, such as poking fun at themselves and laughing at their experience of adversity, were regarded as important in the process of re-framing their stressors and supporting their mental well-being, as opposed to feeling embarrassed or threatened by it (Werner & Smith, 1992; Masten & Wright, 2010; Dumont & Provost, 1999). Social abilities, such as making new friends, encouraging their close friends during difficult moments, and feeling confident in initiating social group activities, were also revealed as important individual attributes, albeit a relatively limited finding (Werner & Smith, 1992; Werner, 1995; Luthar, 1991). The ability to set and work towards academic and career aspirations were also identified as imperative protective factors, as many expressed the importance of working hard to achieve their goals in life (Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Theron, 2016a; Adegoke & Steyn, 2018). Like the research that employs ABR methods, visual references towards elements of the physical and natural environment (e.g., trees, plants, and birds) were used by the young women to portray optimism, hope, and inner strength (Shand, 2014; McKay & Barton, 2018; Hall & Theron, 2016).

The Family Cohesion factor (e.g., shared family values, family member support) formed the second category of resilience '*Attributes of the Family*'. Qualitative analysis revealed that access to safe and supportive family environments, with members who elicited valuable advice on how to cope with difficult situations, as well as motivation and encouragement, were perceived as important protective factors of resilience. This is reflective of large collection of literature outlined in Chapter Two. The family member who young women approached for support was dependent on the type of stressor they were experiencing. In some cases, female family members were the preferred source of emotional support (e.g., exposure to sexual harassment, navigating romantic relationships), whereas fathers were a strong source of academic motivation. This affirms Theron (2020)'s finding which emphasises that male members of the family are more likely to urge young people to invest in their future. In support of a wealth of literature, support from mothers facilitated a sense of inner strength, empowerment, and perseverance among the young women (Hall & Theron,

2016; Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Malindi, 2018; Lys, 2018; Li et al, 2018; Sleijpen et al, 2017; Theron, 2016a, 2020). However, for those who underlined poor relationships, mothers were perceived to play a key role in reducing self-control and restricting social opportunities outside of the family home (Pretorius & Theron, 2019). This reflects a wide amount of literature that emphasises the potential of parent figures in limiting young women's personal, educational, and occupational freedoms in India (Hebert et al, 2019; Khan & Deb, 2021; Bansal et al, 2021; Parikh et al, 2019). In absence of maternal support, or if young women felt unable to approach their parents for support on a particular stressor, siblings, grandparents, and aunties and uncles, were identified as integral facilitators of resilience (Hall & Theron, 2016; Li et al, 2018; Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Theron, 2016a, 2020; Theron et al, 2013; Fourie & Theron, 2012; Lys, 2018). Like Khan & Deb (2021)'s study, seeking support, guidance, and warmth from older siblings, especially brothers, served as a protective function especially during periods of family conflict, or if they had a strained relationship with their parents (Rutter, 1985; Wyman et al, 1991; Shanthakumari et al, 2014).

The Social Resources factor (e.g., access to support outside of the family environment) shaped the final category of resilience, the '*External Environment*'. Qualitative data analysis emphasised the importance of access to close and supportive relationships with peers, who were integral in eliciting valuable guidance to cope with stressors and were effective in facilitating a positive self-concept and sense of belonging, as shown in Chapter Two. Young women valued the interpersonal relationships that they shared with their peers, which was evident in their efforts to continue social connections through online platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Forming online friendships were also seen as supportive of young women's resilience, especially among those who struggled to develop relationships within the college environment (Hamby et al, 2019; Malindi, 2018; Shand, 2014; Erhard & Ben-Ami, 2016; Asakura, 2016). Peers actively recommended positive coping strategies, and were considered as sources of safety, distraction, and fun (Sleijpen et al, 2017; Pretorius & Theron, 2019). Whilst the qualitative analysis did not indicate that peer groups were inhibitors to resilience, like Sanders et al (2017)'s study, one young woman mentioned that a complete withdrawal from peer relationships presented as a proactive strategy to allow her to deal with adversity. However, as Sanders et al (2017) cautions, complete withdrawal from social relationships may be unsustainable and present emotional consequences later in life. Therefore, further research is required to consider the extent to which this promotes, or hinders, resilience and psychological health and well-being in the long-term. Finally,

qualitative data analysis suggested that female college teaching staff were key promoters of agency and exhibited positive influences on young women's personal and professional development (Wyman, 2003; Beam et al, 2002; DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005; Malindi, 2018; Li et al, 2018).

5.2.2. *Relationships Between the Protective Factors*

All five READ factors obtained statistically significant and moderate to strong correlations with one another, indicating that if the young women perceived themselves as resilient in one domain, they were likely to consider themselves as resilient within a different domain (Moksnes & Haugan, 2018; von Soest et al, 2018; Stratta et al, 2012; Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014; Kelly et al, 2017; Askeland et al, 2019; Pérez-Fuentes et al, 2020). In line with previous studies that have validated the READ, the Personal Competence factor demonstrated the strongest associations with the other four factors. This implies that obtaining a positive self-concept has a notable impact on all the protective factors. It's strong correlation with the Goal Orientation factor is not surprising, seeing as the two are often considered as distinct, but related concepts in resilience theory (see Bandura, 1977; Malouff et al, 1990) and may be due to modifications made by Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014) in their version of the READ. Family Cohesion showed a significant and strong association with Social Resources, which implies that young women are likely to have access to social support resources both within and outside of the family environment (Moksnes & Haugan, 2018). The structural path model (Figure 16) showed that Family Cohesion and Social Resources predicted the development of Personal Competence, which in turned facilitated Social Competence and Goal Orientation. This implies that access to social support is likely to influence the development of a positive self-concept, and in turn, shape social competencies and promote goal-orientated behaviours. These findings underpin Hjemdal (2007, p.91)'s assertion that the protective factors should be considered as factors measuring 'different, but related, aspects of the concept of resilience'. It also reflects the widespread argument that resilience should be considered as multi-faceted phenomenon, and a dynamic process that changes over time (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Garmezy, 1993; Luthar et al, 1993, 2000; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000).

5.2.3. Resilience as a Dynamic Process

The results from the first research question contribute to the ongoing debate in resilience theory, regarding whether resilience should be considered as an individual trait or dynamic process (Bonanno & Diminich, 2013; Luthar, 2006; Masten, 2013; Rutter, 1979). Qualitative data analysis indicated that young women's individual attributes were moulded and facilitated by access to relational resources (Masten, 2013; Kelly et al, 2017). For example, like Pretorius & Theron (2019)'s study, young women who regarded their mothers as a source of inner strength, were likely to exhibit the personal characteristics to help them cope with, or overcome adversity (Rutter, 2013). Like Cicchetti (2013)'s study, qualitative data analysis implied that individual attributes (e.g., optimism) alone often did not act as effective buffers against adversity, especially when there were circumstances that were perceived as so hostile (e.g., suicidal ideation, bereavement), that such traits were unhelpful, or simply not enough to facilitate resilience. Whilst for some, individual attributes were important protective factors on their own (Haffeejee & Theron, 2019), the findings reinforce the widely held view that resilience is more than a singular trait that provides protection against adversity (Garmezy, 1991; Masten et al, 2009; Ungar, 2011a, 2012; Wright & Masten, 2015; Luthar et al, 2000; van Breda & Dickens, 2017; Garret, 2016). This, therefore, reflects Vanderbilt-Adrianne & Shaw (2008a, p.33)'s argument that resilience is underpinned by 'a series of ongoing, reciprocal transactions between the child and their environment'.

Qualitative data analysis also indicated that young women's resilience is susceptible to change and develop over the course of their lives (Luthar et al, 2000; Masten, 2001). Many of the workshop discussions focussed on how understandings of resilience have been influenced by the strength (e.g., minor, and major) and time of adversity, the relational resources available to them, and which of these resources are considered as meaningful and relevant to the type of adversity they are faced with (Wright & Masten, 2015; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Masten & Wright, 2010; Ungar, 2011a). The evidence suggests that young women selectively draw on different resources, within their social and physical ecologies, to foster resilience at different periods in their life (Haffeejee & Theron, 2019). For some, as young women grew older, peers were the preferred source of support as they felt more comfortable and safer in confiding in them. This further reinforces the argument that resilience is manifested within dynamic interactions between the individual, and the broader context of resources available to them (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Garmezy, 1993; Luthar, 1993; Luthar et al, 2000;

Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Ungar, 2011a). Like Werner & Smith (1982, 1992)'s studies, a longitudinal approach would enable the researcher to examine how resilience adapts over time, and how it is shaped by a variety of both risk and protective factors. Whilst this was beyond the scope of this research study, it presents an opportunity for future research to extend on this study's findings.

The first research question focussed on uncovering the protective factors that contributed to young women's resilience in the context of New Delhi, India. The findings draw on the gap in the literature and provide an insight into the transferability of the READ with young people in diverse contexts, especially among those who belong to different cultures and societies (Pérez-Fuentes et al, 2020). The findings from quantitative and qualitative analysis support the ecological perception of resilience. It suggests that protective factors, which operate at the individual, family, and external levels, are promotive of young women's resilience and support them in managing stressful circumstances. The findings also contribute to the ongoing debates within resilience theory and reject the individualistic-centred conceptualisations that undermine the influence of protective resources that are external to the individual (see Section 2.2). The findings from this research question lay down the foundation for the following questions that considered psychological constructs, such as locus of control orientation, and the wider processes that enable and/or inhibit young women's resilience-supporting factors.

5.3. The Relationship between Locus of Control Orientation and Resilience

2. How does young women's locus of control orientation influence their resilience?

Locus of control is often considered as an influential individual attribute for child, adolescent, and young adults' resilience (e.g., Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Werner, 1989; Luthar, 1991; Rutter, 2013). However, the association between locus of control and resilience remains largely understudied, particularly with young adults in developing country contexts. Therefore, the second research question investigated whether a relationship exists between young women's locus of control orientations and their resilience. This research question sheds light on the extent to which exhibiting an internal locus of control acts as a potential driving factor affecting the protective factors that promote resilience.

5.3.1. Differences in Locus of Control Orientations

The initial section of the second research question focussed on identifying young women's locus of control orientations using Lumpkin (1985)'s version of Rotter (1966)'s original Locus of Control scale. Mean and standard deviation tabulations indicated that young women generally reported higher scores on the items pertaining to an internal locus of control, in comparison to an external orientation. This implies that the majority of young women perceived themselves as exhibiting a greater level of personal control over their own lives and had an assumption that what happens to them is contingent upon their own behaviours (Rotter, 1966). It is likely that those who reported a higher external locus of control perceived themselves to have reduced control over their own lives, owing it to luck, chance, fate, being influenced by the control of powerful others or due to the unpredictability of wider socio-cultural forces that surround them (Rotter, 1966). Drawing on Rotter (1966)'s original work, future research could consider the antecedents for developing attitudes of internal or external control, and whether they are direct or indirect in nature. An antecedent worthy of further study, particularly in the context of India, could be the extent to which consistency of parent discipline, parenting styles (e.g., authoritative or authoritarian) and presence of supportive home environments influence internal-external attitudes among samples of young women. This would draw on the relatively limited research that has been conducted in non-western contexts (e.g., Keshavarz et al, 2013), which suggests that an authoritarian style of parenting may be associated with an internal orientation if the individual perceives it as supportive. Despite it being beyond the scope of this research study, cross-cultural research could examine differences in internal-external attitudes between young women of similar ages in terms of culture (e.g., individual vs collectivistic family units), religious beliefs, or SES backgrounds.

5.3.2. The Relationship between Locus of Control and Resilience

Quantitative analysis obtained from bivariate correlations, and the SEM diagram, showed that all five READ factors demonstrated statistically significant and moderate to strong correlations with internal and external locus of control factors, indicating that a relationship exists between locus of control and resilience (Rajan et al, 2018; Felicia et al, 2012; Arsini et al, 2023; Haveroth et al, 2019; Alat et al, 2023; Slatinsky et al, 2022; Barron Millar et al, 2021). Similar to Slatinsky et al (2022) and Rajan et al (2018)'s findings, those with an internal locus of control were more likely to showcase resilient behaviours and tendencies, as

opposed to their externally controlled counterparts. In line with previous studies with young adults, young women's locus of control orientations possess significant influence on their perceived access to relational resources and individual attributes. The quantitative findings suggest that those with a higher internal locus of control are more likely to obtain a variety of personal competencies, such as exhibiting a greater level of positive self-concept, optimism, adaptability, as opposed to those with an external orientation. This reflects much of the literature outlined in Section 2.3.2 that suggests that there is a greater likelihood that individuals who possess key mental attributes are more likely to be successful at meeting developmental and stage-salient tasks (e.g., biological, psychological, and social challenges) (Rutter, 2013; Aldwin, 1994; Felicia et al, 2021; Arsini et al, 2023; Haveroth et al, 2019; Luthar, 1991). Individuals with a perceived internal locus of control were also more likely to exhibit goal orientated behaviours and recognised the value of setting short- (e.g., setting a study routine) and long-term (e.g., attaining a dream job) academic and career goals which emerged from the reflective arts workshop discussions. Similar to Luthar (1991) and Luthar & Zigler (1991), quantitative analysis also suggested an association between an internal locus of control with young women's social skills and abilities, further highlighting the protective force of internally orientated values and behaviours.

In their study, Werner & Smith (1982) suggest that it is plausible that more 'resilient' teenagers are internally orientated and have access to a supportive social network. A similar finding is found in this research study as the quantitative data analysis showed that there was a stronger relationship between internal locus of control and the READ factors pertaining to social resources and family cohesion (SR & FC). Qualitative data analysis further reinforced this relationship by suggesting that access to social support (e.g., immediate family members, peers, teachers) was integral for developing attributes which relate to an internal locus of control, such as increased self-confidence and belief in one's own academic capacities. This aligns with much of the empirical literature that suggests that individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to be able to organise and access a greater level of social support resources than individuals with an external locus of control (Hansson et al, 1984; Jones, 1982; Vanderzee et al, 1997; Lefcourt et al, 1973). However, the qualitative findings imply that the impact of perceived social support on resilience may be stronger for externally controlled individuals. In some cases, young women still believed in their ability to achieve the future that they wanted for themselves, despite absence of supportive social resources, notably within the family unit. It is possible that individuals with an internal locus of control

may be less dependent on available sources of support than individuals with an external locus of control as they feel that they already possess the internal attributes required for achieving positive outcomes (Lefcourt, 1980; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1966; Vanderzee et al, 1997; Felicia et al, 2021). For the young women who possessed a higher internal locus of control, the value of having supportive relationships may be less than for those who lack such intrapersonal resources (Vanderzee et al, 1997). These findings indicate that those who believe that both positive and negative outcomes are dependent on their own behaviour, are likely to exhibit a greater level of attributes and resources than do individuals who tend to believe that they cannot influence their own outcomes. However, it can be implied that availability of social support could counteract the negative impacts of the feelings of incapacity that are associated with an external locus of control on psychological well-being. Therefore, targeted efforts to strengthen social support, and nurture the development of internal attributes may lead to significant improvements in the resilience and well-being of those with an external locus of control (Vanderzee et al, 1997).

The second research question draws on a relatively limited amount of literature that explores the relationship between locus of control and resilience among diverse groups of women living in developing country contexts. In alignment with much of the literature outlined in Chapter Two, the results highlight the protective force of an internal locus of control (Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992; Luthar, 1991). Those who exhibit a higher internal locus of control are more likely to have access to a variety of intrapersonal and interpersonal resources to help them cope with, and tackle adversity, as compared to those who are externally orientated. Social support may have a greater contribution to a sense of resilience and psychological well-being to those with an external locus of control. Future interventions could be directed towards creating opportunities to enable young women to build an internal locus of control mindset. This can include focussing not only on building personally meaningful life and career goals, and providing opportunities to exercise personal agency and control, but by targeting social support resources, and equipping young women with the skills to access and maintain high quality relationships (Tyler et al, 2020). Further research is required to better understand how this could be most effectively implemented. The findings from this research question further contribute to an understanding of the factors that influence young women's resilience. The final research question builds on the findings from the first two to explore how young women's cultural and contextual realities shape their resilience-supporting factors.

5.4. The Influence of Context and Culture on Resilience

3. To what extent do young women's socio-cultural contexts shape the protective factors that are promotive of their resilience?

The first research question focussed on uncovering the protective factors that contribute to young women's resilience. The second examined whether young women's locus of control orientation influences their resilience. The third, and final research question, extends on the findings of the first two, by analysing the qualitative data to consider the extent to which young women's socio-cultural contexts shape the protective factors that are promotive of their resilience. A key theme that arose from the previous two research questions was the significance of social and physical environments in providing access to protective attributes and resources. Therefore, this research question draws on Ungar (2011a)'s SER perspective to explore how contextual and cultural resources, that exist within a series of wider, and interconnected environmental systems, inform the resilience process of young women. Given the calls for resilience researchers to consider the 'contextual, temporal, and cultural variation' (Ungar, 2008, p.221) of resilience, and the importance of foregrounding young people's voices in research, this research question aimed to provide a culturally sensitive explanation of resilience, one that is representative of young women's lived realities in New Delhi, India.

5.4.1. Contextual Influences on Resilience Processes

Resilience is widely considered as being supported by 'a complex interplay of personal (including genetic), relational, and contextual protective mechanisms' (cited in Theron, 2016a, p.636; Cicchetti, 2010; Masten, 2001, 2014b; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Rutter, 1987, 2013; Ungar, 2011a). Implicit in this assertion is the responsibility of contextual resources within social and physical environments that shape the utility of the protective factors that promote resilience. Three key themes arose from the qualitative analysis regarding the contextual influences on resilience which will be discussed in this section.

The first theme uncovered the role of the social environment of the college in shaping young women's resilience-supporting factors. This included facilitating creative learning environments, extra-curricular activities, and access to supportive social interactions (e.g. meaningful peer and college teaching staff relationships). Similar to the literature outlined in Chapter Two, qualitative analysis emphasised the significance of college teaching staff as

champions of resilience. This draws on Werner & Smith (1982)'s study which highlights teachers as key socio-ecological partners in young people's resilience processes in Hawaii. Teaching staff provided supportive and stimulating learning environments which encouraged active participation, the opportunity to build constructive peer attachments, and the ability to enhance their specialised subject knowledge to prepare them for their futures (Hall & Theron, 2016). Teachers were often seen as engaging, motivated, dedicated to academically supporting their students (e.g., offering extended office hours), and provided numerous opportunities to develop young women into active, autonomous, and capable agents (Masten, 2014b; Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2009; Theron et al, 2014; Hall & Theron, 2016). From the researcher's observation of the college, this aligns with the institutions' main ethos, which is to empower students to become leaders within their chosen fields of study, and to become voices of social change. Teaching staff also facilitated warm, trustworthy, and respectful connections with their students, as seen elsewhere in the literature (Masten, 2014b; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2013; Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012; Theron et al, 2014; Theron & Theron, 2014; Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016; Kumpulainen et al, 2016; van Rensburg et al, 2018; Hall & Theron, 2016). Following Tatlow-Golden et al (2016)'s findings, female teaching staff often acted as confidants, alongside their family members, who elicited meaningful life and problem-solving skills, or simply listened their stressors. Teaching staff were, however, not identified as sole protective sources of resilience, in contrast to a collection of resilience research (Jefferis & Theron, 2017; Malindi, 2018; Li et al, 2018; Pretorius & Theron, 2019; Lys, 2018; Theron et al, 2014).

The literature presented in Chapter Two illuminates the influence of school ecologies in providing young people with opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities and societies to support the development of constructive connections, and their personal and professional development (Fourie & Theron, 2012; Hall & Theron, 2016; Gilligan, 2000; Masten, 2014b; Reis et al, 2005). Social activities offered by the college societies were perceived as key facilitators of resilience, as it enabled young women to make new social connections, engage with like-minded people, offer a distraction to their stressors, or to push themselves out of their comfort zones (Sleijpen et al, 2017; Kumpulainen et al, 2016; Masten, 2014b; Theron & Theron, 2014). Many valued the online activities offered by their respective societies through the Covid-19 lockdown as it supported the maintenance of peer connectedness, helped to reduce feelings of isolation, and offered a stable support system during a period of uncertainty. Similar to Shanthakumari et al (2014)'s findings, the

significance of social support was illustrated through the strong emphasises that young women placed on their fellow society members as role models. Younger members turned to older members who took an active role in helping them feel understood, aided them in navigating the challenges of adjusting to a new environment, and facilitated a sense of belonging (Shand, 2014). Reflecting Theron (2016b)'s review of the literature, this finding uncovers the multiple social systems that exist within the college environment, and highlights the responsibilities of educational institutions in facilitating young people's positive adjustment outcomes (Kumpulainen et al, 2016; Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016; Theron & Theron, 2014; Theron et al, 2013; Lys, 2018; van Rensburg et al, 2018; Adegoke & Steyn, 2017; Sleijpen et al, 2017; Reis et al, 2005; Gilligan, 2000; Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2009; Masten, 2014b).

The second theme that emerged from the qualitative data related to access and availability to professional services that offer mental health support and guidance (Lys, 2018; van Rensburg et al 2018; Kumpulainen et al, 2016; Tatlow-Golden et al, 2016; Theron et al, 2013; Adegoke & Steyn, 2017). Mental health professionals (e.g., therapist, psychologists) provided young women with a safe space to openly discuss their stressors, especially when they felt as if they couldn't approach other relational resources (e.g., peers, family members), and informed them of effective coping strategies (Adegoke & Steyn, 2017; van Rensburg et al, 2018). Accessing online therapy sessions during the Covid-19 lockdown supported young women in enduring loss and coping with health anxieties. Similar to Lys (2018)'s findings, a large collection of young women reported experiencing barriers in accessing mental healthcare services, due to affordability, perceived lack of confidentiality, and restrictions imposed by family members due to societal stigmas. This reflects many studies that examine the structural and cultural barriers that impede help-seeking behaviours among youth populations in India (Gaiha et al, 2020; Gundi et al, 2020; Avasthi et al, 2013; Sanghvi & Mehrotra, 2021; Chadda, 2018). These findings also highlight the significance of navigation for young people to show resilience (Ungar, 2004, 2005, 2008). It reflects Ungar (2011a)'s argument that resources which are available within young people's social and physical environments, have the potential to obstruct pathways that make health-promoting resources easy to access (Ungar, 2005). Yet, despite these perceived barriers, young women often reported still accessing professional support, beyond their parents' knowledge, or seeking alternative resources through online mediums (e.g., YouTube videos). Further research could consider the extent to which family, community and wider societal attitudes and beliefs influence

young women in accessing mental healthcare support. These findings could potentially inform interventions and policies that identify and target systems within young women's social ecologies which prevent their navigation towards health-seeking behaviours in India (Ungar, 2011a). This would work towards prioritising young women's health and well-being, and further advance progress towards achieving SDG 3 by 2030.

Access and availability to safe and supportive community networks, notably during the initial Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, formed the final theme. This reflects the notion of 'community resilience', which encompasses community advocacy, social networks, and access to community organisations in the resilience literature (Asakura, 2019; van Breda & Dickens, 2017; Theron et al, 2017; Sanders et al, 2017; Hall & Theron, 2016). Alongside exploring personal interests, participating in local community (e.g., performance theatre) and political activist groups, provided opportunities for social engagement and developing social networks (van Breda & Dickens, 2017). Similar to Shand (2014) and Walsh & Black (2018)'s studies, partaking in an activity, that the young women were passionate about, and alongside like-minded individuals, fostered a sense of mastery and a feeling that they were enacting positive change within their communities. This aligns with Ungar et al (2007)'s seven tensions of resilience which refer to the significance of community relationships and finding a meaningful role in the community. Cohesive community environments, that provide its members with emotional and material assistance and relief, were considered as supportive of young women's resilience (Kant, 2021). Feeling safe and secure within community environments and feeling protected by community members were acknowledged as important for young women's well-being (Masten et al, 2009). This may be due to the perceived threats to young women's safety in public spaces (e.g., eve-teasing, sexual harassment) which is often discussed in the literature (Hebert et al, 2019; Bansal et al, 2021; Dhillon & Bakaya, 2014; Beattie et al, 2019). Therefore, as opposed to being a hindrance to mental well-being, as Hebert et al (2019) implies in their study, access to supportive community networks were considered as an important source of resilience. The findings from the third theme reflect the value of cohesive community networks in addressing community-level adversities, and its implications on well-being and resilience (Ellis & Dietz, 2017; Hall & Theron, 2016; Sanders et al, 2017; van Breda & Dickens, 2017) especially within an Indian context (Humble et al, 2023). As will be discussed in Section 5.6, further research could focus on uncovering the broader social and community-level factors that enable and/or constrain young people's

resilience (Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021; Ungar & Hadfield, 2019; Lorenc et al, 2020), as this finding was relatively limited.

5.4.2. Cultural Influences on Resilience Processes

The second section of the response to the final research question emphasised the features of young women's resilience, that can be in part, explained further by wider cultural influences (Ungar, 2011a, 2013). Like the first, this section aligns with Ungar (2011a)'s SER perspective, which posits that there is an additional layer of protective processes – context and culture. Three themes emerged from the qualitative analysis, which will be discussed further in this section.

The first theme that emerged from the qualitative analysis referred to the significance of religious beliefs and spirituality in playing a facilitative role in young women's resilience, as reflected in Chapter Two. Participating in religious customs and practices related to one's religion (e.g., prayers, fasting, meditation, yoga, visiting a temple to worship and presenting a sacred offering to deities), notably Hinduism, were perceived as instrumental for maintaining positivity, and competence, and building emotion regulation during adverse situations (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016; Adegoke & Steyn, 2018). Yoga and meditation were often used as relaxation and calming techniques, and as a way to spiritually connect with their minds and bodies, especially during the Covid-19 lockdown. Mindfulness meditation enabled young women to reflect on their stressors, observe their thoughts in the present, and identify solutions to manage difficult emotions in a productive way (Parikh et al, 2019). Yoga and meditation were also used to elicit a spiritual and direct connection with God, or a 'higher power'. Similar to previous Indian-based studies, a belief in God was perceived as a supportive mechanism in aiding the development of problem-solving strategies in complex situations (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016; Shanthakumari et al, 2014; Verma, 2015; Lys, 2018). However, like Shanthakumari et al (2014)'s study, many young women believed that it was down to their own abilities and that they could simply not rely on God to solve the entirety of their problems. In contrast to Lys (2018)'s findings, God was not the sole source of support. In alignment with Hebbani & Srinivasan (2016)'s study, participation in religious ceremonies and festivals (e.g., Raksha Bandhan) were supportive in strengthening emotional bonds between the young women, and their family and community members. This reflects the assertion that adherence to culturally and religiously driven traditions are critical for the development and maintenance of social networks, inside and outside of the family, and are

key facilitators of individual and family resilience in India (Chekki, 1996; Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016). A spiritual connection to nature was perceived as a safe space, and a source of escapism from the pressures of daily life. This finding is shared with Lys (2018)'s study, who posits that a connection to nature not only encourages a reconnection with spiritual identities but acts as a source of intrapersonal strength and resiliency for indigenous youth. Based on these findings, multi-levelled interventions, that focus on eliciting self-soothing techniques (e.g., yoga and meditation), body awareness, breathing exercises and grounding with nature, may provide important avenues for building and nurturing resilience with young women (Lys, 2018). Finally, listening to music and playing instruments were also perceived as sources of distraction, a therapeutic tool for stress relief during adversities, and fostered a sense of hopefulness. This aligns with the literature that emphasises the relationship between an emotional and spiritual connection to music and resilience (Lys, 2018; Hall & Theron, 2016; DeJonckheere et al, 2017; Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; Malindi, 2018).

The second theme that emerged from the qualitative data related to the wider influence of Indian family unit, and the socially defined roles and responsibilities adhered to by family members (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016; Khan & Deb, 2021; Shanthakumari et al, 2014). The family was widely considered as a significant source of strength, support, and fostered co-operation between its members. Many felt a sense of responsibility, and duty of care to support their family's well-being, which entailed sacrificing comforts or social opportunities (e.g., meeting friends), or taking on additional responsibilities to compensate for another family members' inability to fulfil their obligations (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016). Like Hebbani & Srinivasan (2016)'s study, this included providing care to elderly family members, acting as a pillar of support following a family bereavement, or taking up domestic responsibilities to care for their siblings. For some, taking on additional responsibilities acted as a notable stressor, especially when balancing domestic responsibilities with academic work. However, the majority of young women perceived this to be their role within their family, and helping others instigated a sense of purpose, belonging, and enhanced emotional connection between family members (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016; Khan & Deb, 2021). This aligns with the 'collectivistic' orientation of the family unit in India, which is often understood as a dominant institution, shaped by cultural values and identity, and one that values solidarity, cohesiveness, and stability to its members (Chadda & Deb, 2013; Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016; Mullatti, 1995; Khan & Deb, 2021; Avasthi, 2010). The findings also

reflect Ungar et al (2007, p.295)'s seventh tension of resilience, and Walsh (1996, 2002)'s concept of 'family resilience' (Theron, 2020; Goeke-Morey et al, 2013; Rutter, 1987).

However, like Khan & Deb (2021)'s study, dysfunctional family dynamics (e.g., arguments, hostility, and conflict between family members) acted as notable inhibitors to accessing relational support, leaving them particularly emotionally vulnerable to stressors (Goeke-Morey et al, 2013). This reflects the wide amount of literature that highlights the psychological implications of hostile family environments in India (Nagabharana et al, 2021; Khan & Deb, 2021; Patel et al, 2021; Mathew et al, 2015). In some cases, complete emotional detachment from family members enhanced autonomy and agency and helped to alleviate family-based stressors (Ungar, 2004; Werner & Smith, 1982), however, this finding was limited. As suggested by Khan & Deb (2021, p.7), the findings from this study emphasise the role of the dynamic family unit that encompasses 'ever-changing risk and protective factors'. It also reinforces Ungar (2011a)'s argument that the social ecology has an integral role in liberating and/or constraining positive adjustment, and the choices that an individual is able to make. Similar to Khan & Deb (2021)'s recommendation, resilience research would benefit from adopting a longitudinal approach to examine how the Indian family setting can act as both a source of risk and resilience, and how it develops over time.

The final theme relates to the wider influence of socio-cultural norms, attitudes, and beliefs in shaping young women's resilience (Ungar, 2011a, 2013; Adegoke & Steyn, 2018; Lys, 2018; van Rensburg et al, 2019a; Theron, 2016a, 2019; Theron & Ungar, 2019). Traditional gender role preferences shape young women's perceived access to warm and nurturing relationships with family members, notably among those who favoured their brothers (Khan & Deb, 2021). Similar to much of the Indian-based literature outlined in Chapter Two, gender bias within the family environment was reported to hinder young women's abilities to negotiate and navigate their own autonomy (e.g., social opportunities, educational choice, burden of domestic responsibilities in the household) (Hebert et al, 2019; Khan & Deb, 2021; Bansal et al, 2021; Parikh et al, 2019; Andrew et al, 2012; Das et al, 2012b; Rao et al, 2012). This narrative reinforces the patriarchal society, and preference for favouring sons which is deep-rooted within Indian psyche and reflected within the parental upbringing of the child (Khan & Deb, 2021; Singhi et al, 2013; Carson et al, 2014; Pande & Astone, 2007; Batra & Reio, 2016). The psychological implications of academic and career stress were also recognised as a notable stressor for young women and were exacerbated by societal expectations of success

(Parikh et al, 2019; Nagabharana et al, 2021; Mathew et al, 2015). For example, for one young woman, the pressures to follow social constructions of success, and the pressures from parents, resulted in the failure of her high school examinations. This had led to upholding a variety of negative lifestyle habits, such as self-harm and suicidal ideation, and a breakdown in close relationships (Deb et al, 2015; Jayanthi et al, 2015; Arun et al, 2017; Sidhartha & Jena, 2006; Arun & Chavan, 2009; Parikh et al, 2019). However, in most cases, in contrast to much of the Indian based literature, academic stressors tended to be relieved by access to relational resources, especially positive peer networks and supportive teachers, who elicited guidance and effective coping strategies. These findings further reinforce Ungar (2011a)'s and Bronfenbrenner (1979)'s theories which suggest that elements within the macrosystem (e.g., family structures, social beliefs) have significant implications on the individual's macro- (interpersonal resources) and micro-systems (intrapersonal resources).

Gender-based attitudes and beliefs held by community members and wider society were also considered as influential in shaping young women's resilience. Unequal power distributions between genders that impose structural and cultural constraints to women and girls' positive adjustment is outlined in Chapter Two and has ultimately stagnated India's progress towards achieving SDG 5 by 2030 (e.g., Subramanian, 2023). The psychological implications of experiencing societal discrimination and social exclusions were widely discussed throughout all the workshops (Srivastava, 2021; Hebert et al, 2019; Bansal et al, 2021; Parikh et al, 2019). Perceived threats to personal safety (e.g., exposure to verbal and physical harassment) influenced how young women navigate their complex social and physical environments. This aligns with much of the literature that emphasises that this is a commonplace for women and girls in India (Bansal et al, 2021; Hebert et al, 2019; Dhillon & Bakaya, 2014; Beattie et al, 2019; Pillai et al, 2009; Talboys et al, 2017; Tripathi et al, 2017; Parikh et al, 2019). Like Hebert et al (2019)'s study, seeking support from mothers and peers, after exposure to the harassment, were considered as promotive of resilience, as they elicited effective coping strategies to deal with the assault based on prior experiences. Therefore, a notable theme that emerged from all the workshops was the significance of strong networks of women (Theron, 2016a). Similar to Shanthakumari et al (2014)'s study, there appeared to be a strong female system who were supportive and stood by each other during times of difficulty. There was a collective belief regarding the strength of women in staying strong during adversity, and their abilities to conquer challenges imposed on by wider society. Empathising with other women who had experienced similar circumstances (e.g., sexual assault), providing useful guidance

based on their experience, and collectively speaking out against gender-biased social norms, were also considered as resilience-enablers (Adegoke & Steyn, 2018). This echoes the finding by Shanthakumari et al (2014) and Srivastava (2021) about the journey of building resilience within female friendships groups among those who have experienced similar adversities. Despite the challenges inflicted by wider society, the fact that young women's networks were instrumental in contributing to their resilience, flags the significance of 'women's constructive contribution to young people's resilience processes' (Theron, 2016a, p.662). This element, therefore, could be built into resilience and empowerment intervention models aimed at women and girls in India. Like Shand (2014)'s mental health arts-based community program, this could take the form of female-focussed arts-based interventions that encourage open discussions and exchange of knowledge within safe and secure environments.

The third research question focussed on exploring the influence of contextual and cultural processes in shaping the protective factors that are promotive of young women's resilience in New Delhi, India. The findings draw on the findings from the previous questions to further reinforce the argument that resilience is more than just a psychological construct, and rather an 'interactive process in which young people and their environments co-invest' (Theron, 2016a, p.636, 2016b; Masten 2014b; Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar 2011a, 2013, 2015; Ungar et al, 2007; Wright et al, 2013). The findings correspond with much of the previous SER literature that infers that young women's resilience can be influenced by a complex interplay of broader social, political, cultural, and physical contextual influences (Ungar, 2011a; Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021; van Breda & Theron, 2018; Theron, 2016a). It notably contributes insight into how young women's complex social and physical ecologies, can enable and/or constrain access and availability to resilience-supporting factors, aligning with Ungar (2011a)'s SER theory. The findings reinforce much of the Indian based resilience literature that highlights contextually and culturally specific factors that contribute to women's resilience (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016; Shanthakumari et al, 2014; Srivastava, 2021; Verma, 2015; Khan & Deb, 2021; Parikh et al, 2019). For example, the extent to which the 'collectivistic' family unit is considered as a source of strength, the significance of participating in religious practices and spirituality, and the importance of female support systems to tackle adversities together. Whilst the findings share similarities with western-based literature, it emphasises that resilience should be considered as more than a predictable set of universally defined protective factors and positive outcomes, and rather, it is specific to

an individual's socio-cultural context (Ungar, 2011a). The subsequent section considers the limitations that arose from this research study.

5.5. Limitations

This research study is not without its limitations. The researcher experienced several challenges that influenced the research design, data collection, analysis and reporting phases. Whilst the quantitative portion of the research yielded a high response rate (567), the number of participants in the qualitative portion is relatively small (28). This was due to constraints on the researcher's time, availability of financial resources, and the complexities associated with accessing participants during the college's examination period (April-May). Due to young women's scheduling conflicts, some participants who had expressed an interest to participate, were unable to, and some who partook in the first session were unable to return for the second. This meant that there were more artworks based on experiences of adversity, and a lesser amount on the protective factors associated with resilience. Due to Covid-19 constraints, the researcher only had access to one all-female college located in New Delhi, therefore, the cultural and religious diversity, age ranges, and SES backgrounds of the participants are relatively homogenous. The experiences and narratives, whilst rich and informative, has the potential to reflect a narrower perspective of the broader realities of resilience. Young women in different social and environmental contexts may face unique challenges that influence access and availability to protective factors and coping mechanisms that cultivate resilience, which could have potentially influenced the research findings. It is likely that the participants had the financial means to fund their courses, had access to a supportive social structure, and had the opportunity to choose an all-female college. They also may have benefitted from the college's social environment that promotes solidarity, personal and professional development, the celebration of achievements and the empowerment of its students. The absence of male counterparts could also create an environment where young women felt more liberated to express themselves and challenge societal norms. Young women who attend mixed gendered or rurally located institutions, for example, may face different pressures relating to socio-cultural norms and beliefs, which could shape how resilience is exhibited and understood. Despite it being beyond the scope of the study, future research would benefit from conducting quantitative and qualitative research with a more diverse group of young women attending other colleges in Delhi and its surrounding regions. This would provide a more diversified view of the factors and processes

that influence young women's resilience and gather a broader insight into how they relate to wider processes of gender inequalities that are entrenched within Indian society. It is not possible to generalise these findings to any other contexts other than the college that was selected as the research location in this study. The researcher was also unable to simultaneously collect quantitative and qualitative data from the same sample of young women due to the travel restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The young women self-reported data related to their background information, resilience, and locus of control through the online questionnaire, therefore, it is important to consider the validity of this data. In their limitations section, Hjemdal et al (2006, p.93) recognises that 'one should select a sample that consists of individuals who have successfully adapted and dealt with long-term stresses and adversities'. Due to the Covid-19 lockdowns in the UK and India, the researcher was unable to travel to Delhi to conduct in-depth background research into the participants' lives, therefore, it was difficult to determine who had successfully 'bounced back' from adversity. Consequently, the researcher employed a convenience sampling technique to collect a large range of quantitative data remotely, prior to conducting qualitative research in Spring 2022. Delivery of the questionnaire through an online medium may have prevented some of the young women from participating in the research (e.g., connectivity issues). Social desirability response bias and ecological validity may have also influenced participants' responses in the questionnaire. However, these limitations were addressed through the triangulation of additional data sources, such as group discussions within the reflective art workshops. Construct validity could have been improved by comparing the READ to other established scales, such as those that measure self-efficacy and satisfaction with life, as conducted in studies that have validated the READ with adolescent populations (e.g., von Soest et al, 2010; Stratta et al, 2012; Ruvalcaba-Romero et al, 2014; Moksnes & Haugan, 2018).

In relation to the qualitative data, the reflective art workshops enabled the researcher to build rapport and reduce power tensions with participants. The nature of these workshops could have meant that the relationship between the researcher and the participants were influenced by friendship. Shand (2014) identifies a similar limitation in their study and suggests that this may have evoked a sense of loyalty to the researcher. This could have influenced response bias, as participants may have responded more favourably towards the researcher, and in turn, limited their expressions of negative experiences (Argyle & Bolton, 2005). However, group

discussions enabled the researcher to listen and witness the social interactions and conversations between participants regarding their experiences of risk and resilience, which may have not emerged within semi-structured interviews. The researcher felt that employing ABR methods, within a creative research environment, was the most appropriate form of data collection to build trust, stimulate reflection and encourage participant-led forms of personal expression in relation to resilience (Ascroft, 2024; Kara, 2020; Vaart et al, 2018). The researcher also kept daily reflective journals which supported them in considering whether there were potential contradictions in what had been discussed during the workshops. Due to the nature of the workshops, which facilitated a safe, and supportive environment, and encouraged inclusivity, participants had the option to communicate verbally and/or non-verbally. For those who chose to participate non-verbally (e.g., participating only in artmaking), whilst the researcher had been able to capture a written summary of their artworks, they were unable to clarify some of the messages that they were trying to convey. Therefore, it is possible that some of the qualitative data may have been missed.

Despite the majority of the young women having proficient English-speaking abilities, the researcher was still faced with a notable language barrier during the workshops. In each workshop, the society president, or vice-president, acted as a translator for the participants if needed. However, they were unable to relay verbatim everything that was discussed by the participants, thus, it is possible that some of the data had been lost. Whilst the researcher had access to a Hindi-speaking colleague, who helped to transcribe and translate most of the qualitative data, there was some data that was unable to be picked up (e.g., due to a loud environment), therefore, some potentially useful data was inaccessible. During the qualitative data analysis stage, the researcher was able to code the data into common themes that arose during the discussions, however, they were cautious that they may have been influenced by the translator's (president or vice-presidents) own thoughts and opinions. The majority of the young women's quotes that are included in Chapter Four were spoken in English, whereas a fraction were translated. Therefore, these quotes should be observed through the lens of the translator's interpretation skills, and their prioritisation of the most imperative information that they chose to communicate to the researcher. Finally, as the qualitative data was analysed manually through thematic analysis, it is possible that the reliability of the data could have been improved through the application of computer analysis software packages (e.g., NVivo, ATLAS.ti or MAXQDA). This is a similar limitation identified by Shand (2014, p.36) who states that 'a combination of manual and computer methods would have

produced more confidence in the data analysis’ and reduce potential human error. Despite the justification of using thematic analysis to examine participants’ descriptions of their artworks, subjective analysis of the artwork itself (e.g., scrutinising the application of shapes, colours, textures) could uncover further readings of resilience.

The following section outlines potential avenues for future research, that builds on the findings of this research study. It considers the importance of acknowledging the wider function of context and culture in the resilience process, the role of employing mixed methods approaches in research, and the significance of directly capturing young women’s elucidations of resilience.

5.6. Considerations for Future Research

There are numerous considerations for further research which arose from the findings of this research study. The research study implies that the protective factors, that are implicated in young women’s resilience are complex, and contextually and culturally dependent (Ungar, 2011a, 2013). Future research could consider Ungar (2011a)’s SER perspective further to examine the extent to which protective factors operate at not only the individual, family, and external environments, but how they are shaped by the wider socio-cultural context. For example, as highlighted by Vaughn & DeJonckheere (2021), the structural and spiritual/cultural layer of resilience is relatively understudied. Despite being beyond the scope of this study, future research could examine the extent to which government organisations and services, or entrenched religious and cultural attitudes and beliefs, enable and/or inhibit resilience. Therefore, research should continue to pay close attention to understanding the ‘contextual, individual, and cultural processes’ (VicHealth, 2015, p.22; Ungar, 2013) in order to gather relevant interpretations of young women’s life-worlds in India. This can respond to the widespread calls for the further application of Ungar (2011a)’s SER approach to support and promote the global health and well-being of youth (Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021; Ungar & Theron, 2020; Lorenc et al, 2020).

In alignment with this research study, a mixed method design would be an effective approach to examine the potentially unnamed and diverse processes of resilience, add power to young women’s voices, and explore the complex lives of young women in India (Ungar, 2003). This research study highlights the unique contribution that ABR methods have in not only stimulating reflection and reflexivity, but encouraging young women to ‘explore, embody

and express complex and challenging phenomena, such as resilience' (Shand, 2014, p.i). The workshops also reinforced a sense of social connectedness and belonging between the participants, a sense of mastery over their artwork, and situated resilience within an everyday context (Shand, 2014). Responding to the widespread calls from cultural resilience researchers, future research could focus on identifying creative and youth-led solutions for resilience research and practice (Ungar, 2013; Liebenberg, 2009a). Like ABR methods, continuing to situate young women at the centre of the research process, and involving them as 'co-researchers' (e.g., Ozer & Douglas, 2015; Anyon et al, 2018), can be a critical approach in understanding what is meaningful to them in creating positive change.

The findings from this research study also implied that resilience is an interactive, and dynamic process. Despite it being beyond the scope of the study, a longitudinal research design could further shed light on young women's resilience processes and how it changes over time (Werner, 2005; Werner & Smith, 1982). To gather an understanding of the influence of the family, college, community environment, and socio-cultural context on young women's resilience, it could be particularly beneficial to include the voices of key socio-ecological stakeholders (e.g., family members, peers, teaching staff, and community members) in the research processes. This would help to inform resilience-building interventions that are tailored specifically to the young women's requirements (VicHealth, 2015), which is considered further in the concluding chapter of this thesis. Future research could consider the extent to which background information (e.g., age, religion, caste) and family SES act as a potential driving factor that shapes young women's resilience. As discussed, future research could include a greater number of all-female colleges, especially those with a more social, cultural, and economically diverse student body, as it would add greater depth to the findings. The final section presents the conclusion to this discussion chapter.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter presented a summary of this research study's findings. It responded to each of the three research questions in turn, and considered how the findings compare with the previous literature on resilience outlined in Chapter Two - Literature Review. The findings complement the literature in revealing the key protective factors that contribute to young women's resilience. This reflects the idea that resilience is a multi-dimensional construct, whereby protective factors operate across individual, familial, and external environments

levels. It also implies that the construct is ‘a dynamic process that is context and time specific’ (Sleijpen et al, 2017, p.348; Luthar et al, 2000). The findings also highlight the salience of relational resources (e.g., peers, family, college teaching staff, community members) in fostering the development of individual attributes (e.g., positive self-concept). They demonstrate that psychological constructs, such as an internal locus of control, can play a key role in contributing to young women’s resilience. The findings also insinuate that the protective factors of resilience can be further moulded and shaped by young women’s contextual and cultural realities (Masten, 2014b; Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar, 2011a).

The pervading response to the overarching research aim of investigating the factors and processes that influence young women’s resilience, in the context of New Delhi, India, is the following. Young women have complex and ‘diverse pathways of resilience’ (Ungar, 2012, p.253) that are relevant to their specific socio-cultural contexts. This includes differing viewpoints regarding the beliefs and experiences about what combinations of protective factors are perceived to act as buffers against a specific adversity. Whilst there are generic protective factors which account for their perceived positive adjustment, access and availability to these resources are influenced by their specific social and physical environments (e.g., culture, community, and relationships) (Ungar, 2011a). Ultimately, broader cultural and contextual processes can have a substantial role to play in enabling and/or inhibiting young women’s resilience. When elements within young women’s wider environments provide access to resilience-supporting factors, that are considered as meaningful, it can be instrumental in optimising health and mental well-being, and positively influence the resilience process. The final chapter presents the conclusion to this thesis.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The previous chapter presented a summary of the research findings and compared them with others in the field of resilience. This chapter presents the conclusion to this thesis. It begins by providing an overview of this thesis and outlines the uniqueness of this study. The second section outlines possible approaches to drive stakeholder progress towards achieving SDG 3 & 5 in India and situates the findings from this study within the post-2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

6.1. Thesis Overview

The objective of this research study has been to investigate the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in the context of an all-female college in New Delhi, India. Chapter One introduced the concept of resilience, and briefly explored how it is defined, its key components and the central objectives of resilience research. It outlined the rationale of this research study and highlighted the gaps in the literature that this thesis draws on. It also situated the current research within the wider perspective of global development research and emphasised the importance of women's resilience in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. This chapter also outlined India's progress towards achieving the SDGs, notably SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and 5 (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment), outlined the contribution of this research study and the structure of this thesis.

Chapter Two presented a review of the resilience literature. This chapter provided a brief history of resilience research, and an insight into the ongoing 'Trait vs Process' debate. It emphasised that resilience is a dynamic process that is dependent on the broader context of an individual's resources, as opposed to simply being a personality characteristic. It demonstrated that resilience is multi-dimensional, as protective factors are interconnected and operate over multiple different levels (e.g., individual, family, and external environment). It was hypothesised that an internal locus of control orientation can play a critical role in supporting the development of resilience among young people. It also outlined how child and adolescent resilience is operationalised, and the ongoing limitations associated with current research and opportunities for further research. Drawing on the limitations, this chapter presented Ungar (2011a)'s SER theory, which posits that there is an additional layer of protective processes – context and culture - when conducting research in cross-cultural

contexts. The literature showed that individual attributes of resilience can be moulded by multiple different forces, such as ‘relationships, community resources, structural supports and inequalities, and societal beliefs’ (Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021, p.130). The chapter concluded by outlining the structural and socio-cultural challenges faced by many young women in India (e.g., threats to personal safety, academic stressors, navigating relationships), and highlighted the resilience research that has been conducted within the context that this research study takes place.

Chapter Three presented the methodological approach that was employed in this thesis. It began by outlining the research questions, prior to describing the explanatory mixed methods research design, the setting in which the research took place, and the sampling techniques that were used. An explanation was also provided to describe how the quantitative and qualitative data were analysed. It delineated the philosophical standpoint from which this research study was conducted, focussing on the ontological position of critical realism and the epistemological post-positivist approach. This chapter also described the validity and reliability issues that arose from the research and the actions taken to address them. Finally, the ethical considerations of this research were addressed.

Chapter Four presented this research study’s results. It initially presented the descriptive statistics from the quantitative and qualitative data to provide a background of the research setting prior to answering each of the research questions in turn. The findings implied that young women’s resilience consists of a series of interconnected protective factors, that exist at the individual (e.g., internal locus of control), family, and the external environment, and are shaped by wider contextual and cultural processes. As Ungar (2011a)’s theory demarcates, the findings emphasise the influence of young women’s social and physical environments, and their capacities to shape the extent to which young women adapt to adversity. Chapter Five provided a summary of the main findings and considered to what extent they expand upon the literature detailed in Chapter Two. It also considered the study’s limitations and outlined potential avenues for future research.

This research study offers a unique contribution to the literature by using statistical methods, such as correlational analysis and SEM, in combination with thematic analysis of qualitative data, to investigate the factors and processes that influence young women’s resilience. It extends on the research that aims to understand the strategies and resources that support young women in working towards or maintaining resilience in India (e.g., Shanthakumari et

al, 2014). It also builds on the literature that adopts Ungar (2011a)'s SER perspective and highlights the effectiveness of using a cultural and contextual lens to investigate youths' resilience-supporting mechanisms in a developing country context. The findings highlight the insufficiency of western-based interpretations to completely explain resilience among young people in majority-world contexts, and outlines that there are broader processes at play which are relevant to specific cultural and contextual positionings (Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar, 2013). This research also captures the unique and innovative contribution that ABR methods have in illuminating young women's voices and understanding their transformational processes of resilience. This will be beneficial when conducting future research that samples similar groups of young women from diverse backgrounds (McKay & Sappa, 2020; McKay & Barton, 2018). Finally, it contributes insights to inform the development of culturally relevant multi-levelled interventions, social policies and implementation of services that work towards supporting young women's mental well-being and resilience in India. The following section extends on the findings from this research study to suggest possible approaches that stakeholders could use to drive India's progress towards achieving SDG 3 & 5 by 2030.

6.2. Approaches to Accelerate Progress Towards SDG 3 & 5 in India

This research study has illuminated the complex factors and processes which relate to young women's resilience in the context of New Delhi, India. Based on the findings of this research study, there are numerous advances that can be adopted by relevant stakeholders (e.g., local, and national authorities, public and private sectors, academics, NGOs) to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG 3 & 5 in India. These findings also accentuate the significance of women's resilience in the post-2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

- **Privileging Local Knowledge of Resilience**

This research has shown that there are numerous protective factors and processes that are specific to young women, and the socio-cultural contexts in which they live (Ungar, 2011a, 2013). Young women have diverse pathways of resilience, therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all approach when designing and implementing interventions that support the development and maintenance of resilience. Ungar (2005) argues that to achieve contextually and culturally relevant processes, researchers must conduct indigenous research where key stakeholders (e.g., the individual and the community) are consulted about risk and protective processes. When young women's voices are illuminated in the research process, they can

elicit a first-hand account of what is meaningful to them in creating real and positive change. Therefore, when local knowledge is captured, the most influential risks can be addressed and targeted within relevant individual and community-level interventions that work towards supporting and nurturing young women's health and mental well-being (Ungar, 2005). Relevant stakeholders must ensure that preventative interventions are tailored to specific contexts and cultures (Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021). Gathering local knowledge can help to identify what mechanisms, financial instruments, and partnerships are required at local and national levels to help accelerate progress towards achieving SDG 3 & 5 in India.

- **Addressing Socio-Cultural Barriers Restricting Resilience**

This research revealed several potential structural and socio-cultural barriers that constrain young women's pathways towards resilience. The first of these includes limited access to professional health services due to financial constraints and societal stigmas associated with mental illness and health-seeking behaviours in India (Gaiha et al, 2020). Secondly, inter-familial conflict and restrictive parenting styles were found to not only enhance stress but compromise the accessibility and availability to relational resources. Finally, broader societal attitudes and socio-cultural beliefs, often related towards the social status of women, held significant authority in shaping access to resilience-supporting mechanisms.

As Theron (2016a, p.664) argues, social and physical ecologies must exercise greater accountability in providing access to protective resources, especially when they 'fail to challenge, and change, systems that predict youth vulnerability' (Ungar, 2013). There is a call for stakeholders that hold authority in shaping young people's resilience, to 'change the society-level odds stacked against individuals that block their opportunities to achieve a better future' (Southwick et al, 2014, p.6; Reed et al, 2012; Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012). Therefore, to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs, stakeholders must build robust, supportive, and equitable societies to provide the material, financial, cultural, and social means to enable young women to achieve their full potential (Southwick et al, 2014, p.6; Ager et al, 2013; Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012). As opposed to simply allowing young women to adjust to their potentially 'toxic' life-worlds, addressing these structural and socio-cultural challenges would be particularly important in informing relevant policy, interventions and programs for young women experiencing adversity in India (Fisher et al, 2012; Masten, 2014b; Theron, 2016a). Understanding and championing young women's preferred pathways of resilience is integral to enhance progress towards SDG 3 & 5 in India

and spotlight the significance of women's resilience in the post-2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

- **Multi-levelled Interventions to Support and Nurture Resilience**

The findings from this research study highlight the multiple interconnected systems that shape young women's resilience. Whilst interventions that solely target resources at the individual level, among young women in India (see Leventhal et al, 2015; Mathias et al, 2018) are mostly effective, as suggested by this research study's findings, resilience is an interactive concept, therefore, a multi-levelled intervention would be the most appropriate approach. Resilience-building intervention designs could employ Ungar (2011a)'s SER theory, which recognises the complex social and cultural environments, disparities, and challenges that young people experience. It would be beneficial to provide young people with the knowledge on how to access relational resources (e.g., positive, and nurturing relationships), and the attributes (e.g., problem solving skills) that are promotive of resilience (VicHealth, 2015). For example, encouraging friendships with prosocial peers in health activities (e.g., extracurricular activities), nurturing healthy family functioning through education and policies, and supporting behaviour change techniques (e.g., supporting identity development, encouraging goal orientated behaviours).

To ensure the intervention is tailored to specific requirements, young women themselves must be consulted, or be engaged in the research process, to collect information concerning barriers to well-being, their personal skills and strengths, and their perspectives on the wider processes that influence resilience. Involving young women as 'co-researchers' (e.g., Ozer & Douglas, 2015; Anyon et al, 2018) can be particularly important in understanding what is required from a resilience intervention. Whilst consultation with individuals, as well as local communities, may be somewhat challenging and time consuming for stakeholders, it can offer young women with ownership of the intervention. It also is more likely to result in greater outcomes for their short and long-term health and mental well-being and future resilience trajectories over their life courses. It is imperative for key stakeholders to deliberate these approaches to address gaps in attainment, combat existing challenges, and accelerate progress towards achieving the health and gender-related SDGs in India, within this Decade of Action.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Comparison of Key Concepts for Resilience Theorists

Summary of key concepts for six major resilience theorists (adapted from VicHealth, 2015, p.23-25)

	Definitions	Theory	Empirical Evidence	Implications for population health and well-being
Michael Rutter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘An interactive concept that is concerned with the combination of serious risk experiences and a relatively positive psychological outcome despite those experiences’ (Rutter, 2006, p.26) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Steeling effects’ (Rutter, 2013, p.477), • Mental components (e.g., agency can influence resilience), • The notion of turning points, • Multi-level interactions influence the resilience process, • Emphasis on social relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1979 study comparing children from Isle of Wight, and children from low-income backgrounds in London. • Personal competence and social support through positive-parent child relationship are significant for children’s resilience, (Rutter, 1979). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic and environmental routes to psychopathology, • Risk can be protective, • Turning points can happen later in life, • The biological pathways of resilience require greater attention from scholars.
Norman Garmezy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience is ‘a process of, capacity for, or the outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging and threatening circumstances’ (Masten et al, 1990, p.425) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of positive child development, • Cumulative effect of life stressors, • Addresses individual attributes, family, and community factors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1961 ‘Project Competence’ identifying competence in children with parents experiencing schizophrenia in the US. • Absence of disorder indicates that there were unknown protective factors operating. • (Garmezy, 1991, 1993; Garmezy et al, 1984). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers should hold an ecological perspective of resilience. Interventions with children should target resources within the individual, family, and community levels. • Proposes three models to explain resilience; compensatory, protective vs vulnerability, and challenge (Garmezy et al, 1984).

<p>Emmy Werner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The capacity [of individuals] to cope effectively with the internal stresses of their vulnerabilities (labile patterns of autonomic reactivity, developmental imbalances, unusual sensitivities) and external stresses (illness, major losses, and dissolution of the family)’ (Werner & Smith, 1989, p.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences between factors at individual, family, and community level, • Protective factors operate directly and indirectly, • Resilience is a dynamic process, • Resilience depends on the correct balance between risk and protective factors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1982 Kauai longitudinal study with 868 children, identifying the individual, family, and community differences between risk and resilience. • Follow-up study in 1985-86 identified that there are traits of the individual, ties within the family, and external support systems, that influence child resilience. • (Werner, 1989, 1995, 2000, 2005; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1989, 1992). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of generalised resources and their affect is required in research with children and youth, • Review role of other members of the family (e.g., grandparents) in the resilience process, • Highlights the importance of external supports outside of the family environment, • Focus on developing child coherence, • Resilience is not static; therefore, change is possible with the right types of resources.
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<p style="text-align: center;">Suniya Luthar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘A dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation with the context of significant adversity’ (Luthar et al, 2000, p.543). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two critical conditions for resilience: adversity and positive adaptation, • Resilience is a multi-dimensional construct (operates at individual, family and wider environment levels), • Argues that there is too much diversity in measurement of resilience domains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1991 study with 144 adolescents in inner-city public schools, identifying six characteristics of social competence (e.g., warmth and locus of control). • Later study in 2003 study with 277 mothers with substance abuse problems and their children, showed that children who externalised problems and internalised disorders were heavily influenced by parent psychopathology (e.g., depression and anxiety). • (Luthar, 1991). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are three types of protective factors: (1) protective-stabilising, (2) protective-enhancing, and (3) protective but reactive (Luthar et al, 2000), • Focus on mechanisms of variables that act as a protective or risk factor (Luthar et al, 2000), • Focus on multi-dimensional nature of resilience, • Calls for more clarity in definitions, terminology, and measurements of resilience, • Qualitative resilience research to ensure relevance (voices of young people).
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Ann Masten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten its stability, viability, or development’ (Masten, 2014b, p.6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals do not simply withstand risk; they change to accommodate it, • Variable focussed – statistical relationship and patterns between variables, • Individual-focussed – identify resilient people and how they are different from their non-resilient counterparts, • Resilience is multi-dimensional, • Resilience is a process that changes over time, • Adults can be late bloomers (Masten et al, 2005). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1999 longitudinal study with young children (aged 8-12), and then ten years later (aged 14-19) testing the influence of parent quality and intellectual functioning. • Psychosocial resources are key to influence the resilience process. • There are numerous underlying factors that are prevalent within the resilience process. • (Masten et al, 1999). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of considering that some children lack opportunities for positive adaptation, • Strengthen understanding of underlying protective processes, • Person-focussed and contextualised approach to risk and resilience research, • Individuals react different to stressors, which may be dependent on the influence of context and culture (Masten, 2014b) (see Ungar – Appendix 2).
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Michael Ungar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience ‘is the structures around the individual, the services the individual receives, the way health knowledge is generated, all of which combine with characteristics of individuals that allow them to overcome the adversity they face and chart pathways to resilience’ (Ungar, 2005, p.xxviii). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are seven tensions of resilience, which are influenced by context and culture: (1) access to material resources, (2) relationships, (3) identity, (4) power and control, (5) social justice, (6) cultural adherence, and (7) cohesion (Ungar et al, 2007). • Emphasis on environment’s capacity to facilitate an individual’s growth. • Resilience is dependent upon how an individual navigates and negotiates their social and physical ecologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007 study with 89 youth (aged 12-23) in their transition into adulthood. Identifies that there is a strong interplay between children’s context, culture, and their strength as they navigate the seven tensions. • In a later 2008 11-country study with 108 youth in total finds that resilience is not a predictable set of developmental processes and positive outcomes. • (Ungar et al, 2007; Ungar, 2008) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be more attention on capturing local knowledge from different contexts. • Resilience research and interventions must be sensitive to most influential resources (Ungar, 2011b) • Research must be conducted across four dimensions: (1) individual, (2) relational, (3) structural, (4) cultural/spiritual. • Intervention that support children and youth much focus on supporting them in navigating the seven tensions. • A youth-directed understanding of resilience is required.
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Appendix 2: Summary of Ungar's Protective Processes (SER)

Summary of Ungar et al (2007)'s protective processes (adapted from VicHealth, 2015, p.42).

	Individual	Relational	Structural/Community	Culture/Spiritual
Michael Ungar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertiveness, • Empathy for others and the capacity to understand others, • Positive self-concept (e.g., self-awareness, self-efficacy, and self-confidence), • Sense of personal control, • Problem-solving ability, • Goal orientation, • Optimism, • Sense of humour, • Appropriate use of coping strategies, • Good balance between independence and dependence on others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a positive mentor and role models, • Meaningful relationships with others at home, school, and wider environment (e.g., perceived peer and parent support), • Quality parent-child relationships, • Social competence, • Family cohesion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived social equity, • Community cohesion, • Access to school and education, information and learning resources, • Meaningful rites of passage with an appropriate amount of risk, • Exposure to violence is avoided by one's family, community, peers, • Access to professional services for support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture/spiritual identification, • Belief in God and/or a higher power, • Self-betterment (betterment of the person and community), • Cultural dislocation and a change in values are handled well, • Youth and their families are tolerant of each other's ideologies and beliefs (such as gender roles), • Affiliation with a religious organisation (e.g., church), • Being culturally grounded.

Key Definitions of SER Principles (Decentrality, Complexity and Atypicality)

Firstly, *decentrality* refers to how social ecologies are a significant partner in the resilience process, as opposed to focussing specifically on the child themselves (Ungar, 2011a). Ungar (2011a, p.5) states that 'this subject centred approach means that responsibility for resilience is wrongly placed on the victim of toxic environments, with change hypothesised as a measure of how well the child is individually able to take advantage of environmental resources'. They continue by stating that 'By decentering the child it becomes clearer that, when growing up in adversity the locus of change does not reside in either the child or the environment alone, but in the processes by which environments provide resources for use by

the child' (Ungar, 2011a, p.5-6). Essentially, Ungar argues that whilst an individual is an integral component of the resilience process, they are not the central mechanism.

Secondly, in relation to *complexity*, Ungar (2011a) outlines that previous efforts taken to simplify resilience has unequivocally undermined research, and largely disregards 'the child's capacity to use opportunities, the capacity of the environment to provide for growth, interactional patterns between the environment and the child, and changes across physical and social worlds' (cited in VicHealth, 2015, p.21). Such complexity and temporally specific models to contextualise resilience are required to provide an efficient framework for research and intervention with young people.

Thirdly, *atypicality* refers to 'the openness to processes that work for young people but are not usually identified as 'resilience'' (VicHealth, 2015, p.21). As there are numerous pathways for resilience, consequently, individual's will differ in their perceptions of how meaningful a pathway could potentially be. Ungar (2011a) consistently argues that a one-size-fits-all pathway, or uniform journey towards positive outcomes, is highly dubious especially when different cultures and societies can have a substantial influence on resilience. Therefore, Ungar (2011a, p.8) contends that there must be 'less focus on determined outcomes to judge the success of growth trajectories and more emphasis on understanding the functionality of behaviour when alternative pathways to development are blocked' (van Rensburg et al, 2018).

Appendix 3: Online Questionnaire (English version)

1. Background Information and Socio-economic Characteristics

Instructions:

- Below is a questionnaire all about you, your family, and your home life. Answer according to what is true for you by putting a ✓ in the box or by writing the response on the line.
- Please respond to ALL questions.
- This is not a test. Please answer the statements as truthfully as possible.

Demographic information

1. What is your age? _____
2. Which gender to you most identify with?
 - i) Female ☐ (1)
 - ii) Male ☐ (0)
 - iii) Prefer to self-describe _____
3. Where is your family home situated?
 - i) In a city ☐ (1)
 - ii) In a village ☐ (0)
4. In which state were you born? _____
5. Which zone do you currently live in (e.g. Janakpuri)? _____
6. How do you rate your English conversation skills?
 - a. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor

1	2	3	4	5
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7. How do you rate your English reading skills?
 - a. Where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor

1	2	3	4	5
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8. What was your overall class 10 board exam percentage? _____
9. What was your overall class 12 board exam percentage? _____
10. Were your 10th and 12th examinations:
 - i. CBSE (central board)
 - ii. State board

iii. Other (please state) _____

11. How many rooms does your family have for their own use in your home? _____

12. What type of building is your family home?

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| a) Made of clay | <input type="checkbox"/> (1) |
| b) Wood and tin sheet building | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) |
| c) Half baked | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) |
| d) Paved brick made of cement and cement half-baked | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) |
| e) Other (please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) |

13. Does the family own any of the following items? Please tick if your family has a:

Family-owned asset	Please tick here if your family has the item.
a) Car or Jeep	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Scooter or motorcycle	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Cell phone / Mobile	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Electricity	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) TV	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Gas Stove	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Cultivated land	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Cattle	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Goats, sheep and/or chickens	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) Taxi or auto rickshaw	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) Computer	<input type="checkbox"/>
n) Generator	<input type="checkbox"/>
o) Shop or Housing plot	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. What type of floor is in your family home?

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| a) Earth floor | <input type="checkbox"/> (1) |
| b) Cement/concrete/wood | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) |
| c) Carpet/tile | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) |

15. What is your religion?

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| a) Hindu | <input type="checkbox"/> (1) |
| b) Muslim | <input type="checkbox"/> (2) |
| c) Sikh | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) |
| d) Jain | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) |
| e) Christian | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) |
| f) Buddhist | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) |
| g) Parsi | <input type="checkbox"/> (7) |

h) Other religion
_____ ☐ (8)

16. What is your caste?

- a) General ☐ (1)
b) Scheduled caste ☐ (2)
c) Scheduled tribe ☐ (3)
d) Other Backward caste (OBC) ☐ (4)

17. Does your father (male guardian) have an income?

Yes ☐ (1) No ☐ (0)

18. Does your mother (female guardian) have an income?

Yes ☐ (1) No ☐ (0)

19. What does your father (male guardian) do as a job?

20. What does your mother (female guardian) do as a job?

21. What was the highest level of education your father (male guardian) completed?

(only tick one)

- a) No school ☐ (1)
b) Primary school ☐ (2)
c) Secondary school ☐ (3)
d) Secondary advanced ☐ (4)
e) College ☐ (5)
f) University ☐ (6)

22. What was the highest level of education your mother (female guardian) completed?

(only tick one)

- a) No school ☐ (1)
b) Primary school ☐ (2)
c) Secondary school ☐ (3)
d) Secondary advanced ☐ (4)
e) College ☐ (5)
f) University ☐ (6)

2. The Resilience Scale for Adolescents (READ) (Hjemdal et al, 2006; Rulvacaba-Romero et al, 2014).

Ruvalcaba-Romero et al (2014)'s adapted version of the READ scale – 22-item based on Hjemdal et al (2006)

Instructions:

- Below is a questionnaire about resilience. Decide how much you agree with each statement. Circle the number that best shows your feeling or opinion towards that particular statement.
- The rating scale is divided into five levels – 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

1	I achieve my goals if I make a great effort	1	2	3	4	5
2	I do my best when objectives and goals are clear to me	1	2	3	4	5
3	I have some friends and relatives who frequently encourage me	1	2	3	4	5
4	We share in our family the opinion of what is important in life	1	2	3	4	5
5	I can easily manage that people who surround me feel comfortable	1	2	3	4	5
6	I know how to achieve my goals	1	2	3	4	5
7	I feel comfortable with my family	1	2	3	4	5
8	I can easily make new friends	1	2	3	4	5
9	I have some friends and relatives who really care about me	1	2	3	4	5
10	My family is in agreement most of the time	1	2	3	4	5
11	I'm good at talking to new people	1	2	3	4	5
12	I feel competent	1	2	3	4	5
13	I always have somebody available when I need it	1	2	3	4	5
14	Most of time I know what is best for me when I have to choose among several options	1	2	3	4	5

15	My family sees the future in a positive way, even when very sad things happen	1	2	3	4	5
16	I always find something fun to talk about	1	2	3	4	5
17	Self-confidence helps me overcome difficult moments	1	2	3	4	5
18	We help each other in my family	1	2	3	4	5
19	I always find something encouraging to say to other people when they are sad	1	2	3	4	5
20	When things are going bad, I tend to look for the good that can come out of it	1	2	3	4	5
21	We like to do things together in my family	1	2	3	4	5
22	I have some friends and relatives that value my qualities	1	2	3	4	5

3. Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966; Lumpkin, 1985)

Lumpkin (1985) Locus of Control scale – 6 items based on Rotter (1966)

Instructions:

- Below is a questionnaire about locus of control. Decide how much you agree with each statement. Circle the number that best shows your feeling or opinion towards that particular statement.
- The rating scale is divided into five levels – 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = average, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

Internal Items	When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.	1	2	3	4	5
	Getting people to do the right things depends upon ability; luck has nothing to do with it.	1	2	3	4	5
	What happens to me is my own doing.	1	2	3	4	5

External Items	Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.	1	2	3	4	5
	Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.	1	2	3	4	5
	Many times, I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 4: Participant Information Forms (English version)

1. College Principle



Elle Young
School of Education, Communication
and Language Sciences
Email: e.young1@ncl.ac.uk

Participant Information Sheet – College Principle

PROJECT TITLE: The Art of Resilience: A mixed methods investigation into the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India.

This is an invitation for students at your institution to take part in a research study. Please read the information carefully and consider it before you decide to take part. You may wish to discuss this information with colleagues and students prior to deciding whether to give your consent in writing.

This study is a part of a Newcastle University PhD programme undertaken by Elle Young. It explores the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India. The project aims to capture in-depth narratives of young women's resilience to help inform relevant interventions that work towards supporting mental well-being and building resilience among young women and girls. This is why your institution has been invited to participate in the study.

The initial phase of the research will employ online questionnaires to look at young women's socio-economic background, their perceived protective resources for resilience, and their locus of control. The second phase of the research entails the researcher visiting the college campus to conduct a series of reflective art workshops, where young women will be encouraged to engage in discussions around resilience, whilst simultaneously creating art. The researcher will be making observations and taking photographs of participants' artwork within the workshops.

Questionnaires: Young women asked to participate in the questionnaire component will have the aims of the study explained to them online and will receive an information sheet. They will be informed that they have the choice whether to be involved in the research and will be given a consent form prior to proceeding with the online questionnaire. They will be free to end their involvement at any time during the process.

Reflective Art Workshops: In the second phase of the research process, small groups of students will be invited to participate in reflective art workshops. Each workshop will comprise of two 1.5-2-hour sessions, and can accommodate between 7-10 students at a time, across all age groups. They will be reminded of the aims of the project and will receive another information sheet relating to the reflective art workshop. They will be reminded that they have the choice whether to participate, that their decision will have no impact on their college experience, and that they can withdraw at any time. They will receive a second consent form for the reflective art workshop component. For more information, the researcher can give you the information sheet prepared for the students.

Observations and photography: All students will be informed that the researcher is present in the college to observe the college environment. No students or staff will appear in any of the photos – these will just include images of college surroundings and participants' artwork.

Participation is completely confidential – All identifiable data will be anonymous in the final report and the researcher will not withhold information from participants prior to the research. No names will be used to identify participants in the final report. Once the results have been analysed, all participants, including college staff and students, will have access to a short user-friendly report that provides details about the research outcomes. This short report will contain the contact details of the researcher.

Thank you for considering this information.

2. College Students (Questionnaire)



Elle Young
School of Education, Communication
and Language Sciences
Email: e.young1@ncl.ac.uk

Participant Information Sheet – College Students (Questionnaire)

PROJECT TITLE: The Art of Resilience: A mixed methods investigation into the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Elle Young, and I am a researcher from Newcastle University in the United Kingdom. My university is carrying out some research with young women in New Delhi, India. I am interested in working with young women to illuminate their stories of resilience.

WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

You are invited to take part in a research project that looks at examining the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India. If you take part in the study, your name will not appear in the final report. No one will know that you took part. At the end of the study, we will give your college some information about what we have found out, which they will share with you. So, please take the time you need to discuss this study with anyone you wish to. The decision to join or not is completely up to you. You can withdraw at any time. Deciding not to take part or choosing to leave the study will not result in any negative consequences at college or home. It will not harm your relationship with the college staff. Participation in this study is voluntary.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part you will be asked to take part in an online questionnaire where you will answer written questions in three sections: (1) You, your family, and your home life, (2) Resilience, and (3) Locus of Control. Each topic will be explained to you prior to participating in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire will be distributed in both English and Hindi formats. If you have any questions, the researcher's email, as well as a college staff member's email, will be included in the questionnaire. If you decide to take part, then change your mind, you can ask to be taken out of the study at any time. If you decide to stop, you will not lose any benefits.

BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

We can't guarantee that you will personally experience benefits from taking part in this study. However, others may benefit in the future from the information we find in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will take steps to keep information about you confidential, and to stop anyone finding out that you took part. When we write up what we found out all results will be given numbers or letters – they will have no names and there will be no way of finding out who did what. We need to protect who you are and your results so all the information will be kept on a computer that is password-protected.

Thank you for taking the time to read this sheet.

3. College Students (Reflective Art Workshops)



Elle Young
School of Education, Communication
and Language Sciences
Email: e.young1@ncl.ac.uk

Participant Information Sheet – College Students (Reflective Art Workshops)

PROJECT TITLE: The Art of Resilience: A mixed methods investigation into the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Elle Young, and I am a researcher from Newcastle University in the United Kingdom. My university is carrying out some research with young women in New Delhi, India. I am interested in working with young women to illuminate their stories of resilience.

WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

You are invited to take part in a research project that looks at examining the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India. If you take part in the study, your name will not appear in the final report. No one will know that you took part. At the end of the study, we will give your college some information about what we have found out, which they will share with you. So, please take the time you need to discuss this study with anyone you wish to. The decision to join or not is completely up to you. You can withdraw at any time. Deciding not to take part or choosing to leave the study will not result in any negative consequences at college or home. It will not harm your relationship with the college staff. Participation in this study is voluntary.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to attend a 'Reflective Art Workshop' that consists of two optional sessions lasting 1.5-2-hours. The workshops are a safe space for yourself and your peers to openly discuss your stories of resilience, whilst simultaneously creating artwork. You have the freedom to talk about what you want and artistically create what you want in the session. Depending on how long the session takes, it is possible that you may miss some of your class time.

If you decide to take part, but then change your mind, you can ask to be taken out of the study at any time. If you do not wish to talk about a certain topic, that is fine. If you decide to stop, you will not lose any benefits. If you choose to participate, you will be asked questions and what you say in the discussions will be recorded. Copies of your artwork will also be taken; however, this is optional and if you are asked to take part, you can say no. You can change your mind at any time during the sessions and leave the activity.

BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

We can't guarantee that you will personally experience benefits from taking part in this study. However, others may benefit in the future from the information we find in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will take steps to keep information about you confidential, and to stop anyone finding out that you took part. When we write up what we found out all results will be given numbers or letters – they will have no names and there will be no way of finding out who did what. We need to protect who you are and your results so all the information will be kept on a computer that is password-protected.

Thank you for taking the time to read this sheet.

Appendix 5: Consent Forms (English version)

1. College Students



Elle Young
School of Education, Communication and
Language Sciences
Email: e.young1@ncl.ac.uk

Participant Consent Sheet

PROJECT TITLE: The Art of Resilience: A mixed methods investigation into the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India.

Please read the sentences below and tick the boxes if you agree.


1. I confirm that I have read the information document for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions. The researcher has given me answers I am happy with. ☐
2. I understand that taking part is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. ☐
3. I understand that the information collected about me will be stored securely and no one will be able to find out that I have taken part. ☐
4. I give permission for the information collected about me to be used for further research in the future. ☐
5. I agree to take part in the study. ☐

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's name: Elle Young

Researcher's signature: _____  _____

Appendix 6: Participant Debriefing



Elle Young
School of Education, Communication
and Language Sciences
Email: e.young1@ncl.ac.uk

Participant Debriefing

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking part in Newcastle University's study that focussed on the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India. Your participation was extremely gratefully received. It has enabled the researcher to analyse the valuable data/information you provided.

The overall purpose of the research study was to illuminate young women's stories of resilience, and to help inform relevant interventions that aim to support and enhance young women's mental well-being and resilience in India.

The following are the major draft findings of the component of the study you were participating in:

[Insert major findings of the particular component of the study]

The researcher values your comments, suggestions, queries, and any observations you may have with regards to these findings. If you wish to address any such comments in writing or by telephone, please do not hesitate to email Elle Young on the email address provided above.

The researcher may wish to follow up these comments with you. If you are happy for them to do so, please include your contact details. Equally, you may wish for your comments to be anonymous.

Your comments will be considered in the revised version of the findings. Any comments we will include will remain anonymous. The revised findings will be sent to your college principle, for them to share with you, in approximately one month's time.

Thank you so much for participating in this study, and for making this research possible. It has been fantastic to explore your insightful narratives of resilience.

Yours sincerely,

Elle Young

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Elle Young'.

Appendix 7: Data Management Plan

0. Project title, author, version and date		
The Art of Resilience: A mixed methods investigation into the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India.		
Author: Elle Young	Version: 2.0	Date: 1st December 2022
1. Defining your research		
1.1 Type of study This is a PhD thesis conducted within the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences. It adopts a mixed methods approach to investigate the factors and processes that influence young women's resilience in New Delhi, India.		
1.2 Assessment of existing materials The initial phase of data collection involved collecting quantitative data from participants through the form of an online questionnaire using Qualtrics, a virtual web-based survey programme. The questionnaire included three key research areas: (1) Background Information, (2) Resilience, and (3) Locus of Control. 567 female college students agreed to participate and sent their responses. The researcher visited the college between April-May 2022 for the second phase of research, which entailed collecting qualitative data through reflective arts workshops. The researcher worked with 28 participants in total.		
1.3. Type(s) of digital files your research will generate The primary digital files will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master data files for secondary source notes, kept in OneDrive - Master data files for primary data, fieldwork notes and analysis - Written papers (draft version of thesis), primary in Microsoft Word - SPSS file for quantitative data and outputs - Stata files for quantitative data analysis - Copies of participant artwork (image files) for data analysis - Sound recordings of reflective art workshop discussions 		
1.4. Format and scale of the materials The SPSS and Stata files may reach one or two megabytes, but there are no particularly large files or unusual data formats.		
1.5. Type(s) of non-digital materials, if any, will you need to manage as part of your research Temporary hardcopies of some materials will be used, such as articles, draft versions of the thesis as well as handwritten fieldwork notes. Master chapters will be kept in a hard-copy format as a back-up option.		
2. Looking after your research		
2.1. Where will you securely store your research, both physical and digital? All digital data will be stored on the university provided H:Drive, as well as my personal OneDrive account. The data will also be stored on my personal Mac computer. The data is only accessible to me, password protected (with two-factor authentication) and regularly backed up. The provided H:Drive is 20GB, so will be sufficient for the expected data usage. OneDrive will be used to gain access whilst off-campus. Printouts will primarily be temporary and will be kept in a binder in the researcher's office located in the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences. The office is password protected and the printouts		

will be stored in a locked desk. All physical data, such as fieldwork notes, will be digitised at the earliest practical stage to ensure the data is backed up.

2.2. How will you structure and name your digital folders/files?

Image files will be dated and location tagged when taken and stored on H:Drive and OneDrive. All digital files will follow common-sense naming. The master data files in SPSS and Stata will be tagged as 'Primary SPSS Resilience Data' with a date appended to them showing the last time the file was updated. Images of participant artwork will be titled 'Participant Artwork'. Chapters and other written work will be named by content (chapter title) plus a version number, with version below 1.0 being drafts, and versions at or above 1.0 being finalised work. All files will be categorised under thesis chapter titles (Methodology, Literature Review, and Results etc).

3. Archiving your research

3.1. Suitability for archiving

The research instruments, such as Background Information, Resilience and Locus of Control scales should be archived and made available for other researchers to access and reuse. Whilst the digital files do not need to be retained past the completion of the project and should not be publicly shared in line with participant consent. The final electronic text of the thesis will be archived and shared throughout the University Library.

3.2. Material preservation strategy and standards

This is to be determined, but a reasonable time frame might be ten years to meet the requirements of the University Research Data Policy. Where all possible files will be in an open file format to ensure long-term accessibility.

3.3. Where possible, how will you make material available for future reuse?

The research instruments outlined above will be archived and shared with supporting documentation in data.ncl (<https://data.ncl.ac.uk>), Newcastle's Open Research Data Repository. The datasets will be made public under a Creative Commons licence to ensure credit is given when the data is reused, and access provided for at least ten years. Data deposited will also be assigned a persistent identifier (i.e. DOI) that can be included in project outputs, including publications and the thesis, to detail how and where the data can be accessed.

4. Responsibilities and Resources

4.1. Who is responsible for making sure this plan is followed?

I am primarily responsible for following this plan, with appropriate support from my supervisors (Professor Pauline Dixon and Dr. James Stanfield) and Research Data Service as appropriate.

4.2. What actions, if any, have you identified from the rest of the plan?

There are no additional actions required at this time.

5. Relevant institutional, departmental or study policies on data management and data security

Policy	URL or Reference
Data Management Policy & Procedures	https://www.ncl.ac.uk/media/wwwnclacuk/research/files/ResearchDataManagementPolicy.pdf
Information Security	https://services.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/policies/InformationSecurityPolicy-v2_1.pdf

Appendix 8: Reflective Art Workshop Transcript Example

Participant (P) Reflective Art Workshop Transcript – 05/05/2022

EY: Can you tell me a bit about you have tackled or overcame a challenge in your life?

P1: Can I start off talking a bit about my family? Is that ok?

EY: Of course, go ahead. Do you go to your family for support?

P1, P3, and P4: No! [In unison]

P1: My family is one of the reasons why I am messed! I want to heal myself – not get even more issues.

P4: I think we just don't go to our families because we don't have a great relationship with our parents mostly. It's not like I have a very strange relationship with them, but it's the little things which I am not comfortable sharing with them. I've been comfortable with them for most of my life, but I when I turned 18 and started going out, I think I just lost that. I think I read this in a book called 'The Night We Said Yes' she mentions that there is a shift in our lives where before we share lots of things with our parents then there comes a time where you share everything with your friends. Once you go there, there is just no going back. It does happen. I can definitely but I am not sure how they would react, so I won't and I will maintain my current relationship with them.

P1: Yeah, my mum is pretty toxic, so I never go there with her. Like she is sweet and everything and loves me and all, but it is a very toxic relationship. She likes to be in control of everything, like what I do, the way I think or how I act. I don't like being controlled. I don't think anybody does. I can't even go to the part. I have to give a full thousand-word essay on why I am going. She asks like "why?", "who?", and "why are you taking your phone with you?". She just gets emotional and all, there is just not that narrative of emotions in me. I'm starting to make friends with my emotions again. That is one of the reasons why I have so many issues. I recently just broke up with my boyfriend and I was quite happy. That's the thing, I have got so many issues. I give credit to my counsellor. In my 10th my teacher got to know that I self-harmed, as my friend snitched on me.

P4: As they should.

P1: But it got really bad because then the whole school knew. They just sold my secrets out into the public without me knowing. My parents didn't know about it, just the school. At first, I didn't want to see this counsellor, but actually, she was very helpful. She used to call me every day, like in the morning, my counsellor was there for me for three years straight.

EY: That's amazing.

P1: Yeah, I am surprised she didn't throw me out and tell me to go away.

P4: That's the thing I've heard like most Indian schools and their counsellors, they don't really do their job they just snitch about it to your parents.

P1: Yeah, like you know, she asked me if I wanted her to talk to my parents, like no, I don't want them to know and she was like *"ok, I will respect your decision"* and that. But yes, she did want to meet my brother, but it was like he was never home with college and then office. He's like ten years older than me.

P4: I have a younger brother who is like eleven years younger than me.

EY: That's a big age gap.

P1: Wow he's so much younger than you.

P4: Yes, there's an 11-year age gap. It's funny because I see my friends with siblings who are two- or three-years difference and they keep fighting but I love my brother, I hate fighting with him. It's nice.

P1: Anyway, my counsellor used to help me, I used to go to see her and just rant it out. It was repetitive also, but I think those six years of trauma got out of my system you know? In India, we have to take subject streams. I wanted to take humanities, but my parents were like no. They forced me to go for the commerce exams, but I took science because it was my favourite.

P4: That's another thing. Indian families, like, they want their children to be engineers or doctors, there's no space for us to choose what we want to do. I had a lot of trouble convincing my parents that I want to study English as I did science. They expected me to continue with it, but I said I wanted to study English. That was very hard. I think that when I share thing about my classes with my mother, she makes this weird face to show that she is not interested and I think that is very bad, like ok you don't want to hear it, I get it.

P1: My parents were also very against it. When I went for an English degree, my parents were like *"you're so stupid, why are you doing this to us?"*. I was like *"let me be stupid rather than blaming you in the future"*.

P4: My father was really supportive when I was choosing my college subjects. My mother, she didn't want me to choose English as apparently it wouldn't get me anywhere in life. I remember I was sleeping, and I heard my parents fight about my career, and I heard my father say something like *"Do you really want her to resent us in the future?"*. With my parents, some days with some things there are problems. I'd say yes, they are supportive for the small things, but for larger problems, no. It is very hard for them to accept some issues. It was nice to hear that he had my back. He's my biggest supporter.

EY: So, who would you tend to go to if you had a larger problem that you want to talk about with someone?

P4: That's got me thinking actually like yesterday I remembered that I just give people in relationships too much power with things. I get very hurt and that's because I let them do that to me, like in friendships or romantic relationships. Them doing things would affect me a lot. That power used to lie with my friends but recently I've realised that I shouldn't give that power to my friends, and I can walk away from a situation without feeling hurt. I was like ok I am feeling I am getting better at this. But I realised I have given that power to my boyfriend now and it's not a good thing. I need to change that pattern and think about myself as a better person who is worthy of that much power. I need to work on myself in the meantime.

P1: I was like this you know. At a time, I wanted everyone to validate my existence...I wanted someone to tell me I was worthy, so every day I prayed. I said to God "*please hear me out, I just want to be happy with no drama*". I went on the terrace, and I just cried and said this. For a moment I just forget, like it's strange, isn't it? I don't know if it really helps, but it makes me feel good to talk. But I know now that no one is going to change, nobody changes that easily. My friends, some did more damage than good, but I still have those relationships where even though we are 1000 miles away, they are still there for me. I keep promises no matter what, and my friends, they make me promise that no matter what, I will think about them if I ever go back to this dark place of mind. That has helped me so much, because I was forcing myself not to self-harm and be depressed, because I promised somebody I wouldn't. Recently, I have been so down, like I wanted to go back there, it's a periodic thing that happens, I think it is a side effect for being down for so long, for so many years. It tells me to do it and I say, "No I won't, because I made a promise to my friend, she would be upset if I did something to myself". My counsellor says that whenever I am having these thoughts just rub that point in your head and you will calm down. I've been practicing meditation since I was a kid, my family follows this too, so it helps a lot. It is music, meditation, and the people that I have with me. I may not have my parents for support, but it's ok because they are doing their best as how they are supposed to. I don't blame them. I used to blame them, like this happened because of them, but now we grow up and I say it wasn't them, it was just the situation.

P3: Yeah, every morning in school assembly there would be a two-minute meditation session, people usually fell asleep, but it just let you think about your day and reflect on yesterday.

P1: Can I talk about my dad quickly? I love my dad in this matter, as he has always motivated me. He has never de-motivated me, like say *“you can’t do it”*. He’s always said, *“you can do it”* and *“there’s nothing you can’t do”*. He is happy even if I do the littlest things. When I was a kid, I just did so many sports, so many things, but then things happened, and I left everything behind. But now, I am slowly catching up on those things again. My dad has helped me to that. I love him you know?

P4: Yes, depression takes away that precious important time from you.

P1: I used to dance, I used to do gymnastics, skating, hockey, so many things. I used to be so sporty, but then I left everything, and my parents were really disappointed about that. They said, *“why did you leave that?”* and *“you could have done so many things, so much, but you just left everything”*.

P4: It’s great that you are starting to go back to it again, now you’re feeling better.

EY: Are you slowly taking up those activities again? What do you think has helped you do this?

P1: In college, like in 12th I was you know, very done with being depressed and I was ready to die. I was so ready to kill myself. That is a very scary thing. It was like, I was just walking in my home during lockdown, and I am just walking there and people are there but still I am having these thoughts. It is one thing that you are alone and thinking a lot in that house but you are surrounded by people, yet you are alone. That was a thing. But at that moment when I passed and everything, I said *“Let’s just throw this thing out and let’s start again”*. I have got a new chance at life, so let’s do it. So, when I came to college I started saying yes to everything.

P2: Like, she even joined the art club!

P1: I’m happy now. This bubbly thing, like if my friends could see me now, they’d have a heart attack. In school I used to be so uptight, like people were scared of me. I used to have this pokerface on all the time.

P4: Yeah, like who would believe that P1 used to be angry, she’s so sweet.

P1: Yeah, because I was at my lowest in high school. I was done being that low. Like how many more years is this going to go on for? If dying is the solution, it will just make other people feel bad?

EY: Would you perceive yourself as resilient? Like, for example, P1, you’ve gone through this huge journey of recovery, but would you think of yourself as a resilient person?

P4: Not me. I am still figuring things out; I am going through a lot of stress right now.

P1: Not really, you know. Like, kind of because I am still figuring my way out. Like a few days I text my friend and I am like *“please help me”*, and other days I am like *“I can absolutely boss this, I am a changed woman”*. But like, I am still figuring it out. Sometimes it gets so bad. Like I threw my cutter and scissors away. I do not keep any sharp things with me. Even though I know I am capable of controlling myself, but you never know when you will lose that control. It doesn’t come like *“knock knock I’m here”* it just happens. Maybe I am talking on the phone and it’s like ‘BAM’, then I’m just done.

P4: Oh my god yes, I do that!

EY: Can you explain to me what you mean by ‘still figuring it out’?

P1: In my heart I am still like, depending on others for my value. Somewhere in my heart I am like *“yes, I am worthy enough to be here, like I can lead a society with so many people in it”*. But I just need that push. I need that reassurance from the people close to me that at least I am doing something right.

P4: I am going through the same thing. Both of us depend on each other to manage everything.

EY: Seems like both of you are trying to get reassurance out of each other!

P1: [Laughs] I think there is no answer to this though. There’s no magic potion to say *“poof, you’re healed”*. That doesn’t happen, but you will become stronger and stronger as the days go on. You need to turn back on yourself and say *“wow, I’ve been through so much, and it has made me into who I am today”*. You should believe that you are strong enough to not fall down so easily. If somebody says, *“you’re not worth it”* but you should say *“is that person even worth it?”*. I have confidence in my abilities, but I am still figuring that out. I need to have more confidence in my abilities, that’s what might make me resilient. It will change over time though, I am sure.

P4: That’s where I want to be someday. Yeah, I’ve been resilient at some points in my life, but it always changes. Tomorrow I could face something completely different, and it might take all my effort to stay strong.

P1: Like, I was so uptight back in the day. I had zero knowledge on how to have fun. In college I am trying to change myself, like I had anger issues, major anger issues. I used to punch walls and stuff. That is so embarrassing! You’ve got to laugh at yourself though because if don’t laugh, you’ll cry!

P3: Can I say something? I don’t think I am resilient yet. I’m still figuring it all out. I’ve got important life lessons to learn you know? You can’t know it all at once. I’ve got a long way to go.

EY: What would you say is your best quality P3?

P3: Good question. So, my parents entirely blocked me from choosing the subject I wanted to do, it made me sad, but I think my best quality is the goals I set for myself, and I work really really really hard to work towards them. I have the self-confidence. I have faith in myself that I can achieve the goals. I may take a lot of time and it may take a lot of crying. I may take a lot of push. I may take a lot of validation, but somehow, I reach it, and when I do, I definitely reach it. I have the confidence in myself.

P1: Yeah. I try and help others too. I think that's a great quality of mine. One friend wants to do a PhD and I am friendly, and I help her a lot and I think that stays with you. Thinking that like *"yeah, I've helped her"* makes me feel good. There is also one thing that I always say and follow. Whenever I wake up, I see myself in the mirror and I say to myself, *"you can do it, you are the baddest bitch alive, and nothing can destroy you"*. That is the thing that I always do.

P4: I've never really said good things to myself, and I am really trying to, but I feel like sometimes it's a lie. I'm not even worthy of saying good things to myself.

P1: The thing I often follow is - lie until you believe it.

P4: I feel like I am the shyest person. I feel like being the vice president was a big step for me. I also like to handle things myself, like why would I delegate when I can just do it myself. I've done so much work. I should really delegate more. Maybe that's why I am so stressed! I feel like me and P1 are very similar. One of us can't be without the other.

EY: What a great team. Let's move on. What advice would you give to a younger version of yourself who is going through a difficult time. How do you think they could be resilient? What do you think you would do differently, or do the same in fact?

P1: I would say, *"if you can't believe in yourself, believe in someone you love"*. The person who we love and look up to, like our friends, they become our world. I don't know if it's right to say, but I'd say, *"if you don't believe in yourself believe in me because I believe in you"*. That's what I say to me friends too. I've got their backs.

P4: That would help me validate myself, and I'd believe that things would get better for me. I know it will and I am very hopeful, even though I am contradicting myself because I really believe that the world is going to end very soon. I do think that things are going to get better, and I am very hopeful. Sometimes, it's worth it, all the pain, all the stress. All the stresses that I had in my school life, they are so irrelevant now. I am so proud of myself for getting through tough periods. It's going to be a long hard road, but I'd tell past me that you will get there someday.

P3: That is the same for me. I would tell myself that you will get there, there's no need to be dramatic. It's all well and good talking about this now as we've already gone through it, but I'd say don't lose yourself like I did. Stay true to yourself. I was the head girl of my school in my senior year. Some of the girls didn't like me though and complained to the principle about how I am not the right person for the job. I still shed a tear, but no, you cannot let them have that. Why change? When I sit with myself some days, I think where did that girl go? Where are you? If I could be myself back, then I'd shake them and say "*don't lose yourself*". I think it was a good thing, that I got to rock bottom, because I got the chance to build myself back up from the start. I keep saying it, but I'd just tell past me to "*don't lose yourself*". You will get everything that you've been praying for. Just keep going. You'll get there eventually.

P1: The only thing that I would want to tell myself is to believe in yourself. I think that is why I was bad and started to lose myself. I've changed now but there was a time where I used to fail English, I was so bad at it, and I used to get bullied because I was so bad at it. I then failed English. But I used to fake myself, I used to abandon my true self just to be in a group where I thought I fit in. I changed myself so much, that is why I lost myself. Even if I can't be there for myself sometimes, I am always there for my friends. I am like "*ok, I am here, I will listen to you*". You can depend on me, I am always here if you need, I am just a call away, just call me, and I will listen to you. But do not give yourself to somebody else, don't give them your power. Sit in the driving seat, I know it's scary, but it's your life. I was such as bitch back then. Maybe I still am, but I was really rude. Now that I have calmed myself, I went back and said sorry to all those people that I hurt. Don't regret your actions. You will spend a lifetime doing so if you do.

EY: That's amazing.

P1: Yes, it is. I was very dependent you know, on the one group I had. They were bad news looking back on it though. They kept me to make themselves feel better. But I think that is what pushed me to become better, because I didn't want to be the lowest person. Even when I am fed up of myself, I go to people to talk about it, even to strangers. They don't know me. I don't know them. There is a less possible chance of meeting them in the future. I say that you know, this happened to me, or this person did that to me, and they just listen.

EY: Why do you think you sometimes turn to strangers P1? Does anyone else do this?

P2 & P3: Yeah, sometimes.

P1: Even if they knew what I did. What are they gonna do? Spread rumours? To who? I don't care. If you try to grow, there will always be people who are bad news who want to cut your roots. I am always ready to get backstabbed, I am so prepared so any eventuality.

P2: You are on guard and ready to protect yourself. That's a good quality of P1's. Maybe that helps you be resilient.

P1: Yeah, like, ok go ahead and backstab me. I don't care anymore!

P1: I just want to say, even though I said I didn't feel resilient, I think everyone is actually resilient in some sense. Everyone is battling each and every day in their own way and trying to cope in their own way. Maybe they are down right now, but they are still fighting, because there are so many reasons to give up. But they aren't, so that is what I think.

EY: It seems like we are starting to run out of time. Do you guys want to share your artwork, and say a bit about what it means? This is optional. Who wants to go first?

P4: This is my clumsy drawing of hands and connecting them with red thread. I don't know exactly what –

P1: It's the red thread of faith. It takes you where you want to be.

P4: I was thinking more of, like, there was this K-drama, where they were connected to each other. There is a red thread connecting me and my friends together. I want to call it after that Taylor Swift song 'invisible string', but this time its visible. I seek support from friendships and every kind of friendship that I am part of. There's this bond which supports you during any time of trouble, that makes me feel better. It's like a deep connection...like blood, like family. They are there to support you, no matter what the situation is.

P3: My drawing is of a bird, and this represents hope. There is one that is writing and listening to music, it sounds cheesy but that is my relationship and that one is crying [points to drawing].

EY: That is not cheesy at all. Why did you draw this?

P3: So, my boyfriend. I get mad at him when he gives me solutions to problems. He listens, which is great, when I get mad, and he always puts me in a good mood, but also puts me back in that cycle. I just want to rant at him, and he is really helpful, but I just get mad because he gives me unnecessary options. Music helps me a lot because listening to such big stars writing those lyrics, like they sound so similar like how could you write that? You felt what they wrote in your heart. I feel like oh my god, they are such big stars, that makes me feel good. Also, I started writing in a diary, I just keep it in my notes app. I do not have any other app on lock, only the notes app so no one can read my thoughts. Writing really helps me and obviously crying does. You know the coping mechanism I had [during lockdown] was crying, but then I couldn't cry because my parents were there. I used to shut myself in the bathroom and I used to cry...I saw this therapist online and she said that I should cry and shouldn't be embarrassed...I cry a lot now, my eyes start swelling up and they turn red. I

look at myself in the mirror and then I start feeling better. I think like, how do I do this to myself, but then I think it's ok as my therapist said so. I link that to hope. I have the hope that I will end up in some better place.

EY: Thank you for sharing that with us.

P2: Ok, this is so chaotic. It is my coping mechanisms when I was at my lowest, they used to help me a lot. I used to talk to my therapists, my friends, I used to ring them all night. I used to write in my diary a lot. To be honest, I am not great at expressing my emotions with people, so I have started meditating to cope with the bad stuff. Meditating isn't really my thing, but just for coping, then I stop. Music still helps me a lot, and writing does help me. Music is something that is so soothing, it makes me happy [inaudible]. I feel like when I want to cry, I go to music. Sometimes the tears do not come out, so I listen to sad music, mostly I listen to Taylor Swift.

EY: I love Taylor Swift.

P2: She is the queen. Love of my life. I put her recent albums, Folklore and Evermore, on a playlist when I study. The lyrics are so soothing, but when they start hitting you emotionally, I am like *"oh my god, how does she write that?"*.

EY: Ok, last but by no means least. P1, do you want to summarise your artwork?

P1: Yes. So, there is a dark soul that makes up the whole of you. There are feelings in your heart that are waiting to break through. This is through words, music, and communication, all these things. What I have realised is that communication is the key for believing in yourself. If you are talking to someone, like we are doing right now, it feels so nice. My emotions are just released into the atmosphere. That burden on my shoulder is being lifted. It feels lighter. That's the thing, music is something I listen to for 24 hours. My mother is sick of it. That's what I mean. The colours are just breaking through the cracks in your soul. Through the people you love, and the things that you love to do.

P4: I don't even know. I think I seek support from friendships and every kind of relationship that I am part of. Even strangers, or on social media. I think social media is really draining because I am on reels all of the time. The time goes so fast. I think whilst it's super draining, it does help me too. It's very distracting, and it got me through the tough times in lockdown. The connection I think between friends, the emotional connection, is important. That's why there are two hands connected by a singular red thread. That's your blood and soul.

P2: Oh my god like that Taylor Swift lyric *"It's you and me. That's my whole world"*.

EY: What a great note to end on. Thank you so much for participating in this research project.

Appendix 9: Excerpts from Reflective Art Workshops

(A) Jamila - “My father is like yes: you should go and see the world and have fun. My father wants me to go out and grow but my mother is overly protective of me...my father is much more supportive of me going out, but when it comes to going out with boys, he sometimes thinks twice. However, he always allows it. He just tells me to come back before this time. He will come and pick me up from wherever I am...” (*Jamila, aged 20*)

(B) Samira - “I think we just don’t go to our families, because we all don’t have a great relationship with our parents, mostly now as we are older. It’s not like I have a very strange relationship with them, but it’s the little things which I am not comfortable sharing with them. I’ve been comfortable with them for most of my life, but when I turned 18 and started going out, I think I just lost that...we share lots of things with our parents, but then there comes a time where you share everything with your friends. They know you so well...once you go there, there’s no going back.” (*Samira, aged 20*)

(C) Mani - “My friends, they built me up when I got super stressed...my friend will come in and see that I am having a bad day and just cheer me up. They come in and say “*Hey, you are doing so well, you’re nearly there*”, and it gives me that push to stay focussed. I think to myself “*Yeah, I must be doing well, I should be proud of myself for getting this far. Maybe I can finish this degree*”.” (*Mani, aged 20*)

(D) Chatti - “My life has been overall stress. I don’t talk about it a lot, there is no one to talk about it with. I have been bullied from a child and it comes into my thoughts all the time. I think that no one is my friend, which makes me so sad, but that [bullying] made me just not trust them anymore...I pushed them away, so I don’t have any friends. I love to talk about things, but now I think I shouldn’t share it with people.” (*Chatti, aged 18*)

(E) Sita – “I don’t know if this is strange or not, but I had this huge argument with my friend. She said really heart-breaking things to me, and it broke me at that time. Everyone then started ganging up on me during lunch. I don’t know why. I felt like I couldn’t turn to anyone because they all turned against me...I cried to her [teacher] as she is a close family friend. She let me come upstairs into her office and just hugged me, it felt so nice...She didn’t need to, but it was nice to have her tell me it’s ok.” (*Sita, aged 18*)

(F) Sapna - “I joined the society [LGBTQ+ society] at a point in my life when I didn’t know who I was. I didn’t know what I was. I wanted to show who I was, but I didn’t really feel that accepted right? Like, I felt trapped in this cage...joining this society helped me to meet more people like me and help me go on that journey of discovering myself and who I am...I’ll never forget that.” (*Sapna, aged 18*)

(G) Chaitra - “You know the coping mechanism I had [during lockdown] was crying, but then I couldn’t cry because my parents were there. I used to shut myself in the bathroom and I used to cry...I saw this therapist online and she said that I should cry and shouldn’t be embarrassed...I cry a lot now, my eyes start swelling up and they turn red. I look at myself in the mirror and then I start feeling better. I think like, how do I do this to myself, but then I think it’s ok as my therapist said so. I link that to hope. I have the hope that I will end up in some better place.” (*Chaitra, aged 18*)

(H) Mahika - “...they said that you are of young age to have depression. I was like “*no, it’s not like that*”...maybe it is in my head only?...I started looking up on Google and I started looking at videos for therapy and stuff because therapy is expensive, and our parents do not allow us to go to therapy. It costs so much in India, which is why so many people have f***** up mental health. I saw some videos on YouTube, and they said you need to keep yourself busy...I wish I had the real thing but there’s just no money.” (*Mahika, aged 18*)

(I) Samira - “That’s the thing I’ve heard like most Indian schools and their counsellors, they don’t really do their job they just snitch about it to your parents.” (*Samira, aged 20*)

(J) Durga - “Delhi is a scary place, right? I’m not from here...but I know they [neighbours] are watching out for me...Yes, they question and say, “*who is that?*” and “*why do you go there with him?*”, but it makes me feel good they are looking out for me.” (*Durga, aged 21*)

(K) Anika - “Everyone came together...my parents were really ill at one point and my neighbours just came to my side...they held my hand and said, “*It’s going to be ok*”, and got me loads of supplies...it relieved so much stress when I was there just looking after everybody else. It helped to release this like emotional burden I had at that time.” (*Anika, aged 20*)

(L) Anvi - “At a time, I wanted everyone to validate my existence...I wanted someone to tell me I was worthy, so every day I prayed. I said to God “*please hear me out, I just want to be*

happy with no drama". I went on the terrace, and I just cried and said this. For a moment I just forget...I don't know if it really helps, but it makes me feel good to talk." (*Anvi, aged 20*)

(M) Anvi - "I end up blowing myself up into shatters...Your mind is your biggest villain, so it doesn't work for me." (*Anvi, aged 20*)

(N) Jaya - "I love music, it works as a therapy for me. When I am super stressed, I play some of my favourite songs and I sing at the top of my lungs." (*Jaya, aged 19*)

(O) Geeta - "I lost my grandfather...it was so difficult. It is hard for you, but you also have to fulfil that responsibility of being there for your mother and being a daughter. When I look back at that time, I don't know how I managed it...I remember my mother started crying. She's crying in front of me, but I have to be strong. If I want to cry, I cry at night when no one sees me..." (*Geeta, aged 21*)

(P) Haima - "I am the first grandchild. My parents were forced by my grandparents, from both sides of the family, to have another child so that I can have a brother. But to everyone's surprise, it was a sister. My grandparents were so angry. I prayed for a sister. I knew if I have a brother, all of the attention would be given to him...whilst I have a sister and everything, I still feel alone." (*Haima, aged 18*)

(Q) Diya - "There's a pressure for me to not study outside [of the family origin] but my brother was allowed to study outside of the home. That luxury wasn't allowed for me...I wanted to go to another college somewhere else in Delhi, but it was mixed, and my parents said "*No, you can't do that, you have to go to a girl's college*"...It had to be close to home." (*Diya, aged 18*)

(R) Jaya - "Even in my own family I feel judged, like I might have facial hair, more than normal girls. Even in my family, my cousin say, "*oh come on, you need to get some bleach done*", or its "*wax your face*". Ok, less hair does not define whether I am more feminine or not." (*Jaya, aged 19*)

Appendix 10: Participant Artwork Examples

Figure 37: 'Head in the Clouds'



Figure 38: 'Broken'



Figure 40: 'Stress is Better in the Trash'

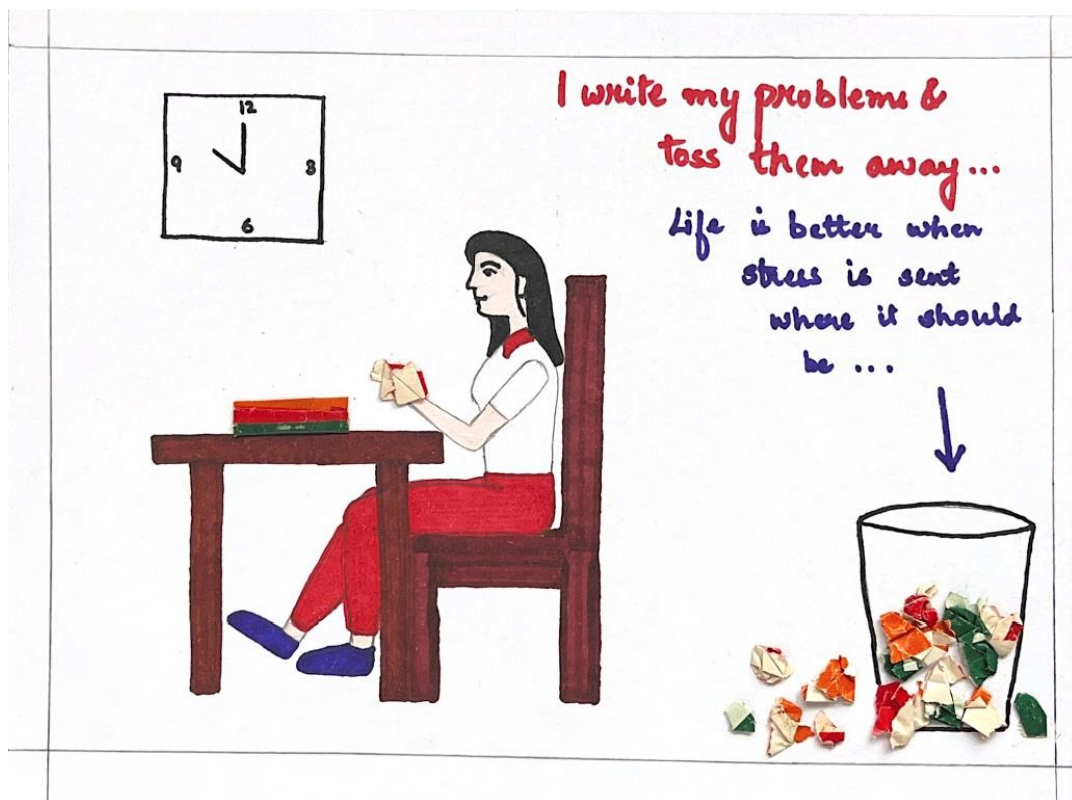


Figure 41: 'My Resilience'



Figure 42: 'My Happy Place'



Figure 43: 'Music'



Figure 44: 'In My Brain'



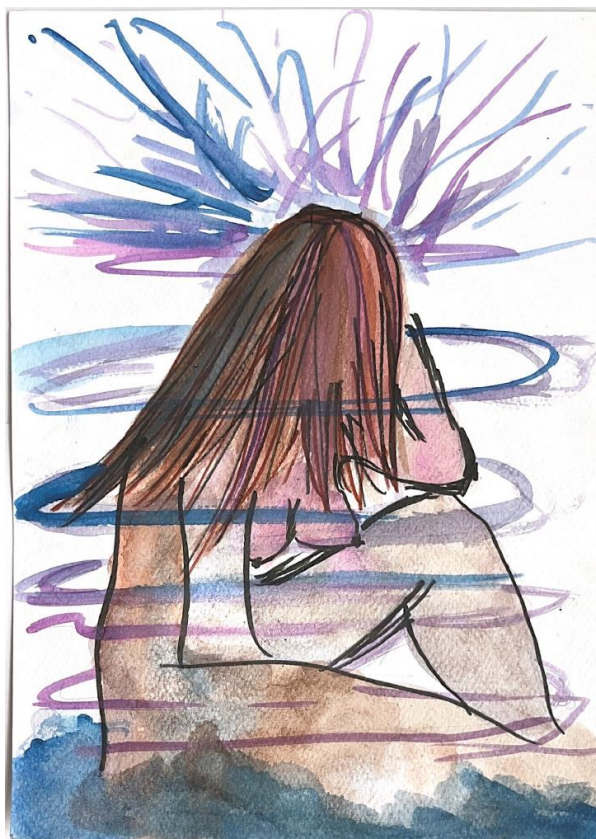
Figure 45: 'India'



Figure 46: 'My Heart is So Heavy'



Figure 47: Unnamed



Appendix 11: Regression Tables for Structural Equation Models

Figure 48: Regression Table for READ SEM (Figure 14)

Structural equation model

Estimation method: ml

Number of obs = 567

Log likelihood = -14366.687

(1) [R12]PC = 1

(2) [R4]FC = 1

(3) [R3]SR = 1

(4) [R5]SC = 1

(5) [R1]G0 = 1

Standardized	OIM		z	P> z	[95% conf. interval]	
	Coefficient	std. err.				
Measurement						
R12						
PC	.5726871	.0344727	16.61	0.000	.5051219	.6402524
_cons	4.881628	.150924	32.34	0.000	4.585823	5.177434
R14						
PC	.5396616	.0355011	15.20	0.000	.4700808	.6092425
_cons	4.075696	.1281096	31.81	0.000	3.824606	4.326786
R15						
PC	.6134321	.0331185	18.52	0.000	.5485212	.6783431
_cons	5.460957	.1675165	32.60	0.000	5.132631	5.789283
R20						
PC	.5934292	.0334159	17.76	0.000	.5279352	.6589231
_cons	4.819526	.1491535	32.31	0.000	4.527191	5.111862
R4						
FC	.5093519	.0352127	14.47	0.000	.4403363	.5783676
_cons	4.260468	.1333049	31.96	0.000	3.999195	4.521741
R7						
FC	.6725073	.0276626	24.31	0.000	.6182896	.726725
_cons	4.964576	.1532912	32.39	0.000	4.664131	5.265022
R10						
FC	.3306656	.0413215	8.00	0.000	.2496769	.4116543
_cons	3.452367	.1107885	31.16	0.000	3.235226	3.669509
R16						
FC	.7413925	.0242039	30.63	0.000	.6939537	.7888314
_cons	5.786294	.1768854	32.71	0.000	5.439605	6.132983
R18						
FC	.69024	.0268468	25.71	0.000	.6376213	.7428588
_cons	4.324537	.1351124	32.01	0.000	4.059722	4.589353
R21						
FC	.734065	.0244613	30.01	0.000	.6861218	.7820082
_cons	4.766165	.1476335	32.28	0.000	4.476808	5.055521
R3						
SR	.6719789	.0302948	22.18	0.000	.6126023	.7313556
_cons	4.473993	.1393378	32.11	0.000	4.200896	4.74709
R9						
SR	.7371396	.0277537	26.56	0.000	.6827434	.7915358
_cons	4.093968	.1286224	31.83	0.000	3.841873	4.346063
R13						
SR	.5001827	.0373414	13.39	0.000	.426995	.5733704
_cons	3.210639	.1041815	30.82	0.000	3.006446	3.414831
R22						
SR	.7376054	.0273832	26.94	0.000	.6839353	.7912755
_cons	4.516904	.1405533	32.14	0.000	4.241425	4.792384

R5	SC	.4624606	.0378871	12.21	0.000	.3882033	.5367179
	_cons	4.992614	.1540922	32.40	0.000	4.690598	5.294629
R8	SC	.7428993	.0256295	28.99	0.000	.6926663	.7931322
	_cons	3.257473	.1054558	30.89	0.000	3.050783	3.464162
R11	SC	.7937469	.0237121	33.47	0.000	.7472721	.8402218
	_cons	3.684906	.1172078	31.44	0.000	3.455183	3.914629
R17	SC	.4367793	.0392421	11.13	0.000	.3598662	.5136924
	_cons	5.534008	.1696174	32.63	0.000	5.201564	5.866452
R19	SC	.5756563	.0335014	17.18	0.000	.5099948	.6413178
	_cons	4.039869	.127105	31.78	0.000	3.790748	4.288991
R1	G0	.4101822	.044995	9.12	0.000	.3219936	.4983709
	_cons	6.14362	.1872089	32.82	0.000	5.776697	6.510543
R2	G0	.4320431	.0442537	9.76	0.000	.3453074	.5187788
	_cons	6.262445	.1906502	32.85	0.000	5.888777	6.636112
R6	G0	.5849909	.0406515	14.39	0.000	.5053153	.6646664
	_cons	4.815474	.1490376	32.31	0.000	4.523366	5.107583
var(e.R12)		.6720295	.0394841			.5989315	.7540488
var(e.R14)		.7087653	.0383171			.637507	.7879887
var(e.R15)		.623701	.0406318			.5489386	.7086456
var(e.R20)		.6478418	.0396599			.5745922	.7304295
var(e.R4)		.7405606	.0358713			.6734883	.8143126
var(e.R7)		.5477339	.0372066			.4794562	.6257348
var(e.R10)		.8906603	.0273272			.8386786	.9458638
var(e.R16)		.4503371	.0358892			.3852139	.5264698
var(e.R18)		.5235687	.0370614			.4557433	.6014881
var(e.R21)		.4611486	.0359123			.3958703	.5371912
var(e.R3)		.5484443	.0407149			.4741785	.6343416
var(e.R9)		.4566252	.0409166			.3830774	.5442935
var(e.R13)		.7498173	.037355			.6800637	.8267254
var(e.R22)		.4559383	.040396			.3832568	.5424032
var(e.R5)		.7861302	.0350426			.7203628	.857902
var(e.R8)		.4481007	.0380803			.3793491	.5293124
var(e.R11)		.3699658	.0376428			.3030782	.4516152
var(e.R17)		.8092238	.0342803			.7447493	.87928
var(e.R19)		.6686198	.0385706			.5971399	.7486561
var(e.R1)		.8317505	.0369123			.7624608	.907337
var(e.R2)		.8133388	.038239			.7417411	.8918475
var(e.R6)		.6577857	.0475615			.5708708	.7579333
var(PC)		1	.			.	.
var(FC)		1	.			.	.
var(SR)		1	.			.	.
var(SC)		1	.			.	.
var(G0)		1	.			.	.
cov(PC,FC)		.6456268	.0410376	15.73	0.000	.5651947	.7260589
cov(PC,SR)		.4967681	.0496262	10.01	0.000	.3995024	.5940337
cov(PC,SC)		.7522329	.037529	20.04	0.000	.6786773	.8257884
cov(PC,G0)		.879357	.0551788	15.94	0.000	.7712084	.9875056
cov(FC,SR)		.6420882	.036945	17.38	0.000	.5696774	.714499
cov(FC,SC)		.3849151	.0462926	8.31	0.000	.2941832	.475647
cov(FC,G0)		.6454165	.0550517	11.72	0.000	.5375171	.753316
cov(SR,SC)		.3890545	.0480843	8.09	0.000	.2948109	.483298
cov(SR,G0)		.5105174	.0610301	8.37	0.000	.3909006	.6301343
cov(SC,G0)		.6300513	.0568031	11.09	0.000	.5187192	.7413834

LR test of model vs. saturated: $\chi^2(199) = 503.92$

Prob > $\chi^2 = 0.0000$

Figure 49: Fit Indices for READ SEM (Figure 14)

Fit statistic	Value	Description
Likelihood ratio		
chi2_ms(199)	503.922	model vs. saturated
p > chi2	0.000	
chi2_bs(231)	3639.547	baseline vs. saturated
p > chi2	0.000	
Population error		
RMSEA	0.052	Root mean squared error of approximation
90% CI, lower bound	0.046	
upper bound	0.058	
pclose	0.270	Probability RMSEA <= 0.05
Information criteria		
AIC	28885.373	Akaike's information criterion
BIC	29215.240	Bayesian information criterion
Baseline comparison		
CFI	0.911	Comparative fit index
TLI	0.896	Tucker-Lewis index
Size of residuals		
SRMR	0.051	Standardized root mean squared residual
CD	0.995	Coefficient of determination

Figure 50: Regression Table for READ Pathway Model (Figure 16)

Structural equation model
Estimation method: **ml**
Log likelihood = **419.51153**
Number of obs = **567**

Standardized	Coefficient	OIM std. err.	z	P> z	[95% conf. interval]	
Structural						
PC1						
FC1	.645062	.0378344	17.05	0.000	.570908	.719216
SR1	.1267798	.0417898	3.03	0.002	.0448733	.2086863
_cons	1.38e-09	.028059	0.00	1.000	-.0549946	.0549946
G01						
PC1	.9728496	.0022495	432.48	0.000	.9684407	.9772585
_cons	-6.33e-10	.0097195	-0.00	1.000	-.0190499	.0190498
SC1						
PC1	.8484053	.0117677	72.10	0.000	.8253411	.8714694
_cons	-1.58e-09	.0222305	-0.00	1.000	-.043571	.043571
mean(FC1)	2.14e-10	.0419961	0.00	1.000	-.0823108	.0823108
mean(SR1)	-8.86e-10	.0419961	-0.00	1.000	-.0823108	.0823107
var(e.PC1)	.4464033	.0278973			.3949415	.5045707
var(e.G01)	.0535636	.0043768			.045637	.0628671
var(e.SC1)	.2802085	.0199675			.243683	.3222088
var(FC1)	1	.			.	.
var(SR1)	1	.			.	.
cov(e.G01,e.SC1)	-.4572655	.033215	-13.77	0.000	-.5223658	-.3921653
cov(FC1,SR1)	.7423415	.0188532	39.37	0.000	.7053899	.7792932

LR test of model vs. saturated: chi2(4) = **202.37** Prob > chi2 = **0.0000**

Figure 51: Fit Indices for READ Pathway Model (Figure 16)

Fit statistic	Value	Description
Likelihood ratio		
chi2_ms(4)	202.365	model vs. saturated
p > chi2	0.000	
chi2_bs(9)	3173.566	baseline vs. saturated
p > chi2	0.000	
Population error		
RMSEA	0.296	Root mean squared error of approximation
90% CI, lower bound	0.262	
upper bound	0.331	
pclose	0.000	Probability RMSEA <= 0.05
Information criteria		
AIC	-807.023	Akaike's information criterion
BIC	-737.577	Bayesian information criterion
Baseline comparison		
CFI	0.937	Comparative fit index
TLI	0.859	Tucker-Lewis index
Size of residuals		
SRMR	0.049	Standardized root mean squared residual
CD	0.554	Coefficient of determination

Figure 52: Regression Tables for Locus of Control SEM (Figure 24)

Structural equation model

Estimation method: ml

Number of obs = 567

Log likelihood = -4405.7607

(1) [Int1]InternalLoC = 1

(2) [Ext1]ExternalLoC = 1

Standardized	Coefficient	OIM std. err.	z	P> z	[95% conf. interval]	
Measurement						
Int1						
InternalLoC	.4013566	.0693375	5.79	0.000	.2654577	.5372556
_cons	4.654182	.1444482	32.22	0.000	4.371069	4.937296
Int2						
InternalLoC	.354693	.0642926	5.52	0.000	.2286818	.4807041
_cons	3.96598	.1250361	31.72	0.000	3.720914	4.211047
Int3						
InternalLoC	.6812953	.1038459	6.56	0.000	.4777611	.8848294
_cons	4.704308	.1458733	32.25	0.000	4.418401	4.990214
Ext1						
ExternalLoC	.4264051	.0713188	5.98	0.000	.2866229	.5661873
_cons	2.671903	.0897727	29.76	0.000	2.495952	2.847855
Ext2						
ExternalLoC	.6981957	.1045699	6.68	0.000	.4932425	.903149
_cons	3.968232	.1250991	31.72	0.000	3.723042	4.213421
Ext3						
ExternalLoC	.3347502	.0616253	5.43	0.000	.2139668	.4555337
_cons	3.946449	.12449	31.70	0.000	3.702453	4.190445
var(e.Int1)	.8389128	.0556581			.7366199	.9554111
var(e.Int2)	.8741929	.0456083			.7892208	.9683136
var(e.Int3)	.5358368	.1414994			.3193406	.8991059
var(e.Ext1)	.8181787	.0608214			.7072484	.9465081
var(e.Ext2)	.5125227	.1460205			.2932251	.8958289
var(e.Ext3)	.8879423	.0412582			.8106506	.9726034
var(InternalLoC)	1	.			.	.
var(ExternalLoC)	1	.			.	.
LR test of model vs. saturated: chi2(9) = 47.66					Prob > chi2 = 0.0000	

Figure 53: Fit Indices for Locus of Control SEM (Figure 24)

Fit statistic	Value	Description
Likelihood ratio		
chi2_ms(10)	3190.219	model vs. saturated
p > chi2	0.000	
chi2_bs(20)	3817.561	baseline vs. saturated
p > chi2	0.000	
Population error		
RMSEA	0.750	Root mean squared error of approximation
90% CI, lower bound	0.728	
upper bound	0.772	
pclose	0.000	Probability RMSEA <= 0.05
Information criteria		
AIC	2355.389	Akaike's information criterion
BIC	2442.196	Bayesian information criterion
Baseline comparison		
CFI	0.163	Comparative fit index
TLI	-0.675	Tucker-Lewis index
Size of residuals		
SRMR	0.315	Standardized root mean squared residual
CD	0.558	Coefficient of determination