The Socio-Cognitive Underpinnings of Resiliency: The role of self-regulation

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Introduction

- Resiliency broadly refers to positive adaptation to life’s challenges.
- Resiliency can be enhanced through intervention.
- Self-regulation (SR) plays an important role in resiliency.
- SR is often negatively impacted in challenging life situations.
- SR has been defined inconsistently and its boundaries are elusive across disciplines.
- This narrative review aimed to synthesize available interdisciplinary research on how self-regulation is defined in the literature.
- A clearer operational definition and consistent interdisciplinary use of SR are essential for best practices and for the advancement of resiliency research.

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Research Questions

The research questions guiding this narrative review were:

- How is self-regulation defined?
- What processes are associated with self-regulation across disciplines?

Method

A review protocol was developed for this narrative report:
- Search of PsycINFO, Medline, and Web of Science
- Keyword “self-regulation”

Inclusion Criteria:

- Peer-reviewed journal
- Empirical Study
- Written in English
- Published in the last 5 years (Jan 1 2016 – September 17 2021)
- Study in Children and Adolescents (2-17 years)
- Focused on self-regulation

PRISMA flow diagram for narrative reviews

Analyses

- To collate the data obtained from the sources, the information was first independently assessed by two reviewers
- Disagreements were resolved by discussion
- Themes were extracted and grouped under 5 categories by two researchers:
  - Disciplines Involved
  - Domains
  - Abilities/Skills/Capacities
  - Descriptive Words
- Using the framework of the themes, each study was coded based on the themes

Discussion

- SR is a dynamic and adaptive multi-component construct. It is most effective when a balance between top-down (reflective, cognitive processes) and bottom-up processes (automatic, reactive, stimulus driven) is achieved.
- SR develops as a result of interactions between individual characteristics, the environment, and situational demands.
- A wide range of disciplines are involved in SR research. Psychology (n=96) and Education (n=52) have published the most in this area.
- The three process most associated with SR are:
  - Inhibition (n=56)
  - Goal-directed (N=54)
  - Cognitive Flexibility (N=27)