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Resiliency in Lebanese Adolescents

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RESILIENCY IN LEBANESE ADOLESCENTS

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The present study is exploratory in nature and aims to examine the relationships between resiliency, global hope and personality traits (i.e. the Big Five personality dimensions). As a secondary aim, we wanted to compare the scores of Lebanese adolescents with a comparable sample of U.S. adolescents on the RSCA.
Based on our extensive literature review we predict the following hypotheses:

- **H1a**: Sense of mastery will correlate positively with Emotional stability, Conscientiousness, and Openness to experience.
- **H1b**: Sense of relatedness will correlate positively with Extroversion.
- **H1c**: Emotional reactivity will correlate negatively with Emotional stability.
HYPOTHESIS 2

- H2: Global Hope will correlate positively with Sense of Mastery, Sense of Relatedness, and negatively with Emotional Reactivity.
HYPOTHESIS 3

- H3: Lebanese Adolescents will score lower on Sense of mastery, and Emotional reactivity but higher on Sense of Relatedness than their US counterparts.
Hypothesis 4

- H4: Females will score higher on Sense of relatedness, and Emotional reactivity than males.
G. Bonanno, stated that resiliency building can be done by most people (as cited in Chronicle of Higher Education, 2013).

Contrary to past assumptions, research has recently demonstrated that individuals are not permanently traumatized by adversity (Seery, 2010) and there are internal mechanisms that help individuals overcome negative life events and serve to mitigate the effects of hardship and promote healthy adjustment (Prince-Embury, 2011; Weiss, 2008).
The sample consisted of 600 Lebanese high school students (330 females) with a mean age of 15 ($SD = 1.76$) ranging from 11 to 19. Students were enrolled in five different schools in Lebanon (urban and rural).
INSTRUMENT 1 (RSCA)

Resiliency Scale for Children and Adolescents (RSCA; Prince-Embury, 2007). The RSCA is a 64-item scale measuring resiliency in adolescents aged 15-18. The scale covers 10 facets encompassed by three factors: Sense of mastery (optimism, self-efficacy, and adaptability), Sense of relatedness (trust, support, comfort, and tolerance), and Emotional reactivity (sensitivity, recovery, and impairment).

Alpha coefficients in the present sample were good to satisfactory (i.e., .83; Sense of mastery, .78; Emotional reactivity, .87; and Sense of relatedness, .86)
The Children’s Hope Scale (CHS; Snyder et al., 1997). The CHS is a 6-item questionnaire designed to assess a "goal-approach conceptualization" of hope in children aged 8-19. The test measures two factors, namely Agency and Pathways. In our sample, internal consistencies were adequate (i.e., Hope, .65; Agency, .45; and Pathways, .61).
Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling et al., 2003). The TIPI is a ten-item questionnaire developed as a short measure of the Big Five personality dimensions. Each item consists of two descriptors, separated by a comma, rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = disagree strongly and 7 = agree strongly). This brief questionnaire has shown adequate levels of convergent and discriminant validity and test-retest reliability (Gosling et al., 2003).
Data was collected in five schools in Lebanon, upon receiving administrative approval from the institutions. Participants completed the questionnaires during class time in the following order: TIPI, Hope scale, and RSCA. The testing sessions lasted 20 minutes approximately. All questionnaires were applied in their original English version because participants were bilingual (Arabic and English), and the five schools used English as the language of instruction. Two trained assistants timed and oversaw all class sessions, and clarified any question students asked about the items. IT should be mentioned that data was collected before the Arab Spring.
Results

Sense of mastery correlated positively with Conscientiousness ($r = .27, p < .001$), Emotional stability ($r = .26, p < .001$), Openness to experience ($r = .31, p < .001$) and Hope ($r = .54, p < .001$). Sense of relatedness correlated positively with Openness to experience ($r = .22, p < .001$) and Hope ($r = .32, p < .001$).

Lastly, Emotional reactivity correlated negatively with Emotional stability ($r = -.41, p < .001$).
Results-2

- Resiliency factors also correlated with Global hope; positively with Sense of mastery ($r = .55, p < .001$) and Sense of relatedness ($r = .33, p < .001$), and negatively with Emotional reactivity ($r = -.10, p < .01$).
Results 3

- We tested for differences in resiliency between the Lebanese study sample and published results from a slightly younger normative US sample (see Table 1). Independent sample $t$-tests revealed that the mean score for the sample of Lebanese adolescents was higher than for the normative sample of US adolescents on Sense of mastery ($t = 3.90, p < .001$) and Sense of relatedness ($t = 23.42, p < .001$). As for Emotional reactivity, Lebanese scores were lower than the normative scores for US adolescents ($t = 26.17, p < .001$).
## Table - Result H3

*Means and Standard Deviations for Resiliency Factors in the Lebanese (N = 599) and USA Samples (N = 641).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of mastery</td>
<td>52.46</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td>50.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of relatedness</td>
<td>65.39</td>
<td>12.59</td>
<td>50.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional reactivity</td>
<td>32.81</td>
<td>12.73</td>
<td>49.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Descriptive statistics from the US sample were taken from Prince-Embry and Steer (2010). *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.
We carried out a MANOVA with a combination of the three resiliency factors as the dependent variable, and gender as the independent variable. The analysis yielded a significant main effect of gender, Wilk’s $\lambda = .95$, $F(3, 599) = 2.15$, $p < .05$. Subsequent ANOVAs indicated
Results

Significant differences in the Sense of relatedness factor,

\[ F(3,599) = 3.72, \ p < .05, \ \eta^2 = .03, \] with females (\( M = 67.08, \ SD = 11.79 \)) scoring higher than males (\( M = 63.40, \ SD = 13.26 \)), and

marginally significant differences in Emotional reactivity

\[ F(3,599) = 2.61, \ p = .07, \ \eta^2 = .02, \] with females (\( M = 33.66, \ SD = 13.22 \)) scoring higher than males (\( M = 31.61, \ SD = 11.96 \)).
The present exploratory study has contributed to the construct validity of resiliency in Lebanese adolescents. Regarding personality characteristics, resiliency factors were associated with Emotional stability and Openness to experience, as well as Hope. As for demographic variables, resiliency factors seem to vary with gender.
At the factor level of resiliency, Sense of mastery correlated positively with Conscientiousness, Emotional stability, and Openness to experience, thus partially supporting H1a. A general tendency to regulate one’s emotions is crucial when facing difficulties in life. In this sense, Emotional stability may be a *sin e qua non* for resiliency.
Results failed to support H1b since Sense of relatedness did not correlate with Extroversion. Even though individuals who are extroverted flourish in social contexts and obtain their gratification and energy from others, this does not guarantee enriching and rewarding intimate one-to-one relationships, which may be the aspect that Sense of relatedness.
Discussion

- Individuals who are open to new experiences maybe more able to deal with change, as stated earlier, and are generally more exposed to cultures and lifestyles other than those of their own convention.
Discussion

- An explanation of the results for H3 obtained may lie in the nature of the Lebanese society, which generally has a collectivist orientation and is accustomed to changing environments. These particularities might have, in fact, promoted adaptive ways to cope with hazards among the population. The majority of adolescents in the country have experienced some collateral negative events.
A recent study conducted in Lebanon on a similar sample using the same instrument support inoculation-resiliency concept [Tayara (2012)].
The findings of this study are important for research and practice. There was evidence for criterion-related validity resulting from the association between resiliency and emotional stability and hope.

In addition, results show the complex nature of the resiliency construct and show the importance of including demographic variables such as gender.

In a country such as Lebanon, where political instability has become the norm psychologist and educators can work together to develop a resiliency curriculum that aims to have children and adolescent bend and not break in the face of adversity.


References


