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## REASON TO BELIEVE: RELIGIOSITY, RESILIENCE, AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG MALAYSIAN INDIAN ADOLESCENT

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### Abstract

The emerging incidence of mental health-related illness such as depression, suicide, and deliberate self-harm has elevated gradually among Malaysian Indian adolescents. This disorder constitutes a significant health risk which leads to further exploration of protective factors. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy among Malaysian Indian adolescents. Therefore, a sample of 86 respondents (40 males, 46 females) has been selected by a purposive sampling method to complete the questionnaire. This study utilized, Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (SCSRFQ), Brief resilience Scale (BRS), and Self-efficacy for Self-regulated Learning Scale to obtain data and has analyzed using the correlation method. The finding of this study revealed a significant positive relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy among Malaysian Indian adolescents. The result showed that religion is an essential phenomenon in adolescents' lives. A few limitations and recommendations for the future study included at the end of this paper.

**Keyword:** Religion, Resilience, Self-Efficacy, Malaysian Indian adolescents

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## **Introduction**

The evolution of science and technology leads to tremendous changes in every aspect of human life. One must possess a significant level of courage and resilience to survive in order to lead a daily functional life. Therefore, one must own more excellent capability to comprehend and overcome the challenges, and emotional turmoil resulted from various life experiences. In general, resilience often means the capability of an individual to overcome the significant changes in their environment, sickness or cataclysm. Psychologists define resilience as an individual tendency to adapt well from stress, trauma and adversity (Smith et al.,2008)<sup>1</sup> such as financial issues, misfortunes, and chronic illness (Rutter, 1985; Rutter, 1987; Kobasa, 1979)<sup>2,3,4</sup>. Recent findings have revealed a positive effect of resilience on enhancing life quality of an individual with a terminal illness (Liu, Xu, Xu, & Wang, 2017; Li, Yang, Liu, & Wang, 2016)<sup>5,6</sup>. Studies revealed that resilience positively correlated with individual stress (Hao, Hong, Xu, & Zhou, 2015; Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli, & Vlahov, 2007)<sup>7,8</sup>. The particular notion of resilience becomes an essential component in determining stress and individual life satisfaction.

Resilience has mainly been a potent and long-studied theme within psychology, applied to a person's capacity to cope with, and emerge stable from, experiencing traumatic incidents. Nevertheless, this short, overarching definition does little justice to the highly disputed and contested nature of the concept existing within the field of psychology, so much so that some psychologists suggest abandoning its use altogether, as they believe these myriad definitions have led to ambiguity and obscurity, making it a meaningless concept. Nevertheless, many psychologists came to realize the fundamental effect of resilience among adolescents and children (Javanmard, 2013)<sup>9</sup> during their critical development phase. They have stated that as much as the element of resilience involved during this period of adversity would help an individual to gain emotional and psychological stability, thus enhancing their personal growth. In other words, possession of resilience has two significant advantages to an individual personal and interpersonal growth. Therefore, it has given a tremendous amount of attention among scholars to expand the body of literature. In line with this, the present study attempted to investigate the relationship between religious faith and resilience among Malaysian Indian adolescents in order to comprehend the possible relation of religious faith which considered as an active force among adolescents.

Apart from investigating the relationship between religious faith and resilience, the present study also attempted to identify the relationship between religious faith and self-efficacy among adolescents in Malaysia. In the literature, self-efficacy tends to be used to refer to an individual belief on himself to enhance productivity in any level of performance and taking control of every event that influence their daily life (Pajares, 2003)<sup>10</sup>. According to Bandura (1977)<sup>11</sup>, self-efficacy determines one's capability and persistency in achieving the pre-planned goal. A growing number of researches has conducted to shows that self-efficacy plays a vital role among adolescents to maintain psychological well-being and positive attainment. These is because adolescents daily live untidily scattered by adversity, impediments, and inequities. Adolescents should have possessed a vigorous sense of self-efficacy in order to undertake and maintain efforts to gain success. In

pursuits strewn with obstacles, realists either forsake them, abort their efforts prematurely when difficulties arise or become cynical about the prospects of effecting significant changes. Adolescents with high self- efficacy tend to be more organized and set an attainable goal and endure failure. Regrettably, not all adolescents are in the same boat. From the personal observation of researcher in school, most of the students found it challenging to maintain their effort to reach their pre-set goal. Lack of persistency eventually delivered an undesirable impact on their academic achievement, which has greater possibilities towards developing stress, and depression. Therefore, a psychologist should have identified and explore any possible factor to enhance adolescent's self-efficacy. The finding might abet teachers to plan and implement evidence-based strategies to nurture the sense of personal efficacy among adolescents. Since religion has an enormous impact on an adolescent's way of life; it is crucial to investigate the relationship between religiosity and self-efficacy among Indian adolescents in Malaysia.

With this in mind, there is essential to nurture the sense of personal efficacy and resilience among adolescents. It would serve as an effort to maximize their potentiality. Since, very few researches have conducted among Malaysian Indian adolescents regarding the functional role of religion, resilience, and, self-efficacy (Ganaprakasam & Fonny, 2018)<sup>12</sup>, the present study attempts to fill this gap by expanding body of literature by investigating the relationship between religiosity, resilience and self-efficacy among Malaysian Indian adolescents.

### **Religion a Complex Phenomenon**

From prehistoric time until now the very function of religion is immutable. Traditionally, the term religion often means individuals' genuine and sacred relationship with the divine which were presumed to be far higher than us. However, religion not only emphasizes the relationship with the divine but also encourages a positive way of life (Nachiappan et al., 2018)<sup>13</sup>. In other meaning, religion encompassed every part of human experience, whether it from the innate psychological component or external experiences.

Adolescents have been a crucial target for psychologists in religion-related studies from the era of the 20th century. Psychologist, G. Stanley Hall once mentioned that adolescents' developmental stage was a crucial and critical phase for religious and spiritual development. According to Hall, adolescence as a new birth, a recapitulation of an ancient period of storm and stress (Arnett,2006)<sup>14</sup>.

Do religious adolescents better adapt well from various life challenges and emotional turmoil?

Adolescents have been a crucial target for psychologists in religion-related studies since the early 20th century. Psychologist, G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924) once mentioned that adolescents were a pivotal time for religious and spiritual development. Hall viewed adolescence as a new birth, a recapitulation of an ancient period of storm and stress (Arnett,2006)<sup>14</sup>.

Role of religion among adolescents always in the age of the sword. Indeed, various studies have revealed religion been a risk factor towards adolescences suicide behaviour (Stratta et al.,2012; Lawrence, 2016)<sup>15,16</sup>. Furthermore, when the first attempted to empirically investigate the notion of religion along with other variables by Allport and Ross (1967)<sup>17</sup>, it has derived huge attraction from scholars. Contrary to the expectations, their finding of the study revealed that compared to non-churchgoers, churchgoers are more prejudice towards others. These contradict finding blew not only the whistle but also became the point of departure of massive expansion in the body of literature.

Although the amassed number of studies indicated that being religious improve mental health (Javanmard, 2013; Estrada et al., 2019)<sup>9,18</sup>, some experts such as Richard Dawkin, a leading figure on evolution and atheism persistently against the agreement by stating that religion as an element of destruction among peoples on earth (Dawkin, 2012)<sup>19</sup>. Similarly, the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) defined religion as an obsessive-compulsive neurosis. Since he believed that all human behaviour is motivated by instinctual drives particularly forces related to sexuality and aggression, he strongly mentioned that religion slowly holds back the development of human intelligence and ineffective in makes us happy.

Research by Silton, Flannelly, Galek (2013)<sup>20</sup> revealed that adults who believe in a punitive god are likely to suffer from mental illness such as paranoia, anxiety, obsessional thinking and compulsion. Similarly, the role of religion in associating with self-efficacy also revealed contradicting finding.

## **Problem Statement**

The Health Ministry of Malaysia estimated more than 4.2 million of adolescents suffering from mental health issues (Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia, 2016)<sup>21</sup>. NoorAni (2015)<sup>22</sup> revealed, mental health-related problems show an upward trend in Malaysia from 1996 to 2011 involves adolescents age 5 through 15 years. The rising number of suicide attempts among adolescents in Malaysia (Ibrahim, Che Din, & Ahmad,2019)<sup>23</sup> demonstrates the diminishing element of resilience.

Suicidal ideation was common among adolescents nowadays (Ganaprakasam, 2018)<sup>12</sup>. Indeed, the study has revealed that approximately seven percent of adolescents in Malaysia have suicidal ideation, and half of them have already attempted suicide. Since World Health Organization (WHO) released a statement by expecting the rising number of suicides across the globe in the next 15 years (WHO, 2017)<sup>24</sup>, it is crucial for a psychologist to expand the body of literature in order to gain comprehensive knowledge on that particular matter by identifying and reassess the risk and protective factor.

This study expected to be an important source for educators and government and non-government organizations to enhance well-being among this population. Furthermore, this study also heightened the awareness of religion so that a healthy way of coping among this population might practice. This study fills a gap in knowledge because little known about what kind of relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy among Malaysian Indian adolescents. The current study investigates the relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy among Malaysian Indian adolescents.

## **Literature Review**

Religion is fundamental to human behaviours. It has grounded like of an individual's beliefs in relation to spiritual value (Alexander, 2017)<sup>25</sup>. It according to the moral decisions and internal qualities reflecting personal assessment or extent of reverence to God. Moreover, the extent to which one seeks to adhere to religious teaching, finds religion to be personally helpful and obtains personal strength by high power beliefs. Meanwhile, self-efficacy could be a person's belief in her or his capabilities to set up and execute courses of proceeding that turn out given attainments (Bandura, 1993)<sup>26</sup>. Low self-efficacy is related to negative feelings like depression, anxiety, or hopelessness in accretion as degrade educational performance or low self-motivation (Gibbons, 2010)<sup>27</sup>. According to the study conducted by Ganaprakasam & Hutagalung (2018)<sup>12</sup>, indicated that religion has an essential predictor of psychological well-being and self-efficacy among high school students. The resulting study showed that psychological well-being intensely associated with a private spiritual religion and self –efficacy among students in understanding their capability.

According to Anjaswarni, et.al (2019)<sup>28</sup>, research aimed is to develop a self-efficacy model among junior and senior secondary school students based on religious and family determinants. The 158 students' sample was taken from 15 both Indonesia public and private schools within the age of 12 to 19 years old in the Malang East Java, City. Based on results analysis, it is found influences self-efficacy in this study adolescents is religiosity. The significance of adolescents in Malang City is mostly in religiosity (74%). These results well-tried the adolescents have sensible self-control and robust philosophy in faith to finishing their role and reached their aim.

On the other hand, Onu et al., (2019)<sup>29</sup>, found the similarity within self- efficacy, and faith. The study aimed to identify self-efficacy mediates within religious commitment and academic dishonesty among 350 undergraduate students at the University of Nigeria. The 98 percent respondent Christian religious background and balance 2 percent is Muslim. The Findings were found that result of low academic dishonesty because of high religious assurance was predictive among undergraduate students. Thus, religion plays a huge role in self-efficacy among student academic dishonesty. Moreover, the analysis conducted by Bekomson, & Ntamu, (2019)<sup>30</sup>, observed if non-secular principle has any relation on self- efficacy among high school students. The participants were 1543 students every which way picked from forty-seven public high schools in Cross stream State in Nigeria. The result additionally showed that non-secular value-system has

the efficiency of up students self-efficacy, particularly tutorial, language, and ethical self-efficacy severally. The study findings were helpful to parents, students, teachers, counsellors, and school administrators to understand the importance of religious value orientation in boosting self – efficacy among school students.

Resilience is the expertise of individuals, families, and groups to successfully run despite significant difficulties in life (Werner and Smith, 1989; Rutter, 1987; Lee, Cheung & Kwong)<sup>31,32,33</sup>. Resilience is also different from healing. According to Hijón (2017)<sup>34</sup>, resilience in an academic context assumed as a form of endurance that every student has when facing difficulties in learning activities, including a decrease in academic achievement. Academic resilience also leads to positive adaptation patterns during or after the individuals face difficulties or failures in academics. According to Buckingham, & Sushames, (2019)<sup>35</sup> resilience not affected when age, gender, and income controlled for in multiple regression analyses. Furthermore, findings proved, both spirituality and religiosity positively correlated with resilience.

Mhaka-Mutepfa, & Maundeni, (2019)<sup>36</sup> conducted research on Development: The Role of Faith (Spirituality/ Religion) in Resilience in Sub-Saharan African Children. The aim is to identify the position of faith (religion or spirituality) as a supply of resilience to persistent, annoying lifestyles occasions experienced with the aid of children. The results showed that faith or spirituality beliefs might enable a child to reframe or reinterpret events that square measure visible as uncontrollable, in this sort of way to create them much less nerve-wracking or extra good sized. The findings consistently have shown a high definite similarity within religion or spirituality, mental, and physical health and resilience. The year 2019, Kimhi.et.al. conducted research to find the national resilience assessment scale (NRAS) as an indicator of national resilience. One of the variables in that scale is religiosity. For that, 1022 Jewish Israeli adults selected to identify the characteristics of the NRAS by Israeli online survey research organization. The output research showed NRAS has high reliability, and validity positively correlated with resilience support and resilience suppressing especially religion variables.

Based on Nor Syakila and Amalia (2019)<sup>37</sup>, conducted research to look at the link between self- efficacy and resilience among late adolescents. The samples of 250 late adolescents aged between 18 to 19 years old Pre- University of University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) students. The number of the respondents samples consists of Malay and Islam. Overall, the analysis results of self-effectiveness have robust correlational statistics with resilience among late adolescents within the kind of significance, perseverance, self- reliance, equanimity, and existential loneliness. The researcher suggested researching for middle adolescents to develop approaches that will help to improve the students academic excellence.

## **Research Hypothesis**

Grounded on the literature review, two hypotheses was formulated:

1. There is a significant relationship between religiosity and resilience among Malaysian Indian adolescences.
2. There is a significant relationship between religiosity and self-efficacy among Malaysian Indian adolescences.

### **Research Questions**

- i. Does religiosity have a significant relationship with resilience among Malaysian Indian adolescences?
- ii. Does religiosity have a significant relationship with self-efficacy among Malaysian Indian adolescences?

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design and Sample of Study**

The present study was descriptive and correlational, whereinto investigate the relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy. Researchers receive permission from a particular school principal to gather all selected participants at their school hall and briefly explain to them the details of the present study.

The sample of this study consists of 86 respondents from one of the secondary schools located at the districts of Kedah, the northern state of Malaysia and they were selected from a purposive sampling method. Krejcie and Morgan (1970)<sup>38</sup> sample size determination table used to calculate an adequate number of respondents. With possible misreport in mind, 95 questionnaires distributed. Participants took approximately 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire, and all of them received a token of appreciation as an attempt to appreciate their time and effort. Nine questionnaires were misreported and therefore, precluded from the data analysis.

### **Instruments**

The present study used an instrument titled the relationship between religion, Resilience, and self-efficacy. This questionnaire consists of four sections. Section one intended to obtain demographics information of respondents such as age, and gender. Section two contained ten questions related to religious faith from Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (SCSRFQ) developed by Plante & Boccaccini (1997)<sup>39</sup>. This questionnaire was designed exclusively to measure religious faith of adolescents (Cummings et al.,2015)<sup>40</sup> and has adequate psychometric characteristics (Jeremy et al.,2015). Section three is made up of six scale measures of resilience from Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) designed by Smith et al., (2008)<sup>1</sup>. This relatively new and widely used

questionnaire has better psychometric properties and has good internal consistency, with a coefficient alpha of 0.71 (Fung, 2020)<sup>41</sup>. Section three consists of 11 items measuring self-efficacy for self-regulated learning designed by Bandura (1977)<sup>11</sup> measuring student ability to perceived academic tasks.

## Data Analysis

This study used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 25) to conduct the data analysis. Measures such as frequency and percentages were used to analyses the respondents demographic profiles, and Pearson correlation test used to investigate the relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy.

## Result

### Descriptive Statistic

Table 1:

*Distribution of component variable of religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy according to the gender difference.*

Variable	Gender	Mean	Min	Max	SD	N
Religiosity	Male	142.30	91	196	25.87	40
	Female	151.70	78	181	27.72	46
Resilience	Male	64.37	48	93	12.40	40
	Female	59.66	9	124	20.80	46
Self-efficacy	Male	58.37	37	87	11.30	40
	Female	47.30	7	126	17.40	46

Table 1 indicated the descriptive result of the respondent of the present study. The mean of religiosity among female student was 142.3 with standard deviation about 25.87, and among men, it was about 151.70 with standard deviation about 27.72. The mean of resiliency among female student was about 59.66 with standard deviation about 20.80 and among male students about 64.37 with standard deviation of about 12.40. Moreover, the mean of self-efficacy among female student was about 47.30 with standard deviation of about 17.40 and among male students about 58.37 with standard deviation of about 11.30.

Further, the researchers identified the relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy among respondents through Pearson correlation.



## Inferential Analysis

Research Hypothesis 1:

There is a significant relationship between religiosity and resilience among adolescents in Malaysia.

The finding of correlation coefficient between these two variables presented in table 2 below.

Table 2:

*Pearson Correlation Coefficient between religiosity and resilience*

Variable	Religiosity	Resilience
Religiosity	1	0.499**
Resilience	0.499**	1

\*\* P <0.01

A Pearson Correlation examined the relationship between religiosity and resilience. As shown in Table 2, there is a positive and significant relationship between the religiosity and resiliency,  $r(86) = 0.499$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) among adolescences in Malaysia. Therefore, the finding supports the first hypothesis of this study.

Research Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between religiosity and self-efficacy among adolescents in Malaysia

Table 3:

*Pearson Correlation Coefficient between religiosity and self-efficacy*

Variable	Religiosity	Self-efficacy
Religiosity	1	0.636**
Self-efficacy	0.636**	1

\*\* P <0.01

A Pearson Correlation examined the relationship between religiosity and self-efficacy. As shown in Table 3, there is a positive and significant relationship between religiosity and self-efficacy  $r(86) = 0.636$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) among Malaysian adolescences. Therefore, the finding supports the second hypothesis of this study.

## **Discussion**

The study aims to investigate the relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self- efficacy among Malaysian Indian Adolescents.

The finding of this study revealed the significant relationship between religiosity and resilience among Malaysian Indian adolescents. In other words, finding revealed that religious faith is involved in preparing adolescents with the courage to bounce back from adversity and obstacles in their life. Being a religious person does assist people move to beyond prior levels of adjustment to achieve fundamental positive transformation. The correlation between religiosity and resilience is worth mentioning because it has more excellent capacity to create and expand pathways towards nurturing well-functioning adolescents in society. The finding of this study has substantiated previous findings in the literature (Gunnestad &Thwala,2011; Javanmard, 2013; Ögtem-Young, 2018)<sup>42,9,43</sup>.

The finding of this study suggests that religion might have provided an answer to adolescents internal psychological struggles in a difficult situation. Study on these particular subjects would enhance people understanding regarding the role of religion among adolescents and contribute to planning and implementing proper educational programs at school in order to maximize the awareness of the advantage of religion. Furthermore, it is imperative to encourage adolescents to participate in their particular religious activities. Previous research on religion and resilience shows that religion is essential to alleviate post-traumatic experiences (Anastasova,2014)<sup>44</sup>. Similarly, Saeidi et al.,(2010)<sup>45</sup> indicates that spiritual-religious intervention can have a positive effect on resilience, nourishing the relationship between religiosity and resilience.

Every religion instils ethical values and provides more exceptional sources among their followers in order to nurture their potential to recover from setbacks and enhance the opportunity of being able to lead a healthier and functional life. Apart from promising findings on the relationship between religiosity and resilience, this study also revealed a significant positive relationship between religiosity and self-efficacy among Malaysian Indian adolescents. The finding of this study is in line with several studies (Estrada et al.,2019; Ganaprakasam & Hutagalung, 2018; Nie,2019)<sup>18,12,46</sup>

Since the respondents of this study were, it is relevant to understand how the religion of Hindu does promote self-efficacy. Hinduism adhered the ideology that every human has the inner potential to reach the higher state and promote all the possibilities to enhance awareness among their followers (Srivastava,2010)<sup>47</sup>. Our finding appears to reflect well the role of religion in possible contribution towards the greater flourishing of self-efficacy among Malaysian Indian adolescents.

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## Conclusion, Limitation, and Future Work

The current study investigated the relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy among Malaysian Indian adolescents. The finding of the study revealed a positive significant relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy, thus gone some way towards enhancing the basis of understanding concerning the relationship between religiosity, resilience, and self-efficacy. Our research suggests and assumes to critically impact policymakers to develop a practical way to create a functional society. However, this study holds certain limitations to addressed.

Firstly, owing to the number of samples that were involved in this study. Given the small sample size and targeted adolescents in one particular race might not be generalized to the entire population. On the other side, the majority of the respondents was derived from an urban area and focus on secondary school students. Hence, future study should concentrate on respondents from a different race, age, and locality. Secondly, owing to the limitation of correlation type research. Since the present study executed the correlation design; therefore, it is unable to explain the cause and effect relationship of the studying variables. It recommended that future study should consider causal research methods in order to comprehend the phenomenon thoroughly. Finally, concerning the self-administrative questionnaire. Although the questionnaire was mostly a structured method of gaining information, somehow it does have specific limitations such as the emotion of respondents are unnoticed, and pooling of ignorance. Therefore, the authors proposed that future study could address this issue by adopting a qualitative method in order to gain insight into this phenomenon.

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