Resiliency among Secondary School Students in Malaysia: Assessment of the Measurement Model

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Abstract

Some adolescents could successfully adapt with exposed risks and they are identified as resilient. Students identified as resilient are those who can successfully adapt with exposed risks. Resiliency is related to the individual quality or strength that increases his/her ability to withstand adversity (Holmes, 2006). A resilient person has also been described as one who commonly displays social competence, problem solving skills, optimism, invulnerability and person-environment fit (Brown et al, 2001; Kaplan, 2000). This paper makes an attempt to validate empirically the measurement model of adolescent resiliency using structural equation modeling (SEM). The adolescents' conceptions of resiliency measured such dimensions as active skills, future orientation, and risk taking and independence. This study was done to validate the Resiliency Belief Scales (Mrazek & Mrazek, 1987) based on a total sample of 308 secondary school students from east-coast of peninsular Malaysia. Cross-validation of the Resiliency Belief Scales (RBS) was done using a sub-sample of 148 students. The Resiliency Belief Scales which was adapted from (Trammel, 2003), was used in this study. The instrument consisted of 45 items and the items were hypothesized a priori to have non-zero loadings on all dimensions in the model. Analysis of the items resulted in a well-fitting model ($\chi^2 = 1.827; df = 1; \text{GFI} = .998; \text{CFI} = .996; \text{RMSEA} = .03$).

Keywords: structural equation modeling, education, resiliency, adolescence

Introduction

Resiliency, in recent years, has been the focus of an increasing number of books, articles and research in human survival, service and the field of social work. Resiliency is defined variously by researchers and theorists. Resiliency finds its theoretical and empirical roots in the developmental psychopathology literature on vulnerability to stress (Cabness, 2003). It is the capacity for and outcome of adjustment in spite of challenging or threatening circumstances. Therefore, resiliency is the positive pole of the vulnerability-resilience continuum. The concept of resiliency that grew out of risk research refers to successful adaptation despite the odds against good development.

The field of resiliency has evolved from early studies by researchers (Rutter, 1985) and (Werner & Smith, 1992). The research focused primarily on identifying intrinsic and extrinsic factors that would either protect or put a child at risk of developing negative outcomes after experiencing difficulties (Thomson, 2005). Resilience (or resiliency), also refers to sustained competent functioning despite severely challenging circumstances (Cabness, 2003). Thus, it implies effective coping, which includes thought and action as the person puts effort to restore or