

# **Thriving Through the Tough: The Relationship Between Relocation Stress, Adaptability, Resilience, Life Satisfaction, and Happiness Among Adolescents from Military Backgrounds.**

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## **Abstract**

Adolescents with parents in the defense services face distinctive challenges, particularly due to the frequent relocations that accompany this lifestyle. These relocations often lead to acculturative stress, which can adversely affect their overall well-being and happiness. The current study delves into the relationship between relocation-induced stress and its impact on the happiness of adolescents from defense families. Additionally, it explores the roles of resilience and adaptability in moderating this relationship. To gather data, purposive and cluster sampling methods were employed to select participants. A total of 333 adolescents, aged 13 to 18, participated in the study. Through analysis, it was revealed that acculturative stress, which arises due to constant adjustments to new environments, has a significant negative correlation with happiness. Adolescents who frequently face such stress often experience lower levels of well-being, as they struggle to cope with the demands of relocation, adjusting to new schools, communities, and social circles. However, the study also found that resilience plays a crucial role in counteracting the negative effects of acculturative stress. Resilience was positively correlated with happiness, suggesting that those who are more resilient tend to experience greater levels of happiness despite the challenges posed by frequent relocations. In conclusion, while frequent relocations can lead to significant stress for adolescents in defense families, resilience acts as a buffer, helping them cope better and maintain happiness. The study highlights the importance of fostering resilience and adaptability in adolescents to mitigate the negative effects of relocation-related stress on their well-being.

**Keywords:** Relocation Stress, Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Adaptability, Resilience, Adolescents, Defence.

## **Introduction**

Military families possess a distinctive set of factors that impact them, encompassing both risks and sources of resilience. This combination raises intriguing developmental questions within the realm of mental health. Despite this, the population remains relatively underexplored in research (Palmer, 2008). The experiences of Adolescents from defence families encompass a unique blend of challenges and opportunities, often revolving around the frequent relocations necessitated by their parents' military service. Due to frequent relocations, they have more periods of stressful adjustment than civilian Adolescents do.

The adjustment period begins when Adolescents first realize they will be forced to relocate. They then begin to grieve over the loss of friends, the changing of schools and communities, and the fear of the unknown (Clark, 2023). Relocation Stress was initially described as a syndrome involving physiological and psychosocial challenges stemming from the transition from one environment to another (Manion & Rantz, 1995). These relocations, while sometimes exciting and full of new adventures, can also pose significant stressors to Adolescents as they navigate changes in schools, friendships, and community environments. Understanding the intricate relationship between relocation stress, the frequency of moves, and their impact on children's happiness, life satisfaction, resilience, and adaptability is crucial in providing support and fostering their well-being.

For Adolescents from defence families, relocation stress manifests in various forms, from the upheaval of leaving familiar surroundings to the uncertainty of starting a new life in a different location. The frequency of relocations exacerbates these stressors, as each move presents a fresh set of adjustments and challenges that require a lot of resilience and adaptability. American Psychological Association (APA) defines resilience as not merely the ability to endure hardships but also the capacity to bounce back from adversity, grow, and thrive despite difficult circumstances. It involves developing coping strategies, maintaining a positive outlook, and utilizing support systems to overcome obstacles and adaptability as the capacity to make suitable responses to altered or evolving situations, the ability to adapt or modify one's behaviour when encountering varying circumstances or individuals. Consequently, examining how these factors intertwine to influence children's emotional and psychological well-being becomes essential in developing strategies to mitigate the negative effects of relocation on their happiness and life satisfaction. "Life satisfaction is an endorsement of or positive attitude toward one's life, overall" (Hall, 2014, p.359), whereas happiness is a state of well-being and contentment, a pleasurable or satisfying experience (Merriam-Webster, 2014).

Central to this exploration are the concepts of resilience and adaptability, which play pivotal roles in mediating or moderating the impact of relocation stress and frequency on children's well-being. Resilience, the ability to bounce back from adversity, and adaptability, the capacity to adjust to new circumstances, offer pathways for Adolescents to navigate the challenges of relocation and thrive amidst change. Throughout history, military children's families have shown great capacity for adaptation and resilience (Park, 2015). The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, proposed by Hobfoll, suggests that individuals strive to acquire and maintain resources they value, which contribute to their well-being. In the context of the positive relationship between adaptability and life satisfaction

It allows individuals to adjust to challenges, cope with stressors, and respond flexibly to situations.

**Relation to Life Satisfaction:** Life satisfaction reflects individuals' overall assessment of their lives. Possessing resources like adaptability and resilience helps individuals manage stress, overcome obstacles, and pursue goals, leading to higher life satisfaction.

**Positive Relationship:** The positive link between adaptability and life satisfaction suggests that adaptable individuals tend to report greater life satisfaction. This aligns with COR, as adaptability is a resource that promotes well-being by aiding in stress management and positive adaptation. Within the COR Theory framework, adaptability is a valuable resource that enhances individuals' ability to cope and achieve greater life satisfaction.

By understanding how these traits function as mediating variables, we can uncover the mechanisms through which Adolescents from defence families maintain or enhance their happiness and life satisfaction despite the disruptions caused by frequent moves.

The Broad and Built theory of positive emotions theory (Fredrickson, 1998) posits that positive emotions (such as joy and contentment) broaden an individual's thought-action repertoire, which helps build personal resources like resilience, adaptability, and social bonds.

The defence lifestyle has historically been perceived as challenging, especially within public school systems that are responsible for educating adolescents from these families. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, examines

how individuals' development is shaped by their environment. This theory emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between individuals and their surroundings, from immediate influences (microsystem) like family and school to broader societal factors (macrosystem) such as cultural norms. Applying the Ecological Systems Theory to relocation stress and its impact on happiness and life satisfaction in Adolescents from military backgrounds involves considering how various environmental systems influence their adaptation to new environments. Defence families keep moving from one place to another because of the frequent postings depending upon the nature of the service. This can subject a child to various experiences over the course of time that can have various implications in their lives. Moving frequently can be emotionally taxing, leading to heightened stress and anxiety. Adolescents may have difficulty regulating their emotions, especially when faced with repeated disruptions to their routines and environments. Moving each time may entail leaving behind friends, familiar places, and routines. This repeated experience of loss and grief can impact how Adolescents form attachments because they may develop a sense of detachment to avoid the pain of repeatedly losing connections. Constant moving can make Adolescents hesitant to show vulnerability or rely on others for support, as they may fear that these connections are temporary. Adolescence is a critical period of development characterized by significant physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. Understanding how frequent moves affect adolescents during this stage can provide insights into how these experiences shape their identity, relationships, and future trajectories.

On the other hand, these experiences also make learn to adapt quickly to new environments, cultures, and social settings. They become adept at adjusting their behaviours and expectations, which can be valuable life skills. Moving exposes the child to diverse

cultures, languages, and traditions. This can cultivate and motivate cultural awareness and open-mindedness as they learn to appreciate and understand different ways of life. While it can be challenging to make new friends, frequent movers often develop strong social skills. They learn how to initiate conversations and join new groups. Since they find other people who are also subjected to constant moving, it encourages a sense of empathy and understanding for each other, inculcating brotherhood and harmony, which the defence lifestyle proudly boasts about. Adolescents learn to bounce back from challenges, develop coping strategies, and manage their emotions effectively building resilience. These unique experiences conclude that there exist stark differences between youth from a defense background and youth from a civilian background. Adolescents from defence backgrounds often have rich and varied experiences contributing to their growth and knowledge. The Transactional Model of Stress by Lazarus and Folkman offers a framework which can be used to understand how Adolescent from defence backgrounds perceive and respond to relocation stress, affecting their happiness and life satisfaction

Primary Appraisal: Adolescents assess relocation as either exciting or anxiety-inducing based on its perceived significance. Secondary Appraisal: They evaluate their coping resources, such as family support and past relocation experiences, to gauge their preparedness for the move. Coping Strategies: Adolescents use strategies like seeking social support, problem-solving, and changing how they view the situation

(cognitive reappraisal) to manage relocation stress and adjust to the new environment

Outcomes: Their happiness and life satisfaction depend on how they appraise the move, the effectiveness of their coping strategies, and the availability of supportive resources. Positive outcomes stem from manageable appraisal, effective coping, and ample support, while negative outcomes can result from coping challenges and limited support networks

This study addresses the need to understand how relocation stress and frequency affect the happiness, life satisfaction, resilience, and adaptability of Adolescents from defence families. Existing research is limited in this area is very less explored and limited especially in the Indian context, most studies are mostly focused on active personals in the military, war veterans, military and military Post Traumatic Stress Disorder etc. Although a few studies on the role of resilience have been done but the role of Relocation stress and frequency and adaptability and its role in life satisfaction and happiness has been unexplored in India. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing supportive interventions, informing policies, and promoting positive long-term outcomes for Adolescents in military communities. Adolescence is a period where mental health issues can emerge. The stress of moving, adjusting to new environments, and coping with changes can impact their mental well-being. Researching this aspect helps identify risk factors and develop support systems. The well-being of military families, including their children, is crucial for maintaining the morale and effectiveness of defence personnel. By studying the factors that influence children's well-being, policymakers can ensure that the needs of defence families are adequately addressed, ultimately contributing to national security. The primary challenge for educators lies in recognizing and overcoming the bias inherent in viewing students from military backgrounds through a deficit lens. Instead, educators should focus on fostering resilience and teaching adaptive coping skills, particularly among young children, to enhance their well-being and equip them to effectively navigate life's obstacles (Russo & Palmer, 2015).

In this study, I would embark on a journey to unravel the complexities of relocation stress, frequency, happiness, and life satisfaction in Adolescents from defence families, while shedding light on the roles of resilience and adaptability as crucial factors in shaping their well-being. By delving into these dynamics, we aim to inform interventions and support systems that empower Adolescents to navigate the challenges of military life with resilience, adaptability, and a sense of fulfilment. This study would be examining the unique challenges faced by these Adolescents and their families, this study aims to contribute to the well-being of military families and enhance their overall quality of life

### **Literature review**

Relocation Stress was initially described as a syndrome involving physiological and psychosocial challenges stemming from the transition from one environment to another (Manion & Rantz, 1995). It is also referred to as transfer anxiety or transfer trauma in cases where the move is involuntary, and the consequences are unfavourable (Hudgson et al., 2004). Relocation frequency refers to how often individuals or families move from one place to another. In military families, relocation frequency describes the number of times they are required to move due to changes in duty stations, deployments, or other military-related reasons. Defence life affects families, particularly in terms of relocation, PTSD, deployment, and post-deployment reunion (Palmer, 2008).

The mental health of children can be affected by family separation, frequent moves, and potential risks that come with the military lifestyle, both directly and indirectly ( Heidi Cramm et al., 2022). Merriam-Webster defines happiness as a state of well-being and contentment, a pleasurable experience. Life

satisfaction denotes a sense of contentment or embracing of one's life circumstances, encompassing the fulfillment of one's desires and needs for their life as a whole. Essentially, life satisfaction reflects a personal evaluation of the overall quality of one's life. (Souza & Lyubomirsky, 2001) The upheaval of moving frequently can disrupt their sense of stability and security. Moreover, the loss of familiar surroundings, such as friends, community support, and extracurricular activities, can contribute to a sense of disconnection and decreased well-being. A study done by Clark (2013) highlighted that continuous movement disrupts educational success, leading to difficulties in making friends, school-related problems, and emotional issues. The stressful adjustment period begins before relocation and intensifies afterward, involving grief over lost friendships and fear of the unknown. These cumulative effects of relocation stress can have lasting implications on children's overall happiness and life satisfaction, shaping their perceptions of their military lifestyle and sense of belonging. However, amidst these challenges, resilience and adaptability can play a crucial mediating role. American Psychological Association (APA) defines resilience is not merely the ability to endure hardships, but also the capacity to bounce back from adversity, grow, and thrive despite difficult circumstances. It involves developing coping strategies, maintaining a positive outlook, and utilizing support systems to overcome obstacles. This dynamic process of resilience empowers individuals to survive challenges and emerge stronger and more resourceful. Adolescents who develop resilience can more effectively cope with the stressors of relocation. Happiness, life satisfaction, and resilience are positively

correlated with resilience playing a mediating role (Nemati & Farnaz, 2016). Positive emotions, resilience, and gratitude play an important role in enhancing adolescents' life satisfaction (Bedi & Khan, 2023). A study done by Weber & Kevin (2005) found a significant association between relocation frequency and improved behavior, suggesting that frequent moves may contribute to resilience development in military adolescents. Students from military families exhibited higher resilience compared to those from non-military families. This suggests that familial factors, such as military affiliation, may influence resilience levels among students (Beri et al., 2022)

In a research done by Chakraborty & Chadha (2022), Resilience alone accounted for 56% of the variance in life satisfaction, and when combined with optimism, it accounted for 64% of the variance. This suggests that both resilience and optimism are significant factors in understanding life satisfaction, with optimism adding an additional 8% to the explanation beyond what resilience alone can account for. Resilience is also positively correlated with self-acceptance, contributing to psychological well-being among military children. (Sharma and Nagle, 2018). According to the American Psychological Association (APA), Adaptability is the capacity to make suitable responses to altered or evolving situations and the ability to adapt or modify one's behavior when encountering varying circumstances or individuals. Adaptability allows Adolescents from military backgrounds to find ways to maintain a sense of stability and continuity despite the changes. moreover, a study done by Zhou (2016) found that Adaptability and social support positively correlated with life satisfaction. Family and child satisfaction within military life and its crucial due to the stress of relocation. Considering all aspects of child development is vital for positive outcomes (Russo & Fallon, 2014). Collaboration between psychology and the military is crucial. The goal is to ensure the well-being of military families, recognizing their importance to society at large. (Park, 2011)

## **Aim and Hypotheses of the study**



**Aim** - The aim of this study is to investigate the relationships between relocation stress, adaptability, resilience, life satisfaction, and happiness among adolescents from defence backgrounds.

### **Hypotheses**

H1: Adaptability, relocation stress, and resilience will significantly predict life satisfaction among adolescents from defense backgrounds.

H2: Adaptability, relocation stress, and resilience will significantly predict happiness among adolescents from defense backgrounds.

H3: Adaptability will mediate the relationship between resilience and life satisfaction, such that higher adaptability will strengthen the positive association between resilience and life satisfaction.

H4: Adaptability will mediate the relationship between resilience and happiness, such that higher adaptability will enhance the positive relationship between resilience and happiness.

H5: Relocation stress will negatively predict life satisfaction, with lower levels of relocation stress being associated with higher life satisfaction.

H6: Relocation stress will negatively predict happiness, with lower levels of relocation stress being associated with greater happiness.

### **Method**

In this study, the researcher used a quantitative research design to explore the relationships between relocation stress, adaptability, resilience, life satisfaction, and happiness among adolescents from military backgrounds. Quantitative research involves systematically collecting and analyzing numerical data to understand patterns and relationships among variables. The primary independent variable (IV) of this study is relocation stress, the primary dependent variables (DVs) are life satisfaction and happiness, and the mediators are adaptability and resilience.

The study employs correlation analysis, linear regression, and mediation analysis to examine these relationships. Correlation analysis will determine the strength and direction of the relationships between relocation stress, adaptability, resilience, life satisfaction, and happiness. Specifically, it will help identify whether higher relocation stress correlates with lower life satisfaction and whether higher adaptability is associated with greater happiness. Pearson's correlation coefficients will quantify these relationships and guide further analysis.

Linear regression analysis will predict the effects of relocation stress, adaptability, and resilience on life satisfaction and happiness, assessing the predictive power of each variable while controlling for others. The regression models will determine whether relocation stress negatively predicts life satisfaction and happiness and whether adaptability and resilience positively predict these outcomes.

Mediation analysis will examine whether adaptability mediates the relationship between resilience and happiness, and between resilience and life satisfaction. It will also explore whether adaptability and resilience mediate the relationship between relocation stress and life satisfaction/happiness. This analysis will clarify whether the influence of relocation stress on life satisfaction and happiness is direct or mediated through adaptability and resilience, highlighting the pathways through which these variables interact.

### **Participants**

The study included 333 adolescents from defense backgrounds, selected using a combination of probability (clustered sampling) and non-probability (snowball sampling) techniques to ensure a representative and accessible participant pool. Participants met specific inclusion criteria: they were aged between 13 and 17 years, had at least one parent currently working in or retired from the defense sector, and had experienced relocation at least once due to their parent's service. The geographic locations of Jorhat, Assam, and Bangalore, India, were chosen for their prominence as military bases and their large populations of defense families, allowing access to participants from various regions across the country. Adolescents without relocation experience or those with intellectual disabilities, severe mental illnesses, or other multiple disabilities were excluded from the study. This sampling approach ensured a comprehensive representation of adolescents from diverse military backgrounds, enhancing the relevance and generalizability of the findings.

**Table 1. Demographic Details of participants**

Category	Counts	% Of total
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	184	55.3 %
Female	149	44.7 %
<b>Working Status</b>		
Serving	257	77.2 %
Retired	76	22.8 %
Father	322	96.7 %
Mother	9	2.7 %
Both	2	0.6 %
<b>Nature of Service</b>		
Army	150	45.0 %
Other services	6	1.8 %
CAPF	1	0.3 %
Air Force	82	24.6 %
CRPF	7	2.1 %
BSF	41	12.3 %
CISF	43	12.9 %
Navy	2	0.6 %
DSC	1	0.3 %
<b>Mother Tongue</b>		
Assamese	56	16.8 %
Kumauni	1	0.3 %
Malayalam	18	5.4 %
Bengali	9	2.7 %
Hindi	128	38.4 %
Punjabi	3	0.9 %
English	1	0.3 %
Garhwali	5	1.5 %
Bhojpuri	9	2.7 %

Marathi	5	1.5 %
Bodo	1	0.3 %
Meitei	1	0.3 %
Nepali	3	0.9 %
Kokborok	2	0.6 %
Chhatisgarhia	1	0.3 %
Telegu	25	7.5 %
Kannada	27	8.1 %
Tamil	15	4.5 %
Odia	4	1.2 %
<hr/>		
Manipuri	2	0.6 %
Chamka	1	0.3 %
Dogri	1	0.3 %
Wancho	1	0.3 %
Awadhi	2	0.6 %
Rajasthani	5	1.5 %
Urdu	1	0.3 %
Haryanvi	3	0.9 %
Nishi	1	0.3 %
Coorgi	1	0.3 %
Himachali	1	0.3 %

## Measures

### Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI)

The Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI), developed by Argyle, Martin, and Crossland in 1989, consists of 29 multiple-choice questions reflecting emotional states ranging from unhappiness to high happiness. The OHI has high internal reliability ( $\alpha = .90$ ) and a test-retest reliability of .78 over seven weeks. Construct validity was established through correlations with other scales: the Bradburn Positive Affect Scale ( $r = .32$ ), Argyle's Life Satisfaction Index ( $r = .57$ ), and the Beck Depression Inventory ( $r = -.52$ ). Factor analysis identified six factors—Life Satisfaction, Joy, Self-esteem, Calm, Control, and Efficacy—explaining 33.93% of the total variance. Concurrent validity was demonstrated by a strong correlation ( $r = .73$ ) with the Fordyce Happiness Inventory.

### Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

The SWLS, developed in 1985, assesses overall life satisfaction through five items. It has demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .82 to .88 across various countries. The scale shows good construct validity, with positive correlations with happiness ( $r = .61$ ), resilience ( $r = .46$ ), and hope ( $r = .60$ ), and negative correlations with depression ( $r = -.42$ ) and anxiety ( $r = -.24$ ). Concurrent validity is strong ( $r = .77$ ) with the Life Satisfaction Index.

### Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)



The BRS, developed in 2008, measures an individual's ability to bounce back from stress using six items on a 5-point Likert scale. It demonstrates high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .85$ ) and convergent validity, showing positive correlations with well-being, social support, and coping strategies, and negative correlations with depression, anxiety, and maladaptive coping mechanisms.

### **Adaptability Scale**

Developed in 2012, the Adaptability Scale includes nine items assessing cognitive, behavioral, and emotional adjustments to uncertainty or novelty. Participants rate responses from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Psychometric evaluations confirm its reliability and validity, with consistent factor loadings across subgroups such as gender and ethnicity. Adaptability can be analyzed as a single construct or divided into cognitive-behavioral and affective factors.

### **Domestic Migration Stress Questionnaire (DMSQ)**

The DMSQ measures stress related to domestic migration through 16 items across four subconstructs: Separation from Origin, Rejection at Destination, Lack of Self-confidence, and Maladaptation. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale has high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .93$  overall) and strong criterion-related validity, with significant correlations (ranging from .27 to .45) with the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The research was conducted using primary data obtained through a clustered sampling method involving 333 participants who met the inclusion criteria. Participants were drawn from schools such as Army Public School Jorhat, Assam Rifles Public School, Jorhat, Assam, and Kendriya Vidyalaya Air Force, Yelahanka, Bangalore. These schools included students from across the country, ensuring the study was not limited to a specific geographic region. Additionally, online Google Forms were distributed using a snowball sampling method.

The purpose of the questionnaire was explained to participants, along with the inclusion criteria, and they were assured that their responses would remain anonymous. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary, and there would be no penalties for withdrawing from the study. Assent forms were distributed in the schools prior to data collection to obtain parental approval, and consent forms were collected on the day of data collection to ensure voluntary participation. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the process.

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis plan involved a series of statistical tests to examine the relationships among relocation stress, relocation frequency, adaptability, resilience, life satisfaction, and happiness in adolescents from military backgrounds. Correlation analyses were conducted to assess the associations between relocation stress, life satisfaction, and happiness, as well as the relationships between adaptability, resilience, and these outcomes. Multiple regression analyses were performed to determine how adaptability, relocation stress, and resilience predicted life satisfaction and happiness. Additional regressions examined whether relocation stress negatively predicted life satisfaction and happiness.

To further investigate the mechanisms underlying these relationships, mediation analyses were conducted to assess whether adaptability mediated the relationship between resilience and life satisfaction and

happiness. These analyses aimed to explore whether adaptability strengthened the positive associations between resilience and these outcomes.

## Results

The table presents descriptive statistics and reliability measures for four psychological variables: happiness, life satisfaction, resilience, and adaptability. The mean happiness score is 116.62 (SD = 17.45) across 29 items, with a Shapiro-Wilk test value (W) of 0.993, indicating the data is normally distributed ( $p = 0.136$ ). However, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 0.513 suggests moderate internal consistency. Life satisfaction has a mean score of 20.98 (SD = 6.88) over 5 items. Although the Shapiro-Wilk test indicates non-normality ( $W = 0.867$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), the internal consistency is relatively low ( $\alpha = 0.499$ ). Resilience scores show a mean of 16.22 (SD = 2.85) across 6 items, with normally distributed data ( $W = 0.995$ ,  $p = 0.290$ ), though internal consistency is weak ( $\alpha = 0.251$ ). Adaptability scores average 42.18 (SD = 10.24) over 9 items. While the Shapiro-Wilk test indicates non-normality ( $W = 0.963$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), the internal consistency is strong ( $\alpha = 0.753$ ), suggesting reliable measurement. Overall, these findings highlight variability in data distribution and reliability across the constructs.

**Table 2**

Descriptives	Shapiro's Wilk					
	Mean	SD	No. of items	W	P	Chronbach's $\alpha$
Happiness	116.62	17.45	29	0.993	0.136	0.513
Life Satisfaction	20.98	6.88	5	0.867	<0.001	0.499
Resilience	16.22	2.85	6	0.995	0.290	0.251
Adaptability	42.18	10.24	9	0.963	<0.001	0.753
Stress	44.8	9.62	16	0.985	0.001	0.734

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationships between stress, resilience, adaptability, happiness, and life satisfaction. There was a **Low, negative correlation** between **stress** and **resilience**,  $r_s(331) = -.120$ ,  $p = .028$ , and a **moderate, negative correlation** between **stress** and **happiness**,  $r_s(331) = -.157$ ,  $p = .004$ , both of which were statistically significant. However, there was no significant relationship between **stress** and **satisfaction**,  $r_s(331) = -.008$ ,  $p = .881$ , and between **stress** and **adaptability**,  $r_s(331) = -.045$ ,  $p = .416$ . There was a **moderate, positive correlation** between **resilience** and **adaptability**,  $r_s(331) = .240$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicating that higher resilience is associated with higher adaptability. A **strong, positive correlation** was found between **happiness** and **satisfaction**,  $r_s(331) = .523$ ,  $p < .001$ , and between **happiness** and **adaptability**,  $r_s(331) = .506$ ,  $p < .001$ , both of which were statistically significant. Finally, there was a **moderate, positive correlation** between **adaptability** and **life satisfaction**,  $r_s(331) = .407$ ,  $p < .001$ , showing that individuals with greater adaptability tend to report higher life satisfaction.

**Table 3 Correlation Matrix**

## Correlation Matrix

	Relocation Stress	Resilience	Adaptability	Happiness	Life Satisfaction
Relocation Stress	—				
Resilience	-120*	—			
Adaptability	-0.045	0.240***	—		
Happiness	-0.157**	0.178*	0.506***	—	
Life Satisfaction	-0.008	0.074	0.407***	0.523***	—

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

A linear regression model was computed to predict **satisfaction** based on **resilience**, **stress**, and **adaptability**. The results indicated that the model was statistically significant,  $F(3, 329) = 15.2$ ,  $p < .001$ , and accounted for approximately 12.2% of the variance in satisfaction ( $R^2 = 0.122$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.114$ ).

Among the predictors, **adaptability** ( $B = 0.2317$ ,  $p < .001$ ) was a significant positive predictor of satisfaction, meaning individuals with higher adaptability tend to report higher satisfaction levels. However, neither **resilience** ( $B = 0.0250$ ,  $p = .846$ ) nor **stress** ( $B = 0.0291$ ,  $p = .435$ ) were significant predictors of satisfaction.

**Table 1.3 Linear regression Analysis**

### Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Overall Model Test				
			Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	df1	df2	P
1	0.349	0.122	0.114	15.2	3	329	< .001

### Model Coefficients - Satisfaction total

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	9.4982	2.9829	3.184	0.002
Resilience Total	0.0250	0.1285	0.194	0.846
stress total	0.0291	0.0372	0.782	0.435
adaptability total	0.2317	0.0355	6.519	< .001

A linear regression model was computed to predict **happiness** based on **resilience**, **stress**, and **adaptability**. The results indicated that the model was statistically significant,  $F(3, 329) = 36.0, p < .001$ , and accounted for approximately 24.7% of the variance in happiness ( $R^2 = 0.247$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.240$ ). Among the predictors, **adaptability** ( $B = 0.777, p < .001$ ) was a significant positive predictor of happiness, indicating that individuals with higher adaptability tend to have higher happiness scores. **Stress** ( $B = -0.260, p = .003$ ) was a significant negative predictor, suggesting that higher stress levels are associated with lower happiness. However, **resilience** ( $B = 0.349, p = .248$ ) did not significantly predict happiness.

**Table 1.31 Linear Regression Analysis**

**Model Fit Measures**

**Overall Model Test**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	df1	df2	p
0.497	0.247	0.240	36.0	3	329	< .001

**Model Coefficients - Happiness Total**

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	89.834	7.0120	12.81	< .001
Resilience Total	0.349	0.3020	1.16	0.248
stress total	-0.260	0.0874	-2.98	0.003

**Model Fit Measures**

**Overall Model Test**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	df1	df2	p
adaptability total	0.777	0.0835	9.30		< .001	

A mediation analysis examined whether adaptability mediates the relationship between resilience and happiness. The results indicated that the indirect effect was statistically significant (Estimate = 0.608, SE = 0.163,  $Z = 3.74, p < .001$ ), showing that resilience impacts happiness through adaptability. The direct effect of resilience on happiness, without the mediation of adaptability, was not significant (Estimate = 0.457, SE = 0.302,  $Z = 1.51, p = 0.130$ ). However, the total effect of resilience on happiness was significant (Estimate = 1.065, SE = 0.330,  $Z = 3.23, p = 0.001$ ).

Among the path estimates, resilience significantly predicted adaptability (Estimate = 0.785, SE = 0.1919,  $Z = 4.09, p < .001$ ), indicating that individuals with higher resilience tend to have higher adaptability. Additionally, adaptability was a significant positive predictor of happiness (Estimate = 0.774, SE = 0.0841,  $Z = 9.20, p < .001$ ), suggesting that individuals with higher adaptability experience greater happiness. However, the direct path from resilience to happiness was not significant (Estimate = 0.457, SE = 0.3020,  $Z = 1.51, p = 0.130$ ).

In conclusion, adaptability fully mediates the relationship between resilience and happiness, as the indirect effect was significant while the direct effect of resilience on happiness was not.

**Table 1.4 Mediation Analysis Mediation Estimates**

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Indirect	0.608	0.163	3.74	< .001

Direct	0.457	0.302	1.51	0.130
Total	1.065	0.330	3.23	0.001

## Path Estimates

			Estimate	SE	Z	p
Resilience Total	→	adaptability total	0.785	0.1919	4.09	< .001
adaptability total	→	Happiness Total	0.774	0.0841	9.20	< .001
Resilience Total	→	Happiness Total	0.457	0.3020	1.51	0.130

## Discussion

The study explored the relationship between relocation stress, resilience, adaptability, happiness, and life satisfaction among adolescents from defense backgrounds. The findings of this research offer valuable insights into how these factors interplay, with particular emphasis on adaptability's key role in mitigating stress.

The correlation analysis revealed several significant relationships. **Relocation stress was negatively correlated with resilience and happiness**, indicating that higher stress levels are associated with lower resilience and happiness (Gibbs, 2010; Clark, 2013). Similar findings have been supported by Pour et al. (2022), where perceived stress was inversely related to resilience and happiness, emphasizing the role of resilience in maintaining well-being in stressful situations (Saltzman, 2014). **Continuous movement disrupts educational success**, leading to difficulties in making friends, school-related problems, and emotional issues (Clark, 2013). However, **relocation stress did not significantly correlate with life satisfaction or adaptability**, suggesting that while frequent relocations may impact emotional well-being (happiness), they may not necessarily affect overall contentment or the ability to adjust to new situations (Marchant & Medway, 1987). This distinction is particularly relevant for military families, where frequent relocations can lead to emotional upheaval, yet some adolescents still find ways to adjust over time. These findings reinforce the idea that adaptability and resilience play distinct roles in psychological well-being (Weber & Kevin, 2005).

Resilience showed a positive correlation with adaptability and happiness, implying that **more resilient adolescents tend to adapt better and feel happier** (Saltzman, 2014; Chakraborty & Chadha, 2022). This aligns with the **Broaden-and-Build Theory** proposed by Fredrickson (1998), which explains how positive emotions (happiness) expand an individual's thinking and actions (broaden) and help build lasting personal resources like resilience and adaptability (Bedi & Khan, 2023). However, **resilience did not significantly correlate with life satisfaction**, indicating a more complex relationship between resilience and different dimensions of well-being. This may reflect the unique challenges faced by military adolescents, who may feel transient or disconnected in their pursuit of lasting satisfaction (Sharma & Nagle, 2018). The **strong positive relationship between adaptability and both happiness and life satisfaction** reinforces the importance of adaptability in promoting overall well-being (Zhou, 2016). Military adolescents who are adaptable are better equipped to navigate new social and environmental contexts, which is crucial given the disruptions they face in their social networks and education (Russo & Fallon, 2014).

The linear regression analyses provide further support for the role of adaptability in well-being. **Adaptability emerged as a significant positive predictor of both happiness and life satisfaction**, underscoring its crucial role in helping adolescents from defense backgrounds navigate the challenges of



relocation and maintain a positive outlook (**Park, 1980**). Resilience and relocation stress were not significant predictors of life satisfaction, but **adaptability remained a significant predictor of happiness even when accounting for stress and resilience**. This reinforces the idea that **adaptability serves as a protective factor**, helping individuals maintain happiness despite stressors like frequent relocations (**Marchant & Medway, 1987**).

The mediation analysis provided deeper insights into how resilience impacts happiness. **The results indicated that adaptability fully mediates the relationship between resilience and happiness**. While resilience alone was not a significant direct predictor of happiness, it influenced happiness indirectly through adaptability (**Chakraborty & Chadha, 2022**). This suggests that **building resilience alone may not be sufficient to enhance happiness; rather, adaptability acts as the bridge between resilience and happiness**. **Frequent relocations may contribute to resilience development in military adolescents**, as they are constantly required to adapt to new settings (**Weber & Kevin, 2005**). Practically, interventions aimed at increasing resilience should also focus on improving adaptability skills to maximize their impact on happiness.

### **Implications and Limitations**

This study provides valuable insights into the well-being of adolescents from defense backgrounds, particularly in relation to relocation stress, resilience, adaptability, and happiness. However, several limitations must be acknowledged. **The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships** between variables, and future longitudinal studies could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how these factors evolve over time (**Gibbs, 2010**). Additionally, **the reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias**, as participants could overestimate or underreport their levels of stress and well-being (**Saltzman, 2014**). Integrating objective measures such as behavioral assessments or peer evaluations could enhance the accuracy of future findings.

In light of these findings, practical interventions can be implemented to support the well-being of defense-background adolescents. **Structured training programs focusing on resilience and adaptability—through workshops on stress management, coping strategies, and problem-solving—can significantly benefit these students** (**Saltzman, 2014; Park, 1980**). Establishing "Welcome Committees" in schools to help new students integrate into their environments can foster a sense of inclusion (**Marchant & Medway, 1987**). Finally, **providing access to mental health professionals within military units, specifically offering counseling services to address relocation stress**, would address critical aspects of their well-being and support these families more holistically (**Beri et al., 2022**).

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings from the study, several interventions and recommendations can be formulated to support the well-being of adolescents from defense backgrounds. Developing structured training programs focused on building resilience and adaptability can include workshops on stress management, coping strategies, and problem-solving techniques tailored to the unique experiences of military families (**Sharma & Nagle, 2018**). The creation of "Welcome Committees" in schools to help new students integrate into their new environment can ensure they feel supported and included (**Clark, 2013**). Additionally, providing access to mental health professionals in every military unit, specifically designed for families—including counseling services that address relocation stress—would help mitigate its impact on well-being (**Zhou, 2016**). These recommendations are essential in ensuring that adolescents from defense backgrounds

receive the support necessary to thrive despite the challenges associated with frequent relocations (**Russo & Fallon, 2014**)

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