



# Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Coping Strategies: A Comparative Study between Professionals and Non-professionals

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and hectic world, individuals frequently encounter various personal, social, and occupational stressors. The way people manage these challenges depends greatly on their emotional abilities, resilience, and coping mechanisms. Emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies are important psychological constructs that influence how individuals understand emotions, adapt to adversity, and deal with stressful situations. These factors have a crucial part in maintaining psychological well-being and promoting effective functioning in personal and professional environments.

Emotional intelligence is the capacity to identify, understand, regulate, and use emotions in oneself and others. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined emotional intelligence as the capacity to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, discern between them, and use this knowledge to guide one's thoughts and behavior. Later, Goleman (1995) emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence for interpersonal relationships, leadership, effective decision-making, and career success. According to Mayer et al. (2004), those with higher emotional intelligence are often better at managing stress, communicating effectively, and maintaining strong interpersonal connections.

Another crucial psychological component that aids people in adjusting to difficult situations in life is resilience. It describes the capacity to bounce back, adapt, and carry on with business as usual in the face of hardship or adverse situations. Resilience is "ordinary magic," according to Masten (2001), emphasizing that overcoming adversity is a typical human skill rather than an exceptional quality. In a similar vein, Connor and Davidson (2003) described resilience as the capacity to manage stress and preserve psychological stability in trying circumstances. When confronted with difficulties, resilient people typically exhibit optimism, flexibility, and emotional stability.

Coping strategies are the mental and behavioral methods people use to manage stressful situations. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping as the process by which individuals attempt to manage demands, both internal and external, that they find unpleasant or overwhelming. Emotion-focused coping, which focuses on managing emotional responses to stress, and problem-focused coping, which aims to address the cause of stress, are the two primary categories of coping strategies (Carver et al., 1989). Effective coping strategies can reduce stress and improve psychological well-being overall.

Professionals often work in structured environments that involve responsibilities, deadlines, and interpersonal interactions. These experiences may contribute to the development of effective coping mechanisms and emotional management skills. On the other hand, non-professionals may encounter different types of life stressors influenced by personal, social, or environmental factors. Understanding whether differences exist in emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies between professionals and non-professionals can provide valuable insights into how occupational roles influence psychological functioning.

Although previous research has examined emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies individually, limited studies have explored these variables together in relation to professional status. Therefore, the present study aims to compare emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies among professionals and non-professionals in order to better understand how these psychological factors operate across different life contexts.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies have shown that emotional intelligence is a strong indicator of psychological health, interpersonal effectiveness, and career success. Emotional intelligence was first conceptualized by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the capacity to recognize, comprehend, control, and make use of emotions. Goleman (1995) later popularized the concept by highlighting its significance in social competence, leadership, and professional performance. According to research, people with high EI are better able to handle stress, have stronger social bonds, and solve problems. Studies conducted across occupational groups suggest that professionals, particularly those in managerial and service-oriented roles, often display higher levels of emotional intelligence due to continuous interpersonal engagement and structured work demands.

Scholars have also given resilience a lot of attention as a defense against stress and hardship. Masten (2001) referred to resilience as "ordinary magic," emphasizing that adaptive functioning in the face of hardship is a typical human ability rather than an exceptional quality. Resilience was further defined by Connor and Davidson (2003) as the capacity to recover from stress, adjust to change, and persevere in the face of difficulties. Research indicates that emotional control, optimism, and social support are all positively correlated with resilience. Occupational environments that require individuals to manage pressure, deadlines, and responsibility may foster resilience over time. However, resilience is also influenced by socio-economic status, family environment, and community resources, making comparative studies across different groups particularly relevant.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping strategies are behavioral and cognitive attempts to control demands that are thought to be too much for a person to handle. The three main types of coping are avoidance coping, which entails distancing oneself from stressors, emotion-focused coping, which attempts to control emotional reactions, and problem-focused coping, which deals with the source of stress. While avoidance coping is connected with increased stress and mental health issues, research repeatedly shows that problem-focused and adaptive emotion-focused techniques are linked to better psychological outcomes. Occupational studies reveal that professionals are likely to employ problem-focused coping strategies due to structured environments that encourage solution-oriented approaches. In contrast, non-professionals may rely more on emotion-focused or avoidance strategies depending on contextual factors and available support systems.

The relationship between coping mechanisms, resilience, and emotional intelligence has been the subject of numerous studies. Resilience has been found to be positively correlated with emotional intelligence since emotionally intelligent people are better at controlling their stress and being upbeat in the face of difficulty. Similarly, adaptive coping strategies, especially problem-focused coping, are linked to resilience. According to research, those with greater EI typically report feeling less stressed and employ healthy coping mechanisms. These results imply that resilience may be indirectly impacted by emotional intelligence via the mediation of useful coping strategies.

Overall, existing literature supports the strong interconnection among emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies, while highlighting gaps in comparative research across occupational categories. The study aims to address this said gap by examining differences between professionals and non-professionals, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of adaptive psychological functioning in diverse socio-occupational contexts.

## RESEARCH GAP

Previous studies have extensively explored emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies as important psychological factors related to stress management and overall well-being. However, many of these studies have examined these variables separately rather than in combination. In addition, only a limited number of studies have compared these psychological constructs between professionals and non-professionals. Most research tends to focus on specific occupational groups or particular

populations, which leaves a gap in understanding how these variables function across broader occupational categories. Therefore, there is a need for comparative research that examines emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies together in relation to professional status. The present study seeks to address this gap by investigating these factors among professionals and non-professionals.

## OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the present study is to examine and compare the levels of emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies among professionals and non-professionals. These psychological factors play an important role in determining how individuals understand and regulate their emotions, adapt to stressful situations, and respond to challenges in everyday life. By comparing these variables across the two groups, the study aims to understand whether professional engagement influences the development of emotional regulation, resilience, and effective coping mechanisms. The objective is also to gain a clearer understanding of how occupational roles may shape psychological functioning and stress management abilities in individuals.

## HYPOTHESES

1. H1: There will be no significant difference in Emotional Intelligence between professionals and non-professionals.
2. H2: There will be no significant difference in resilience between professionals and non-professionals.
3. H3: There will be no significant difference in coping strategies between professionals and non-professionals.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a comparative research design to examine the differences in emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies between professionals and non-professionals. A total of 32 participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, consisting of 16 professionals and 16 non-professionals aged between 25 and 34 years. Data were collected using standardized psychological instruments measuring emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their consent was obtained before administering the questionnaires. The responses were collected and organized for analysis. The obtained data were then analyzed using independent sample t-tests through SPSS version 27 in order to determine whether significant differences existed between the two groups on the selected variables.

## SAMPLE

1. **Sample Population:** Adults belonging to professional and non-professional groups.
2. **Sample Size:** 32 participants.
3. **Sampling Technique:** Purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants.
  - A. *Inclusion Criteria*
    - Participants aged between 25–34 years.
    - Individuals who are either professionals (engaged in formal occupations) or non-professionals.
    - Participants who can read and understand English.
    - Individuals willing to participate voluntarily in the study.
  - B. *Exclusion Criteria*
    - Individuals below 25 years of age.
    - Individuals unwilling to provide consent.
    - Participants who did not complete the questionnaire properly.

## INSTRUMENTS

The following standardized tools were used for data collection:

### 1. Emotional Intelligence Scale

A self-report tool called the Emotional Intelligence Scale is used to assess a person's ability to identify, comprehend, control, and regulate their own and other people's emotions. Participants rate the degree to which each of the 33 items accurately captures their experiences or behavior using a Likert-type scale. Higher scores on the scale represent greater levels of emotional intelligence.

### 2. Resilience Scale

The Resilience Scale gauges a person's capacity to overcome hardship and recover from difficult circumstances. Six statements on perseverance, flexibility, and personal competence are included in the measure. Higher scores indicate stronger resilience. Respondents assess how much they agree with each statement. There is also reverse scoring on the scale.

### 3. Coping Strategies Scale

The Coping Strategies Scale evaluates the different behavioral and cognitive strategies people employ to deal with stress. There are thirteen items on the questionnaire. It assesses many coping strategies, that involve avoidance, emotion-focused, and problem-focused coping. The type and degree of coping methods employed are shown by the scores obtained from participants' responses on a Likert-type scale.

## PROCEDURE

1. After identifying the research variables, appropriate standardized questionnaires were selected for measuring Emotional Intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies.
2. Participants were approached and educated about the purpose of the study.
3. Informed consent was taken before administering the questionnaires.
4. The questionnaires were sent to 30 participants, consisting of 16 professionals and 16 non-professionals.
5. Participants were instructed to read each statement carefully and respond honestly.
6. There was no time limit for completing the questionnaires.
7. The collected data were organized and analysed using appropriate statistical methods to determine differences between the two groups.
8. Data was analysed using SPSS version 27.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The statistical analysis of the present study was carried out to examine the differences in emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies between professionals and non-professionals. After the data were collected from the participants through standardized questionnaires, the responses were carefully organized and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 for further analysis. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were calculated to understand the overall distribution of scores for each variable among the two groups.

To determine whether significant differences existed between professionals and non-professionals, independent sample t-tests were applied for each of the three variables. This statistical test was chosen because the study involved comparing the mean scores of two independent groups on emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies. The t-test helped in identifying whether the observed differences in the mean scores of the two groups were statistically significant or occurred by chance. The level of significance was considered while interpreting the results obtained from the analysis.

The results of the statistical analysis were presented in the form of tables showing the mean values, standard deviations, degrees of freedom, t-values, and significance levels for each variable. These

statistical findings provided a clear understanding of the relationship and differences between professionals and non-professionals with regard to emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies. The interpretation of these results helped in testing the proposed hypotheses and drawing conclusions about the psychological functioning of individuals in different occupational contexts.

## RESULTS

The data gathered to investigate the variations in coping strategies, resilience, and emotional intelligence between professionals and non-professionals is analyzed and interpreted in this chapter. SPSS version 27 was used to analyze the gathered data. To find out if the two groups differed significantly on the chosen psychological factors, independent sample t-tests were used.

The results are presented in the form of tables showing the mean scores, standard deviations, t-values, degrees of freedom, and significance levels for each variable. The findings help in understanding whether professionals and non-professionals differ significantly in their coping strategies, emotional intelligence, and resilience. The following tables present the statistical analysis and interpretation of the obtained results.

Coping	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Professionals	16	34.50	5.820	30	2.913	0.007
Unprofessional	16	29.19	4.400			

**Table 1** indicates that there is a significant difference in the coping of Professionals and Unprofessionals. Thus, in this case, hypothesis 1 is rejected at 0.007 level of significance.

Emotional Intelligence	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Professionals	16	122.75	14.888	30	.944	0.352
Unprofessionals	16	117.88	14.306			

**Table 2** indicates there is no significant difference between Emotional Intelligence of Professionals and Unprofessionals. Thus, in this case, hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Resilience	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Professionals	16	17.50	2.338	30	-1.790	0.84
Unprofessionals	16	18.75	1.528			

**Table 3** indicates no significant difference between Resilience of Professionals and Unprofessionals. Thus, in this case, hypothesis 3 is accepted.

H1-There will be no significant difference in the coping of Professionals and Unprofessionals.

H2- There will be no significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence of Professionals and Unprofessionals.

H3- There will be no significant difference in the Resilience of Professionals and Unprofessionals.

## DISCUSSIONS

The study looked at and contrasted coping mechanisms, resilience, and emotional intelligence in professionals and non-professionals. These psychological concepts are crucial in determining how people control their emotions, handle stress, and adjust to difficult circumstances. In order to ascertain if professionals and non-professionals differed significantly on the chosen variables, the data gathered from the participants was examined using independent sample t-tests.

The findings shown in Table 1 show that professionals and non-professionals use very different coping mechanisms. Compared to non-professionals, professionals had greater coping scores, indicating that those working in professional settings might learn better coping mechanisms. This result makes sense when considering the expectations, obligations, and structured problem-solving scenarios of the job, all of which may promote the application of adaptive coping strategies. Effective coping methods are essential for lowering stress and fostering psychological well-being, according to Carver et al. (1989), whereas Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping as the cognitive and behavioral attempts people make to manage stressful demands. Therefore, the higher coping scores among professionals may reflect their greater exposure to situations that require problem-solving, emotional regulation, and stress management.

However, there was no discernible difference between professionals and non-professionals in the emotional intelligence results. Professionals' mean scores were marginally higher, but this difference was not statistically significant. The ability to recognize, comprehend, and effectively manage emotions in oneself and others is known as emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It is also considered an important factor influencing interpersonal relationships and personal well-being (Goleman, 1995). The absence of a significant difference suggests that emotional intelligence may develop through everyday social interactions, life experiences, and personal development rather than occupational status alone. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) also suggested that emotional intelligence is shaped by a variety of personal and social experiences, which may explain why individuals across different occupational groups can display similar levels of emotional understanding and emotional regulation.

Similarly, there was no discernible difference in resilience between professionals and non-professionals, according to the results. The ability of people to effectively adjust in the face of hardship, stress, or difficult life circumstances is referred to as resilience. Masten (2001) described resilience as a common human capacity that enables individuals to recover from difficulties and maintain psychological functioning. Connor and Davidson (2003) also emphasized that resilience involves adaptability, persistence, and emotional strength in challenging situations. The findings of this study suggest that resilience may not necessarily depend on professional status, but rather on broader life experiences, social support systems, and individual personality characteristics. Individuals from both groups may have developed resilience through personal challenges, family support, or other life circumstances.

Overall, the findings of the study suggest that while professionals demonstrate stronger coping strategies compared to non-professionals, emotional intelligence and resilience appear to be relatively similar across both groups. These results highlight the importance of coping mechanisms in dealing with occupational stress and responsibilities, while also indicating that emotional intelligence and resilience are broader psychological capacities that can develop through various life experiences. Understanding these factors can contribute to promoting better psychological well-being and helping individuals manage stress more effectively in both personal and professional contexts.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study titled "*Emotional Intelligence, Resilience and Coping Strategies: A Comparative Study between Professionals and Non-professionals*" sought to understand whether these important psychological factors differ between individuals engaged in professional work and those who are not. Emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies are key aspects of psychological

functioning, as they influence how individuals understand emotions, deal with stress, and adapt to challenges in everyday life.

The study adopted a comparative research design and collected data from a total sample of 32 participants, including 16 professionals and 16 non-professionals, selected through purposive sampling. Standardized tools measuring emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies were administered, and the obtained data were analyzed using independent sample t-tests through SPSS.

The results of the study indicated that there is a significant difference in coping strategies between professionals and non-professionals, with professionals demonstrating comparatively stronger coping abilities. However, no significant differences were found in emotional intelligence and resilience between the two groups. These findings suggest that while professional environments may contribute to the development of more structured coping mechanisms, emotional intelligence and resilience appear to be broader psychological capacities that develop through diverse life experiences.

Overall, the study contributes to the understanding of how individuals manage emotional and stressful situations across different occupational contexts. The findings emphasize the importance of developing effective coping strategies and highlight the need for further research with larger and more diverse samples to gain deeper insights into these psychological constructs and their role in promoting mental well-being.

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