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A preliminary analysis on the resilience and subjective well-being of the Malaysian adolescents

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ABSTRACT: Past studies have indicated that subjective well-being (SWB) promotes high resilience. As studies on this issue are quite scarce in Malaysia, 296 adolescents were given the Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle et al., 1989) and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (2003) to measure their SWB and resilience. The results indicated that more than 94% of adolescents are happy and 74% are high in resilience. It is also found that SWB builds resilience and therefore give further evidence that positive emotions create desirable outcomes.

1 INTRODUCTION

Resilience is a crucial ingredient to a happy, healthy life. It is generally defined as the ability to cope well in adversity, and to persevere and adapt when things go awry. The broaden-and-built theory suggests that subjective well-being predicts desirable life outcomes in many aspects (Fredrickson, 2001). This is because being happy build lasting resources. Up till now, most of the studies have been centred on Western and European countries but little has been done on Asian countries or, in this case, Malaysia. There is also a great need to understand resilience in Malaysia as studies on this issue are quite scarce. Hitherto, there have been only two studies on resilience of the Malaysian youth (see Azlina & Shahril, 2010, Azlina et al., 2010). The research is in the initial exploratory stage and further empirical study is needed.

Although the study of subjective well-being (SWB) started in the West in the early 1960s, research in Asia gathered momentum only at the beginning of 2000. Accumulating evidence in this region suggests that similar to their counterparts in the West, Asians are also average in SWB. However, most studies were done on adults. In the light that little research has been done on Malaysians, and resilience seems to be relevant to the SWB of adolescents, the present study is an attempt to extend and confirm the previous research on both resiliency and SWB.

2 METHOD

The respondents are 296 local secondary school students (138 male, 158 female) between the ages

of 13–19 ($M = 16.25, SD = .905$), selected based on convenience sampling.

2.1 Measures

Connor Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). CD-RISC has 25 items that measures the ability to cope with stress and adversity. Alpha Cronbach of the scale is 0.87 (Connor & Davidson, 2003).

The Oxford Happiness Inventory. The scale (Argyle et al., 1989) has a 29 items scale which measures the level of happiness. Alpha Cronbach of the scale is 0.82 (Mohammad et al., 2008).

3 RESULTS

Descriptive indices were calculated and Pearson correlation coefficient was used to demonstrate the relationship between happiness and resilience. The summary of the results is presented below.

3.1 SWB and resilience

Overall, 94% of the adolescents are happy and 78% are high in resilience (see Table 1).

Table 1. Subjective-well being and resilience of the adolescents.

Variable	Mean	SD	Total	(%)
<i>SWB</i>	145.39	21.37		
High			279	94
Low			17	6
<i>Resilience</i>	72.87	12.04		
High			232	78
Low			64	22