Research Article

The Effects of Social Support and Resilience on Life Satisfaction of Secondary School Students

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Abstract
The present study examines the role of resilience and social support in reducing depression of secondary school students. The respondents were randomly selected from four secondary schools from Kuala Lumpur with the aim to examine the role of resilience and social support as coping strategies in reducing depression and increasing student satisfaction with life in secondary schools. Data were randomly collected from 200 students of secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur. The results show that social support and resilience are positively related to life satisfaction. The findings also revealed that resilience was positively and significantly related with social support.

Keywords: depression, coping strategies, social support, resilience, well-being

Introduction
Academic performance is affected by satisfaction in all life domains. As numerous studies indicate, life satisfaction is a key indicator of quality of life. For example, people with higher degrees of life satisfaction achieve better life outcomes, including academic achievement, self-esteem, financial success, self-efficacy, supportive relationships, effective coping, mental health, and even physical health and longevity (Gilman & Huebner, 2006, Proctor et al., 2009 and Suldo & Huebner, 2006). Life satisfaction has been defined by (Diener et al. 1984) as one's positive evaluation of his entire life according to the criteria determined by the individual himself. Satisfaction with life is related to positive feelings of an individual's experiences in important areas in one's life (school/college, job, family etc.) outweighing negative feelings (Diener, 2000). For this purpose, this paper endeavours to determine whether students overall satisfaction with life relates to social support and resilience.

Academic performance rests on a great number of factors. Although there are always exceptions to the rule, in general, academic performance nurtures in safe and calm

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environments that consist of physical well-being, social well-being, and emotional, spiritual and psychological well-being. Physically and psychologically stable students are expected to excel academically compared to those who are not physically, mentally, and psychologically fit. In other words, those who are experiencing psychological problems such as depression, and stress may face problems in managing their academic performance (Yasin & Dzulkifli, 2011). Research has shown that performance in school and college was affected by symptoms of depression that manifested in the lack of concentration, lack of interest and motivation, fatigability, and poor attendance (Fine & Carlson, 1992).

Sherina, Lekhraj, and Nadarajan (2003) reported that 41.9% of students in a Malaysian public institutions suffered from depression. Some reported that their academic performance was affected by depression. Dwyer (2008) reported that academic achievement correlated to life satisfaction, which may mean that the better students do in school, the happier they are with themselves, and they greater support they receive from family members. To date, most research concerned with student experiences has focused on correlates of student satisfaction with the college (Astin, 1993).

Social Support and Life Satisfaction
Social support can be viewed as care, value and guidance provided from family, peers and community members (Dollete et al. 2006). Research has advanced social support as an expansive construct that describes the physical and emotional comfort given to individuals by their family, friends, and other significant persons in their lives (Israel & Schurman 1990). The concept of social support is an important issue in the 21st century workplace, especially in educational institutions. Social support is information that leads an individual to believe that he is cared for and loved, and valued as a member of a network of mutual obligation (Cobb, 1976).

Moreover, social support was defined by Thoits (1985) as helpful actions performed for an individual by significant others, such as family members, friends, and significant others. Social support may be an important component of college students' successful transitioning to the college environment (Hays & Oxley, 1986) worth low levels of social support being related to a lack of persistence in academic endeavours (Mallinckrodt, 1988). In addition, Canty-Mitchell and Zimet (2000) argued that the significant other and friends' subscales are a strong supplement to the family because it taps a different support source for the adolescent, such as boyfriend/girlfriend, teacher, and counsellor.

Students' life satisfaction is likely to be influenced by their overall satisfaction with school life (Danielsen et al, 2009). In the Malaysian context, the research found that very limited social supports was given to students. Teachers did not give sufficient moral support or encouragement to their students during the teaching and learning process. This is a serious concern given that teaching is supposed to stimulate a meaningful and active learning atmosphere in the classroom (Shaari et al., 2012). It is therefore expected that social support will have a positive relationship with life satisfaction.
Hypothesis 1: Social support will have a positive relationship with life satisfaction.

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Resilience and life satisfaction

Resilience has become an important factor in research and mental health theory over the past decades (Walsh, 2003). Resilience has been defined by Ahmed (2007) as the ability to maintain a state of normal equilibrium in the face of extremely unfavourable circumstance. Resilience has also been defined as the capability to flourish despite normative fluctuations that take place throughout the life span (Bonanno, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Furthermore, Johnson et al., (2009) stated that resilience is a psychological process developed in response to intense life stressor that facilitates healthy functioning. The term resilience is derived from the verb 'resile', which refers to when an object is stretched or bent, it tends to spring back, to recoil, and to resume its former shape and size. To be resilient includes constructive and growth-enhancing consequences of adversity or challenges (Strumpfer, 2003). While some people are naturally resilient, as their personality may contribute to the prediction of resilience, others may have to work at it (Griffith, 2007; Campbell-Sills et al., 2006). It is, co-determined by environmental and personal characteristics (Lew, 2001). It is therefore expected that resilience will have a positive relationship with life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Resilience will have a positive relationship with life satisfaction.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Data were randomly collected from 200 students studying in four secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur. The sampled students' population consisted of male and female students from different religious backgrounds and ages in the range of 15 to 19 years. Rapport was established by explaining the importance and the relevance of the study. Participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and utilized only for the research purpose. They were asked to complete the questionnaires by following the instructions written on the top of the first page.

Measures

Life satisfaction was measured using 5 items developed by Diener et al., (1985), the Cronbach alpha reported .87. Sample items include "The conditions of my life are excellent." (Item-2) and "I am completely satisfied with my life." (Item-3). The scale uses a 5-point Likert response format, ranging from (1) "Strongly Disagree" to (5) "Strongly Agree".

Social Support - The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988) comprises of 12- items rated on a 7-point response scale anchored by 1: Not suitable at all and 7: Very suitable. The scale provides scores on three sub-scales on each of 4- items: Family (α=.91); Friends (α=.89); and Significant Other (α= .90). Scores on each of these scales ranged from 4 to 28, with a higher score reflecting greater perceived social support. The total score showed reliability of Cronbach's alpha .92.

Resilience has been measured by identifying positive outcomes despite exposure to adversity (Masten 2001). Psychosocial Inventory of Ego Strengths (PIES) developed by

Markstrom et al, (1997) has been used to assess resiliency (Markstrom et al., 2000). The Cronbach's alpha from the original study was .81 for the scores for white adolescents (n = 60) and .78 for African American adolescents (n = 53).

Results
Reliability Results
The Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient for social support was .869, the coefficient for resilience was .680, and Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient for life satisfaction was .887. Therefore, as related by Nunnally (1978), the reliability of the research was very high, and as such the results are acceptable.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of the variables

Variable	M	SD	N of Items	1	2	3
1. Resilience	27.65	3.19	6	1		
2. Social Support	65.00	10.55	12	.341**	1	
3. Life Satisfaction	25.25	6.18	5	.431**	.563**	1

Note: *p<0.01, **p<0.05

Table 1 shows that there exists a positive and significant correlation between resilience and social support (r =.340**, p<.01). The results also show positive and significant correlation between resilience and life satisfaction (r =.419, p<.01). Depression shows a negative and significant correlations with resilience (r= -.207, p<.01), social support (r= -.218, p<.01), and life satisfaction (r = -.348, p<.01). Life satisfaction shows a strong positive and significant correlation with social support (r= .567, p<0.01).

Table 2: Regression analysis

Variables	B (t-value)	Sig
Resilience	.498 (4.404)	.000
Social Support	.258 (7.663)	.000
R Square	.382	
Adjusted R Square	.375	
Sig. F Change	.000	

Note: *p<0.01, **p<0.05

As expected, the results of all the independent variables are positively correlated with life satisfaction. The correlation on social support and resilience are statistically significant. This means that life satisfaction, social support, and resilience are related. The research examined the effect of social support and resilience on life satisfaction. As expected, resilience (β = .498, t-value = 4.404, p < 0.01) and social support (β = .258, t-value = 7.663, p < 0.01) had a significant and strong positive influence on life satisfaction. Thus, hypotheses H1 and H2 were supported. As such, the research concluded that the proposed model explained a significant percentage of variance in life satisfaction (R Square= 38.2%).

Discussion

This paper examined the effect of social support and resilience on the level of life satisfaction among secondary students in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The results show that there exists a positive and significant relationship between resilience and life satisfaction. The results also show a positive and significant relationship between social support and life satisfaction. Social support shows a positive and significant relationship with resilience. The first hypothesis was supported by the positive and significant relationship that was obtained between social support and life satisfaction. This indicates that higher social support will help students achieve greater higher satisfaction with life compared to those with lower perceived social support (Mahanta & Aggarwal, 2013). Contemporary research on the topic indicates that an individual's life satisfaction level (Duru, 2007) are positively affected by an increased social support system. Social support was also shown to relate positively to student satisfaction with their schooling experience (DeSantis King et al. 2006). Holahan et al. (1993) found that first-year students with higher levels of perceived parental support were better adjusted and less distressed. Hence, positive social support is essential in order for a person to be better adjusted and become more successful in life.

Among the significant findings of this study was that resilience had a strong relationship with life satisfaction in students. Empirical literature showed that resilience has an important relationship with life outcomes. As mentioned above, resilience can assist people enhance their life satisfaction (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Cohn et al., 2009). Abolghasemi and Varaniyab (2010) also demonstrated that psychological resilience predicted increased life satisfaction in students. Thus, resilience is considered a protective factor for quality of life and contributes towards greater life satisfaction. This may be because people with high resilience are more likely to effectively meet the challenges of their lives, flexibly adapt to the stresses of their lives, and are more likely to become successful, healthy, and happy in the future (Bonanno, 2004, Cohn et al., 2009; Ong et al., 2006).

Conclusion

This study sought to examine the influence of resilience and social support on life satisfaction of student at secondary schools. The findings of this study show that the regression model significantly explains the dependent variable as R Square is 38.2 showing that the model is acceptable to explain the variability of life satisfaction of student in secondary schools. The study's results also revealed that resilience and social support have a significant and positive influence on student life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is a dependent variable in regression analysis. The objective of regression analysis was to determine which of the two factors would have the most important effect on life satisfaction. Of the two relations that were hypothesized to influence life satisfaction; both resilience and social support were significantly and positively related. Generally, as discussed above, the findings show that resilience and social support are necessary factors f, but insufficient conditions for life satisfaction of students at schools. In addition, consistent with previous research, resilience and social support should be

taken into consideration in formulating strategies for developing life satisfaction of students in educational institutions.

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