

REHABILITATION THROUGH PAROLE SYSTEM IN MALAYSIA: THE ROLE OF OPTIMISM AS MEDIATING VARIABLE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY AND RESILIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Identifying the personal characteristics of parolees that can reduce the likelihood of committing crimes is a great challenge to prison officers in order to ensure that rehabilitation process is handled successfully. The changes recommended to prisoners under parole are to increase their self-efficacy, developing optimism and maintaining a high level of resilience. This study employs a cross-sectional survey research design. A total of 280 prisoners undergoing parole monitoring were recruited as respondents. A set of questionnaire was used consisting of the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Positive Thinking Rating Scale and a self-developed resilience scale. Results showed that there were significant correlations between self-efficacy, optimism and resilience. Further, findings indicated that optimism partially mediated the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience. Implications are discussed in the context of preventing recidivism among parolees and strategies to increase effectiveness of rehabilitation in the parole system.

Keywords: prisoners; parole; self-efficacy; optimism; resilience

INTRODUCTION

The need for parole system to be implemented in Malaysia is attributed to the growing number of prisoners incarcerated in the prison. Asia Pacific Conference of Correctional Administrators reports that Malaysia is one of the 14 countries in Asia and Pacific that experiences serious growth of prisoner population. The report further states that the increase of overall imprisonment was observed especially in Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand and in all these countries, the remand population has been rising faster than the sentenced prisoner population (APCCA, 2008). Therefore, the implementation of parole system by the government is seen as one strategy to help the country in reducing the congestion in prisons. Records published by Malaysian Prison Department show an increase in prisoner population in the prison from 1999 until 2006 up to 60% which amounts to about 42,000 prisoners compared

to the capacity limit of 24,000 prisoners (Malaysian Prisons Department, 2009). In 2007, the number of prisoners recorded a total of 42,471 which exceeds more than the rate and capacity limit which is 38,832 for the said year. In addition, within the next 10 years, Malaysian Prisons Department estimates the number of prisoners in the prison to increase up to 75% from the existing number which is 36,416 with the estimated increase of 2,000 prisoners a year (Malaysian Prisons Department, 2009). Congestion of prisoners recently has caused anxiety not only among the rehabilitation counselors that have to face various characteristics of prisoners, but also provides great challenge to them in order to ensure that rehabilitation process is handled successfully and ascertain that the prisoners rehabilitated are able to function well in the community. Thus, the introduction of parole system in Malaysia is hoped not only to help in dealing with serious congestion problem in Malaysian prisons, but also help in

developing the well-being and self-development among prisoners.

Parole originates from the French word parole meaning declaration of promise, while prisoners undergoing parole system are known as parolees. The Parole System introduced in Malaysia is a system developed based on the Parole System in Australia. Apart from that, the parole system is also a method that enables prisoners to be released conditionally before sentence has been completely served provided that they show good behaviour and become involved in beneficial voluntary work under the supervision of parole officers. Through this system, prisoners are required to complete the rest of the sentence outside of prison under supervision of parole officers under the Prisons (Amendment) Act 2008. The Parole System is implemented through Prisons Act (Amendment 2008 (A1332), in which this Act is granted Royal Assent on 24 January 2008 and has been enacted on 7th February 2008. The implementation of Parole System in Malaysia as a policy is regulated on 30th June 2008.

Several definitions have been proposed by scholars regarding the implementation of parole system based on specific region and area (Caplan & Kinnevy, 2010; Solomon, 2006). Caplan and Kinnevy (2010) explain that after a decade of implementation of parole system in the United States of America, it does not show similarities in terms of definition between one country to another country. Although the implementation is conditional, the conditions differ between one area and district. For instance, some pre-release operational model comprises states that share characteristics such as program completions is required prior to release; while other states share similarities at the post-release operational model for supervision which comprises parole systems have full authority over parolee supervision (Caplan & Kinnevy, 2010). All these factors directly contribute to how parole is understood and implemented in an area or district.

Siegel (2006) and Ellis and Marshall (2000) on the other hand define parole as a planned release with approval of the Parole Board on selected prisoners and conditional with community monitoring towards prisoners before sentence is completed. Incarcerated prisoners who

are allowed to undergo parole system will be readmitted to prison unconditionally if they violate the rules specified through this system (Siegel, 2006). This is similar with Conklin's (1998) view who states that parole is a program that can reduce cost and congestion in prison by releasing prisoners before sentence is completed. If prisoners violate parole regulations, they will be readmitted. This is in accordance with Alarid, Cromwell and Del Carmen's (2008) views who define parole as a gradual transition process from prison to the community as an integration step to reduce recidivism. Alarid, Cromwell and Del Carmen (2008) also state that parole system is introduced in prison to reduce the congestion among prisoners and thus create prison institution as a correctional institution.

Under Malaysian Parole System, the tasks of Parole and Community Services Division consists of managing and overseeing the development of Parole Management Information System, being responsible to maintain, improve and monitor the Parole Management Information System to ensure it operates smoothly, and ensuring that all parole officers across the Prison Department of Malaysia can access the Parole Management Information System (Malaysian Prisons Department, 2015). The objective of the parole system is to help in speeding the rehabilitation and adjustment of prisoners with the community so that they can continue their lives normally and become independent towards themselves, family and community before experiencing full freedom. In addition, the initiatives of parole system are to reduce recidivism, encourage residents to maintain good character, provide an opportunity to obtain suitable employment, create a high involvement in the community, reduce operating costs by the residents in prison, and help reduce congestion in prisons.

One reason that explains the increase in the number of prisoners is recidivism. Statistics published by Malaysian Prison Department in 2007-2008 show the average between 25% to 30% prisoners in Malaysian Prison are recidivist prisoners. In general, recidivism is defined by Bahaman et al. (2008) as a repeat process in which offenders return to deviant behaviour and readmitted after two years release from prison (Bahaman et al., 2008). The problem of

recidivism among prisoners is a serious problem that needs to be addressed by concerned parties. The main cause of increase of recidivism is believed to be the difficulty of prisoners to adapt their lives with the surrounding community after being released from prison (Mohamad Fadzil et al., 2005). Andrews and Bonta (1998), Kroner and Loza (2001), Loza and Loza-Fanous (2001) and Loza et al. (2000) suggest that recidivism is the nexus of personality, sociodemographic characteristics, criminal history, personal attributes, associations, and perception of the environment. Petersilia (2000) and Travis (2000) opined that support and involvement from community to prisoners after being released is important and needed to enable these individuals to retain their good behaviour to continue their lives and become independent in the community. Therefore, it is crucial to study the characteristics of prisoners who have been released on parole to understand what their personal characteristics are that make them resilient and hardy.

Literature Review

Self-Efficacy

Prisoners under parole monitoring need to change their criminal behaviours to those behaviours accepted by community. These behaviour changes need parolees to be strong in their motivation and capabilities to resist temptation to criminal behaviours. Sappington (1996) argued that both response-outcome expectancies and self-efficacy expectancies must be considered when predicting or changing behaviour. The term self-efficacy has its roots in the social learning/cognitive behavioural perspective and was introduced by Bandura (1995) who defined it as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2).

According to self-efficacy theory, the ways individuals think, feel, motivate themselves, and act are influenced by their self-efficacy beliefs. Once a task is undertaken, the amount of energy expended towards that task and persistence in the face of difficulty depends on their level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995; Longo et al., 1992). In other words, if individuals perceive they have high self-efficacy, they will expend more energy and they will display more persistence. In the context of self-change,

Bandura hypothesized that all attempts at personality change are effective because they create and strengthen an individual's perceived self-efficacy (Liebert & Spiegler, 1990). In terms of social behaviour, individuals having high self-efficacy will experience no problems in forming new relationship with other people to replace old friends who no longer exist due to retirement, replacement or death (Lerner, Easterbrooks & Mistry, 2012).

Bandura (1995) stated that self-efficacy beliefs contribute to motivation and accomplishments in several ways: they determined the goals that individuals wanted to achieve, how much effort they use, how long they persevere when facing difficulties, and how resilient they were to failures. In other words, individuals who do not trust their capabilities will reduce their efforts or give up quickly when they are faced with obstacles and failures. In contrast, people who believe strongly in their capabilities expend greater effort when they face difficulties to master a challenge. Having strong perseverance will contribute to performance accomplishments. This suggests that for effective correctional treatment programmes to be successful, offenders must have the belief that they are able to fulfil the requirements of treatment and this will result in favourable outcomes.

Sappington (1996) conducted a study on the relationship between adjustment in prison with self-efficacy and response-outcome beliefs among a sample of 38 inmates in a maximum security prison for whom anger management classes has been recommended. The results showed that self-efficacy and response-outcome beliefs affected adjustment in prison. The findings indicated that individuals who believed that their behaviour did not affect the treatment and those who believed that they could not control their actions were likely to have more adjustment problems. This study also found that these beliefs were positively correlated with age and amount of time served in prison. Older inmates and inmates who had served more time in prison felt that their actions did not affect their treatment in prison and that they could not control their actions.

Hogan (1990) explored the effectiveness of self-efficacy and motivation in predicting sub-

stance abuse relapse among a sample of 60 offenders admitted to a pre-release substance abuse program. The measures used were the Drug Taking Confidence Questionnaire to assess self-efficacy, the Self Satisfaction subscale of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale to measure motivation, and urinalysis as an independent measure of relapse. Both self-efficacy and motivation predicted relapse after a three-month period. This means that offenders with greater motivation for abstinence and higher self-efficacy had lower relapse rates than offenders with lower motivation and self-efficacy. Although the sample of this study was substance abuse offenders, the measure of relapse has some similarities with recidivism which is the repeat of offence after being released from incarceration.

Several researchers such as Bonta (1996), Gendreau (1996), Gendreau, Little, and Goggin (1996) and Hoge (1999) found that personal characteristics and criminal history have been the primary elements of risk classifications, whereas factors that have the potential to be changed such as drug use or self-esteem are found in needs assessments used for treatment purposes. Benda (2001) found that the personal attributes expected to discriminate between non-recidivists and recidivists were self-esteem, self-efficacy, expectations of future success, and resilience. Crime can be stopped or reduced if individuals have a greater degree of these attributes (Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Scheier, Botvin, Griffin & Diaz, 2000).

Benda (2001) also examined the discrimination of several sociodemographic variables, personality traits, criminal history factors, personal attributes, and perceptions of the boot camp environment among 480 boot camp graduates. Respondents' were first-time referral for adult correctional system, were sentenced 10 years or less, have no previous violence record in the correctional system, have IQ more than 70, and have no physical or psychological problems including drug addiction. Findings showed that recidivists were younger, began crime at an earlier age, started using drugs earlier in life, were more influenced by peers who engaged in unlawful behaviour, and associated with these peers more frequently (Benda, 2001). In contrast, non-recidivists

have higher self-efficacy, have more resilience, have higher self-esteem than recidivists or parole violators.

Optimism

Having self-efficacy alone may not ensure that prisoners under parole can succeed in starting a new life and change their behaviour. Another variable that is hypothesized to influence the physical health of inmates (Heigel, Stuewig & Tangney, 2010) and indirectly the success of rehabilitation among parolees is optimism. It is defined as expecting the best possible outcome from any given situation. Scheier and Carver (1985) define it as the global generalized tendency to believe that one will generally experience good versus bad outcomes in life.

The study by Segovia et al. (2012) examined extreme cases of trauma such as prolonged captivity, malnourishment, and physical and psychological torture among the United States' longest detained American prisoners of war. The study examined six variables namely officer/enlisted status, age at time of capture, length of solitary confinement, low antisocial/psychopathic personality traits, low post-traumatic stress symptoms following repatriation, and optimism. Findings showed that dispositional optimism was the strongest variable contributing towards resilience and it can be considered a protective factor for confronting trauma.

Brodhagen and Wise (2008) studied the role of dispositional optimism in mediating distress among students who experienced traumatic events, including child physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. Results showed that dispositional optimism partially mediated distress among individuals who had experienced child physical abuse and child emotional abuse with participants with higher levels of optimism had lower levels of distress. In addition, dispositional optimism fully mediated distress among individuals who had experienced traumatic events such as rape, assault, and fire. Participants with higher levels of optimism had lower levels of distress.

A study by Li Liu et al. (2013) was conducted among 1428 correctional officers. These correctional officers were measured in terms of

perceived organisational support, psychological capital and depression. Psychological capital includes personal resources such as self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism. Results found significant negative correlations among perceived organisational support, hope, resilience, and optimism with depressive symptoms. Optimism was found to significantly mediate the association between perceived organisational support and depressive symptoms.

Optimism can also help victims of abuse and is correlated with resilience. Sun Kyung Kang and Wook Kim (2011) conducted a study on 110 battered women in Korea. Findings showed that the meaning and value of life positively influenced self-efficacy. Value of life was also positively correlated with optimism. This finding was consistent with Karademas's (2006) study who stated that self-efficacy, optimism and social support were related to health and functioning. Results of his study among 201 respondents found that optimism predicted life satisfaction and depression. Findings also showed that optimism partially mediated the relation of self-efficacy and perceived social support to well-being.

Resilience

One indicator that can be used to measure the ability of individuals to succeed after facing difficulties is resilience. The term resilience refers to a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity. Studies in resilience suggest two critical conditions: (1) exposure to significant threat or severe adversity; and (2) the achievement of positive adaptation despite major assaults on the developmental process (Garmezy, 1990; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Rutter, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992).

Rutter (1987, 1990), for example, has characterized resilience as the positive end of the distribution of developmental outcomes among individuals at high risk. Masten (1994) on the other hand recommended that the term resilience be used exclusively when referring to the maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging life conditions. When used by clinical experts, the term resilience actually implies recovery, one's ability "to bounce

back" after the sustained trauma, or the prospects of a "speedy recovery" (Hill, 2009). In literature, there is a common belief that every single person has the capacity for resilience. In order to develop resilience, one must experience some hardship; yet, in the process of developing the capacity for resilience, one certainly needs some support (Kostic, 2010).

In order for prisoners under parole to succeed in making behavioural changes and integrate themselves in the community, they need to develop resilience as part of their character. The resilient mind-set includes several factors, such as: having control over one's life; the ability to reinforce one's resilience to stress; empathy; demonstrated communication skills and other interpersonal skills; having genuine problem-solving and decision-making skills; setting realistic goals and expectations; learning valuable lessons from one's mistakes and accomplishment; acting as a functional and efficient member of the community; living a responsible life based on the fundamental human values; the feeling of being special when acting for the benefit of others, etc. (Morris, 1971).

A study by Rumgay (2004) exploring theoretical perspectives on female desistance from crime suggested that opportunity, identity, scripts, self-efficacy, and resilience should be recognized and valued for successful desistance from crime. Fougere, Daffern and Thomas (2012) stated that resilience was one purported protective factor that has been highlighted as being of potential importance. Their findings showed that an absence of a likely mental health diagnosis was the only factor significantly correlated with resilience, with alcohol and/or drug problems and psychopathy approaching statistical significance. Subsequent multivariate analysis found absence of a likely mental health diagnosis to be the only significant contributing factor to resilience, explaining only a small (approximately 6%) amount of total variance, as measured by the Resilience Scale.

The crime prevention theory based on the concept of environmental design rests on a simple idea that crime is partly a result of the opportunities which are to be found in the immediate physical environment. Therefore, a change in the physical environment may reduce the likelihood of committing crimes among prisoners

under parole. The changes recommended to prisoners under parole are to increase their self-efficacy and optimism and maintaining a high level of resilience.

Objectives

The present study has two main objectives. First, this study aims to examine the relationship between self-efficacy, optimism and resilience among parole prisoners based on the evidence from previous studies that found that the personal attributes expected to discriminate between non-recidivists and recidivists are self-esteem, self-efficacy, expectations of future success, and resilience (Benda, 2001; Fougere, Daffern & Thomas, 2012; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Rungay, 2004; Scheier, Botvin, Griffin, & Diaz, 2000). The second objective of this study examines the role of optimism as mediating variable in the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience based on studies by Brodhagen and Wise (2008), Li Liu et al. (2013) and Karademas (2006) that have tested optimism as a mediator.

METHOD

Respondents

This study employs a cross-sectional survey research design. A total of 280 male prisoners under parole undergoing parole monitoring were recruited as respondents. The respondents were prisoners under the parole system conducted by the Malaysian Prison Department in Peninsular Malaysia.

Research Instruments

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study was resilience. It was measured using ten items with four items adapted from the Resilience Scale by Neill and Dias (1993) and another six items were developed by the researchers. These items were developed based on the literatures related with deviant behaviour and incarcerated prisoners as items from resilience scale measuring normal individuals may not accurately reflect resilience among deviant individuals. A pilot study was conducted to assess its' reliability and results showed that it has acceptable reliability with Cronbach alpha of

0.745. This scale also used a four point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Example of the items are "I feel that I can handle many things at a time".

Independent Variable

The independent variable in this study was self-efficacy and it was measured using the Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). It consists of 10 items with responses using a four point Likert scale with 1 "Strongly Disagree", 2 "Disagree", 3 "Agree" and 4 "Strongly Agree". Reliability of the scale was also satisfactory with Cronbach alpha of 0.802.

Mediator Variable

Optimism was the mediator variable in this study and it was measured by the Positive Thinking Rating Scale (PTRS) developed by Northside Counseling and validated by Fauziah et al. (2013). It consists of 19 items with responses using a four point Likert scale with 1 "Strongly Disagree", 2 "Disagree", 3 "Agree" and 4 "Strongly Agree". Reliability of the scale was also satisfactory with Cronbach alpha of 0.863.

Procedures

The researchers first applied permission to conduct the study from Malaysian Prison Department. Once approval was granted, the researchers then made appointment with Parole Directors from each state in Peninsular Malaysia. According to the statistics by Malaysian Prisons Department (Malaysian Prisons Department, 2012), the number of parolees was 320 and based on this population, sample size was determined according to the recommendation by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The sample size required was 175 and following that, 280 respondents were recruited to ensure that adequate sample size was obtained. A total of 112 respondents were from the North region, 81 respondents were from the South region, 40 respondents from the East region and 57 respondents from Central Peninsular Malaysia. Administration of questionnaires was conducted in groups with the assistance from Parole Officers and Counsellors. The officers and counsellors were first briefed and trained on how to administer the questionnaires.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on demographic variables. The respondents' age was from 20 to 63 years old with the mean age of 34.46. A total of 209 respondents (74.6%) was in the age range between 20 to 39 years old, 65 respondents (23.3%) were in the age range between 40 to 59 years old and another 6 respondents (2.1%) were above 60 years old. Regarding their marital status, a total

of 149 respondents (53.2%) were single, 106 respondents (37.9%) were married and 25 respondents (8.9%) were divorced or widowed. A total of 15 respondents (5.4%) were formally uneducated, 56 respondents (20.0%) finished their primary school, 188 respondents (67.2%) have higher school certificate, and 21 respondents (7.5%) have tertiary education.

Table 1. Results of descriptive analysis

Variables		N	%
Age	20-39	209	74.6
	40-59	65	23.2
	Above 60	6	2.1
Marital status	Single	149	53.2
	Married	106	37.9
	Divorced/Widowed	25	8.9
Education level	Uneducated	15	5.4
	Primary school	56	20.0
	Higher school	188	67.2
	Tertiary	21	7.5

Inferential Analysis

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among self-efficacy, optimism and resilience. Both skewness and kurtosis showed that the data were normally distrib-

uted. There was significant correlation between self-efficacy and optimism, $r=0.55$, $p<0.0001$. There was also significant correlation between self-efficacy and resilience, $r=0.61$, $p<0.0001$. Finally, results also showed significant correlation between optimism and resilience, $r=0.63$, $p<0.0001$.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlations among variables

	1	2	3	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-efficacy (1)	-			29.97	3.59	0.36	0.65
Optimism (2)	0.55*	-		57.95	6.82	0.32	0.17
Resilience (3)	0.61*	0.63*	-	29.63	3.66	-0.03	0.66

* $p<0.0001$

Analysis was then done to test the role of optimism in mediating the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), three regression equations should be carried out in order to test for mediation. First, regressing social support on self-efficacy; second, regressing resilience on self-efficacy; and third, regressing resilience on both self-efficacy and on optimism.

These three regression equations provide the tests of the linkages of the mediational model. To establish mediation, first, self-efficacy must predict optimism in the first equation (path a); second, self-efficacy must be the predictor to the resilience in the second equation (path c); and third, optimism must predict resilience in the third equation. Then, the effect of self-efficacy on resilience must be less in the

third equation than in the second equation. Perfect mediation holds if self-efficacy has no effect on resilience when optimism was controlled.

To test this, a series of three regressions were conducted. First, optimism was regressed on self-efficacy ($\beta=.55, p<.0001$). Self-efficacy contributed a significant amount of variance to optimism (30%). Second, resilience was regressed on self-efficacy ($\beta=.61, p<.0001$). Self-efficacy explained a significant amount of

variance to resilience (37%). In the third equation, resilience was simultaneously regressed on both self-efficacy ($\beta=.38, p<.0001$) and optimism ($\beta=.42, p<.0001$). The results are presented in Table 3. The regression model contributed 50% variance to resilience. Based on these results, it can be concluded that optimism partially mediated the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience.

Table 3. Results of regression analysis

Model	B	Std. Error	B	t
Model 1				
Constant	10.97	1.46		7.50*
Self-efficacy	0.62	0.05	0.61	12.85*
Model 2				
Constant	4.94	1.50		3.29*
Self-efficacy	0.39	0.05	0.38	7.45*
Optimism	0.23	0.03	0.42	8.28*

* $p<.0001$

The results of regression analysis testing mediation effects of social support on the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience are presented in Fig. 1. As shown in Fig. 1, the beta weight when self-efficacy was regressed alone on resilience was .61. The beta weight dropped from .61 to .38 when optimism was added into the equation. The Sobel test (6.17, $p < .05$) revealed that optimism partially mediated the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience.

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), full mediation is obtained when the predictor (self-efficacy) has no significant effect on the outcome (resilience) when the mediator (optimism) is controlled. However, the predictor has significant effect on the outcome but the effect decreased slightly. Therefore, these results indicated that optimism partially mediated the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience.

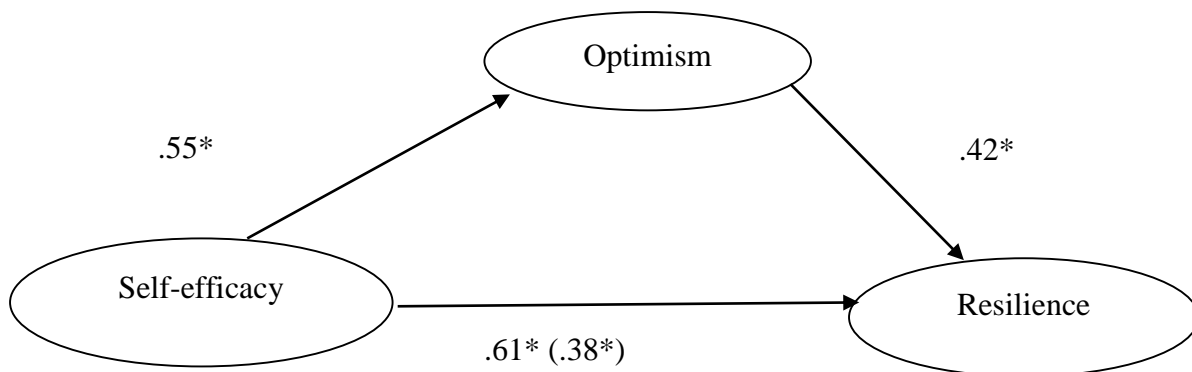


Figure 1: Results of optimism as mediator between self-efficacy and resilience

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to examine the relationship between self-efficacy, optimism and resilience, and to examine the role of optimism as a mediator in the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience. The results showed that self-efficacy has significant correlations with optimism and resilience. Results also showed that self-efficacy was significantly related with resilience. In addition, this study showed that optimism was significantly correlated with resilience. However, results of mediational analysis showed that optimism partially mediated the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience.

The findings of the present study imply that self-efficacy and optimism significantly influenced resilience. Monitoring system of parole prisoners that requires them to have support from family, employer and community can assist in strengthening their resilience which is an indicator of success and change in their life. Consequently, the tendency to repeat criminal behaviour can be reduced and this will reflect the success of parole system as a rehabilitation programme.

A significant relationship between self-efficacy, optimism and resilience indicates that parole prisoners can develop protective factors in themselves. This needs to be reinforced throughout the duration of parole probation through various programmes under parole such as programmes that include elements of metacognition, emotional intelligence, self-motivation, and positive learning that can be applied during face to face meetings between parole prisoners and parole officers. Self-efficacy techniques can be further increased through identification of the belief and thinking strategies of individuals, interpretation and providing feedback about their success and failures, developing optimistic learning to enhance their resilience, identifying obstacles and how to overcome these obstacles, assisting parole prisoners to set goals in their lives and always encourage them to have positive thinking.

In terms of optimism, results showed that optimism was significantly correlated with resilience. Optimism in individuals requires them to

have positive thinking about the future, expecting the best possible outcome from any given situation and having the belief that one will generally experience good outcomes in life. Most prisoners who are released usually face stigma from the community as they have negative thinking and experience pessimism to the extent that some of them are not able to achieve successful integration in the community and consequently relapse. Therefore, the Malaysian Prison Department is recommended to publicize widely about social awareness and responsibility in assisting parolees build a better life. This can be achieved through collaboration with the mass media. Understanding the importance of parole programme should be disseminated through the media towards the community so that they can work together to help in the rehabilitation process. By having a deep understanding among the community on the importance of carrying out their social duties to accept parolees will enable their integration in the community. This not only helps in changing the negative perception towards parolees, it will also instil confidence in them to rebuild their lives.

Acknowledgement

The researchers have been supported generously by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and the Malaysian Prison Department. The researchers would also like to express sincere appreciation for all the support provided.

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