

# The Emotional Intelligence and Resilience among Emerging Adults After a Romantic Breakup in Petisah Tengah

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This investigation was orchestrated to empirically examine the relational dynamics between emotional intelligence and resilience in early adults after a breakup. The research sample amounted to 289 people who were early adult individuals who lived in Petisah Tengah and had a breakup experience, and were selected through purposive sampling. The instruments employed encompassed 23 items of the emotional intelligence scale and 36 items of the resilience scale. Data analysis was performed utilizing the Pearson Product-Moment correlation technique. The findings unveil a robust and statistically significant positive association between emotional intelligence and resilience, with a correlation coefficient of 0.674 and a p-value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). These results imply that elevated emotional intelligence is intricately linked with heightened resilience capacities, suggesting a reciprocal interplay between the two instruments.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Early adulthood is a transitional developmental stage in which individuals move from dependence toward independence in economic, social, and psychological aspects, typically occurring between the ages of 20 and 30 years (Frezy, 2023). During this stage, individuals begin to face various developmental demands, including establishing more intimate interpersonal relationships, planning for the future, forming families, and fulfilling social responsibilities within society (Wangge et al., 2024). One of the dominant developmental tasks during early adulthood is the establishment of romantic relationships through dating as a form of emotional attachment and interpersonal commitment.

Dating is an interpersonal relationship between two individuals who engage in emotional interactions to develop mutual understanding and affective closeness (Yosua, 2024). However, romantic relationships do not always progress harmoniously due to conflicts, infidelity, or the inability to maintain commitment, which may ultimately lead to romantic breakups. Breakups can generate various psychological impacts, including sadness, loss, anger, decreased motivation, and difficulties in carrying out daily activities (Aska et al., 2022). In certain cases, the emotional consequences of romantic breakups may develop into more serious psychological conditions when individuals are unable to manage their emotions adaptively.

Experiencing a breakup often evokes various negative emotional reactions, such as sadness, loss, anxiety, anger, and decreased motivation in daily functioning (Aska et al., 2022). For some individuals, such experiences may trigger prolonged psychological distress when not balanced with adequate adaptive coping abilities (Saharani et al., 2025). Many adolescents and young adults experiencing romantic breakups fall into severe emotional distress, with some cases leading to suicidal behavior due to the inability to cope with overwhelming emotions (Kalsum & Laksmiwati, 2022); (Firmawati et al., 2025). Nevertheless, individuals respond differently to breakup experiences. Some are able to recover and adapt quickly, while others struggle to manage the emotional pressure that emerges. These differences in individuals' ability to withstand and recover from stressful situations are closely related to resilience.

Resilience refers to an individual's capacity to face difficulties, adapt, and recover after experiencing pressure or traumatic events.

Individuals with high levels of resilience tend to manage emotional distress more effectively and maintain their quality of life after negative experiences (Apriani & Fadilla, n.d.). In contrast, low resilience is associated with anxiety, depression, somatization, and self-blame tendencies (Fakhriyani, 2021). Therefore, resilience is considered an important psychological aspect that helps early adults cope with emotional distress resulting from romantic breakups.

One psychological factor associated with resilience is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and direct emotions adaptively in both personal and social contexts (Anggraini & Yanto, 2023). Emotional intelligence includes the ability to recognize one's own emotions, regulate emotions, motivate oneself, understand others' emotions (empathy), and maintain social relationships (Wisudayanti, 2020). Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are generally more capable of controlling negative emotional responses and coping with psychological pressure adaptively.

Several previous studies conducted by (Hidayah, 2022) and (Sari & Fridari, 2021) demonstrated a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience. These findings indicate that individuals with better emotional regulation abilities tend to possess stronger adaptability and psychological endurance when facing stressful situations. However, research examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience among emerging adults who experience romantic breakups remains limited, particularly within the Indonesian context. Most previous studies have focused on adolescents, school students, or populations from different contexts, thereby failing to fully capture the psychological dynamics experienced by emerging adults after romantic breakups. In addition, prior studies primarily examined the general relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience without specifically investigating romantic breakup experiences as emotional stressors. This condition highlights the need to further examine the relationship between these variables among emerging adults following romantic breakups, especially within the socio-cultural context of Indonesia.

Although previous studies have explored emotional intelligence and resilience, research focusing specifically on early adults experiencing romantic breakups remains scarce. The emotional dynamics of breakups during early adulthood differ from those

experienced during adolescence because they involve deeper affective attachment, future expectations, and readiness for long-term relationships. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand how emotional intelligence contributes to the development of resilience among early adults after experiencing romantic breakups.

Based on the explanations above, this study aims to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience among early adults after romantic breakups. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of developmental psychology and emotional psychology literature, as well as provide practical insights to help early adults manage emotional distress resulting from romantic breakup experiences.

## **2. METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative correlational approach to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence as the independent variable and resilience as the dependent variable among early adults after romantic breakups. A quantitative approach was selected because the study aimed to objectively measure the relationship between variables through statistical analysis, with the findings presented in numerical form (Sahir, 2021).

The population of this study consisted of 1,793 early adults residing in Petisah Tengah District. The sample size was determined using the Isaac and Michael table with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a total sample of 289 participants. The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling because the study specifically involved participants who met predetermined criteria relevant to the research objectives. The inclusion criteria were: (1) individuals aged 20–30 years, (2) individuals who had experienced a romantic breakup after being in a dating relationship for at least two years, and (3) residents of Petisah Tengah District. The minimum relationship duration of two years was established because longer romantic relationships tend to involve stronger emotional attachment, psychological investment, and future expectations, thereby increasing the likelihood of more significant emotional impacts following a breakup. The selection of Petisah Tengah as the research setting was based on the presence of relevant social phenomena related to psychological distress after romantic breakups, as well as accessibility to participants who matched the study criteria. Furthermore, the location was chosen to obtain contextual data that reflected actual urban social conditions.

Nevertheless, the use of purposive sampling within a single geographical area may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations.

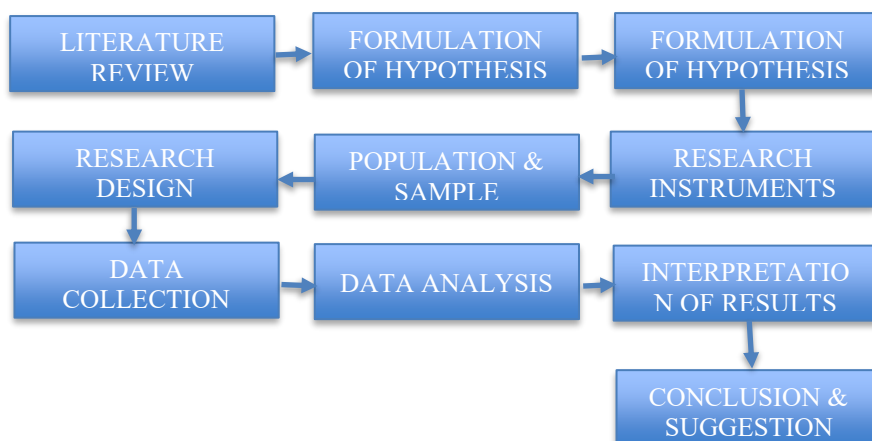
Data collection was conducted using two research instruments in the form of four-point Likert scales consisting of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The four-response format was applied to reduce neutral response tendencies and encourage participants to provide clearer responses to each statement. The research instruments consisted of a resilience scale and an emotional intelligence scale developed by the researcher based on relevant psychological theories.

The resilience scale was developed based on the resilience aspects proposed by (Pusvitasari & Yuliasari, 2021), namely emotion regulation, impulse control, optimism, causal analysis, empathy, self-efficacy, and reaching out. Meanwhile, the emotional intelligence scale was constructed based on Salovey's theory (Wisudayanti, 2020), which includes self-emotional awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, recognition of others' emotions, and relationship management. The instrument items were developed through a conceptual operationalization process based on theoretical indicators for each aspect. Both favorable and unfavorable items were included to minimize response bias among participants.

Prior to the main study, both instruments were pilot-tested on 100 participants who shared characteristics similar to those of the research sample, namely early adults aged 20–30 years who had experienced a romantic breakup after maintaining a relationship for at least two years. The pilot study was conducted from May 22 to June 5, 2025, in Petisah Tengah District. Item validity was tested using the Corrected Item Total Correlation technique with a minimum coefficient criterion of  $\geq 0.30$  (Arindawati & Izzati, 2021). The resilience scale produced 36 valid items out of 42 items, with validity coefficients ranging from 0.334 to 0.681. Meanwhile, the emotional intelligence scale yielded 23 valid items out of 40 items, with validity coefficients ranging from 0.305 to 0.580. Instrument reliability was assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha technique. The reliability analysis showed alpha coefficients of 0.930 for the resilience scale and 0.894 for the emotional intelligence scale, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming that both instruments were appropriate for use in this study.

The data collection process was conducted by directly distributing scale booklets to participants who met the inclusion criteria. Before completing the scales, all participants were provided with informed consent explaining the purpose of the study, confidentiality of data, participants' right to withdraw at any time, and assurance that the collected data would only be used for academic purposes. Participants' identities were anonymized to maintain confidentiality and reduce potential social desirability bias in self-report responses.

Data analysis was performed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics 23 to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience. Prior to hypothesis testing, assumption tests consisting of normality and linearity tests were conducted. The normality test employed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, where a significance value greater than 0.05 indicated normally distributed data. The linearity test was conducted to ensure a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables, with a deviation from linearity significance value greater than 0.05 indicating a linear relationship between the variables.



**Figure 1. Research Flow Chart**

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The following section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in this study. The presentation of these characteristics aims to provide an initial understanding of the

respondents' profiles, which may serve as a basis for interpreting the research findings more comprehensively.

**Table 1. Demographic Data**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Gender	Male	128	44,29%
	Female	161	55,71%
Age	20	36	12,46%
	21	55	19,03%
	22	42	14,53%
	23	26	9%
	24	17	5,88%
	25	26	9%
	26	10	3,46%
	27	18	6,23%
	28	30	10,38%
	29	22	7,61%
Relationship Duration	30	7	2,42%
	2 Years	141	48,79%
	3 Years	82	28,37%
	4 Years	36	12,46%
	5 Years	19	6,57%
	6 Years	2	0,69%
	7 Years	9	3,11%

Based on the respondent characteristic table, it was found that the participants in this study consisted of 128 males (44.29%) and 161 females (55.71%), indicating that the majority of respondents were female. The participants' ages ranged from 20 to 30 years, with the highest proportion being 21 years old, totaling 55 individuals (19.03%), while the lowest proportion was participants aged 30 years, totaling 7 individuals (2.42%).

Regarding the duration of romantic relationships prior to the breakup, the majority of respondents had been in a relationship for 2 years, accounting for 141 individuals (48.79%), followed by 3 years with 82 individuals (28.37%), and 4 years with 36 individuals (12.46%). In contrast, the lowest proportion was respondents who had been in a relationship for 6 years, totaling 2 individuals (0.69%). These

findings indicate that most respondents were young adults with moderate-term relationship experiences.

**Table 2. Comparison between Empirical and Hypothetical Data of the Resilience Variable**

Variable	Empirical				Hypothetical			
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Resiliensi	80	144	115.30	13.65	36	144	90	18

The hypothetical standard deviation was calculated using the formula  $\sigma = (144 - 36) \div 6 = 18$ , while the hypothetical mean was obtained through  $\mu = (36 + 144) \div 2 = 90$ . Based on these calculations, the categorization criteria were determined as follows:  $x < 72$  for the low category,  $72 \leq x < 108$  for the moderate category, and  $x \geq 108$  for the high category.

**Table 3. Resilience Score Categories**

No	Guide	Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	$X < (\mu - 1\sigma)$	$x < 72$	Low	0	0%
2.	$(\mu - 1\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$72 \leq x < 108$	Medium	81	28.03%
3.	$X \geq (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$x \geq 108$	High	208	71.97%
<b>Total</b>				<b>289</b>	<b>Total</b>

Table 3 demonstrates that among the 289 respondents, 81 individuals (28.03%) exhibited moderate levels of resilience, while 208 individuals (71.97%) demonstrated high levels of resilience.

The emotional intelligence scale consisted of 23 items. Each item provided four response alternatives with scores ranging from one to four. The total score range extended from a minimum score of  $23 \times 1 = 23$  to a maximum score of  $23 \times 4 = 92$ , with a hypothetical mean calculated as  $(23 + 92) \div 2 = 57.5$ . The hypothetical standard deviation was obtained using the formula  $(92 - 23) \div 6 = 11.5$ . Based on respondents' questionnaire responses on the emotional intelligence scale, the empirical mean obtained was 67.07 with a standard deviation of 10.90.

**Table 4. Comparison between Empirical and Hypothetical Data of the Emotional Intelligence Variable**

Variable	Empirical			SD	Hypothetical			SD
	Min	Max	Mean		Min	Max	Mean	

Emotional Intelligence	34	92	67.07	10.90	23	92	57.5	11.5
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The analysis results indicated that the empirical mean was higher than the hypothetical mean ( $67.07 > 57.5$ ), suggesting that the respondents' emotional intelligence levels were generally higher than the average population norm. Based on these findings, participants were further classified into three categories of emotional intelligence: low, moderate, and high. The detailed categorization is presented below.

**Table 5. Categorization of Emotional Intelligence**

No	Guide	Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	$X < (\mu - 1\sigma)$	$x < 45.7$	Low	5	1.73%
2	$(\mu - 1\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$45.7 \leq x < 68.7$	Medium	148	51.21%
3	$X \geq (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$x \geq 68.7$	High	136	47.06%
<b>Total</b>				<b>289</b>	<b>Total</b>

Table 5 reveals that among the 289 respondents, 5 individuals (1.73%) demonstrated low emotional intelligence, 148 individuals (51.21%) demonstrated moderate emotional intelligence, and 136 individuals (47.06%) demonstrated high emotional intelligence.

The hypothesis proposed in this study suggested a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and resilience among individuals aged 20 to 30 years in the Petisah Tengah area who had experienced a romantic breakup after being in a relationship for at least two years. To test this hypothesis, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was applied.

**Table 6. Correlation Test Results between Emotional Intelligence and Resilience**

Analysis	Pearson Correlation	Significance (p)
Correlation	0,674	0,000

As presented in Table 6, the Product-Moment correlation analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.674 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings indicate that the two variables demonstrated a strong and positive relationship. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.454, indicating that emotional intelligence

contributed 45.4% to resilience, while the remaining 54.6% was influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study.

**Table 7. Model Summary of Effective Contribution**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R-Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
1	.674 <sup>a</sup>	.454	.452	10.10711

The findings obtained from 289 respondents in the Petisah Tengah community aged between 20 and 30 years who were experiencing romantic breakup demonstrated a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.674$  and a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). These results reinforce the notion that higher emotional intelligence is directly associated with stronger psychological resilience. Conversely, lower emotional intelligence tends to correspond with lower resilience levels.

The results further revealed that 81 respondents (28.03%) demonstrated moderate resilience. These individuals were generally still capable of carrying out daily responsibilities despite experiencing sadness, had begun to open themselves to social support from their environment, and occasionally still experienced emotional instability when dealing with post-breakup difficulties. Meanwhile, 208 respondents (71.97%) demonstrated high resilience. These individuals tended to possess the ability to derive positive meaning from their breakup experiences, focus on self-recovery and personal development, maintain social engagement, and rebuild hope for a better future. Therefore, resilience plays a highly important role in enhancing individuals' capacity to recover from the difficulties associated with romantic breakup experiences.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The results of the study indicated a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience among emerging adults following romantic relationship dissolution. These findings suggest that individuals who possess better abilities to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions tend to demonstrate greater capacity to recover and adapt after experiencing emotional distress caused by a breakup. The relatively strong correlation found in this study indicates that emotional intelligence

represents an important psychological factor contributing to the development of resilience during emerging adulthood.

From a theoretical perspective, the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience is not merely associated with general emotional regulation abilities but also involves more specific psychological mechanisms. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in cognitive reappraisal, namely the ability to reinterpret negative experiences into more adaptive and meaningful perspectives. In the context of a romantic breakup, individuals may perceive the experience as a form of emotional learning rather than solely as a loss. Furthermore, individuals with higher emotional intelligence are generally better able to reduce excessive emotional suppression. They tend to express emotions in healthier ways through interpersonal communication, seeking social support, and engaging in positive activities. The ability to recognize others' emotions and maintain social relationships also enables individuals to mobilize social support more effectively, thereby facilitating a more adaptive psychological recovery process.

The findings of this study are consistent with Goleman's theory (Anggraini & Yanto, 2023), which explains that emotional intelligence helps individuals control impulses, maintain motivation, and establish healthy social relationships when facing stressful situations. Individuals who are capable of understanding their emotional conditions are less likely to become trapped in impulsive reactions such as excessive self-blame, social withdrawal, or prolonged negative emotional states. Instead, they are more likely to maintain optimism, accept change, and develop more constructive coping strategies following romantic relationship dissolution.

This study also supports previous findings reported by (Anggraini & Yanto, 2023) as well as (Anggraini & Yanto, 2023). Although all studies demonstrated a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience, differences in the strength of correlations were observed across studies. Variations in effect size may be influenced by differences in participant characteristics, stressor contexts, sample sizes, and measurement instruments employed. The study involved first-year university students during the COVID-19 pandemic, where participants simultaneously faced academic and social adaptation stressors, potentially making emotional regulation more influential in shaping resilience (Anggraini

& Yanto, 2023). Meanwhile, Anggraini and Yanto's study focused on undergraduate students completing their thesis, involving more specific academic stressors, which may explain the weaker correlation observed. In the present study, romantic breakup represents a highly personal and affective emotional stressor, which may explain why emotional intelligence contributed substantially to resilience among participants.

Nevertheless, emotional intelligence is not the sole factor influencing resilience. The remaining unexplained variance indicates that resilience may also be affected by other variables, such as social support, religiosity, personality traits, coping strategies, previous life experiences, family conditions, and broader social environments. This finding highlights that resilience is a multidimensional psychological construct shaped by interactions between internal and external factors. Therefore, an individual's ability to recover from romantic breakup experiences depends not only on emotional regulation abilities but also on the quality of social relationships and psychological support systems available to them.

Within the Indonesian cultural context, the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience may also be influenced by collectivistic values emphasizing family closeness, social connectedness, and religious coping mechanisms. Indonesian individuals are generally more accustomed to seeking emotional support from family members, peers, and social communities when encountering psychological distress. Additionally, strong religiosity within Indonesian society may help individuals interpret breakup experiences more positively and accept such experiences from a spiritual perspective. These cultural factors may contribute to emotional stability and facilitate psychological adjustment following the loss of a romantic relationship.

The finding that the majority of participants demonstrated high levels of resilience also requires critical interpretation. On the one hand, this may indicate that most participants possessed relatively good adaptive capacities after experiencing a romantic breakup. However, the possibility of a ceiling effect should also be considered. High resilience scores may have been influenced by social desirability bias, where participants tended to provide socially acceptable responses. Furthermore, the use of purposive sampling may have introduced sampling bias, as individuals willing to participate in the study may have already achieved better emotional adjustment

compared to those still experiencing severe emotional distress. Another possible explanation relates to the limitations of self-report instruments, which rely heavily on participants' subjective perceptions when evaluating their own psychological conditions.

This study also has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the correlational design does not allow conclusions regarding causal relationships between emotional intelligence and resilience. Second, the use of self-report measures may increase the likelihood of subjectivity and social desirability bias in participants' responses. Third, the study was conducted only within a specific area, namely Petisah Tengah, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings to broader emerging adult populations. In addition, this study did not examine potential differences based on gender, age, or relationship duration, despite these variables theoretically having the potential to function as important moderators in the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience.

Practically, the findings suggest that the development of emotional intelligence may represent an important approach in helping emerging adults cope with emotional distress following romantic breakup experiences. Programs focusing on emotional regulation, adaptive coping skills, psychological counseling, and mental health education may assist individuals in improving their ability to understand and manage emotions, thereby strengthening resilience after experiencing emotionally distressing life events.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This study involved 289 emerging adults aged 20–30 years who had experienced a romantic breakup after being in a relationship for a minimum duration of two years. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience, as indicated by a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.674$  and a significance value of  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings suggest that individuals who possess better abilities to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions tend to demonstrate greater psychological adaptability and recovery following emotional distress caused by romantic relationship dissolution. Therefore, emotional intelligence may be understood as one of the psychological factors associated with the development of resilience among emerging adults after experiencing a breakup.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.454 indicates that emotional intelligence was associated with 45.4% of the variance in resilience, while the remaining 54.6% may be influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this study, such as social support, coping strategies, religiosity, family conditions, life experiences, personality traits, and self-efficacy. These findings demonstrate that resilience is a multidimensional psychological construct influenced not only by emotional regulation abilities but also by various psychological and social factors. Consequently, this study contributes theoretically to the fields of developmental psychology and emotional psychology, particularly in understanding the psychological adaptation processes of emerging adults following the loss of a romantic relationship.

Practically, the findings highlight the importance of developing emotional intelligence as part of efforts to strengthen psychological adaptability among emerging adults. Potential interventions may include emotional regulation training, cognitive reappraisal training, adaptive coping development programs, emotion-focused psychological counseling, and peer-support group interventions that facilitate healthy emotional expression following romantic breakup experiences. In addition, educational institutions and community environments may develop more structured mental health psychoeducation programs tailored to the emotional needs of emerging adults.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The use of a cross-sectional design prevents causal conclusions regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience. Furthermore, the use of self-report instruments may increase the likelihood of subjectivity and social desirability bias in participants' responses. The study was also conducted only within a single geographical area, namely Petisah Tengah, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the study did not examine the potential moderating roles of gender, age, or relationship duration in the relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience.

Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to employ longitudinal designs or mixed-method approaches in order to gain a deeper understanding of post-breakup psychological adaptation processes. Future studies are also encouraged to investigate additional variables potentially associated with resilience, such as social support, stress coping, religiosity, self-efficacy, and attachment style, as these factors may help explain the remaining unexplained variance in

resilience identified in the present study. Moreover, studies involving more diverse populations and cultural contexts are necessary to provide a more comprehensive understanding of resilience dynamics among emerging adults following romantic relationship dissolution.

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