

Acceptance and Resilience among working adults in Malaysia

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Introduction

The estimated costs of workplace distress to employees, organizations, and societies are substantial (Flaxman, & Bond, 2010). Depression and anxiety have a significant economic impact, estimated cost to the global economy of US\$ 1 trillion per year in lost productivity (W.H.O., 2019). In Malaysia, 29% of workers have poor mental health, an estimated of 60 out of 200 workers will experience symptoms of depression, anxiety or stress, which result in business costs at RM189,068 per annum, equivalent to 3.78% of the company's annual gross output (Ning, 2020).

Resilience is the ability to adapt, and bounce back despite adversity. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) believes adversity is in the cognitive activity, not the situation itself. ACT aims to expand the psychological flexibility. The ultimate goal is to make room for these unwanted cognitive contents, without any form of avoidance. Acceptance refers to both behavioral willingness to not get in the way of the cognitive content as the individual continue with their value-based choices, while adapting in open, receptive, flexible and non-judgmental posture with respect to moment to moment experience

The research aims to examine the relationship between acceptance and resilience among working adults in Malaysia. The purpose of the research is the advancement of resilience to promote a sustainable resilient workforce in Malaysia. The research question focuses on answering "Is there a relationship between acceptance and resilience among working adults in Malaysia?" The research hypothesis is: "when the individuals who exhibit relatively higher levels of acceptance will also exhibit higher levels of resilience".

Method

The study collected a total of 108 participants of working adults in Malaysia (67 female/ 41 male). Their age range were 23 to 72 years old (M= 37.08). Participants were Malaysian working adults 21 years old and above. They have been working in Malaysia for a minimum of one year from the date of filling out the study form either as an employee or self-employed worker.

Two instruments were used for data collection namely: Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) and the Work-relation Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (WAAQ). The BRS and WAAQ was included into the Google Forms and data collection commenced using social media networks or platforms, sent out to the public. Data from completed questionnaires was recorded on Google Forms Response Excel Sheet which is password protected to the members of this study.

BRS final scores and WAAQ final scores was exported into the JASP statistical analysis software. Statistical analysis applied on the demographic data, BRS scores and WAAQ scores were descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis used for determining if there is a relationship between the acceptance and resilience scores.

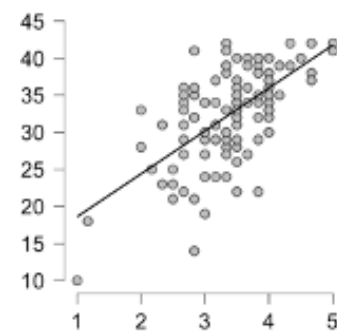
Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between acceptance and resilience among Malaysian working adults. The results have demonstrated that there is a significant positive correlation of moderate strength between the two variables; acceptance, measured with the WAAQ, and resilience measured with the BRS, among our participants who consists of working adults in Malaysia.

The findings of this study are in line with the findings of previous studies where acceptance is found to be a predictive factor to resilience among university students (Low and Abdullah, 2017) and drug rehabilitation staff (Mansor, 2018).

The findings of this study suggesting a moderate positive significant relationship between acceptance and resilience, indicate that for the working adults in Malaysia, as acceptance increases, there is also an increase in resilience levels. Or it could also be viewed that as resilience decreases, acceptance follows suite as well.

Figure 1



The figure 1 shows a positive relationship between Acceptance (WAAQ) and Resilience (BRS). Even though some of the dots scattered outside the line, the bottom to the top point form a straight line, therefore the assumption of linearity showed a pattern of positive correlation.

Correlation Q Q Plot of Acceptance (WAAQ) and Resilience (BRS)

Conclusion

The findings of this study show a positive correlation of moderate strength between acceptance and resilience. This correlation was stronger amongst males than females. It was observed among the working adults in Malaysia that high measures of psychological flexibility corresponded to greater the ability to bounce back and vice versa.

Further studies can be conducted using face to face interviews as well as on a larger population representing the Malaysian demographics (including different social economic status and skill levels) and validating Malay translations of the WAAQ and BRS. Additionally, future work can consider analyzing whether acceptance or resilience is the causative agent to this association and to consider how gender differences affect their association.

References

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