Resiliency, Hope, and Life satisfaction in Midlife

Vidyadayini Shetty

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Nagindas Khandwala College, Mumbai, India

Abstract: *Resilience is defined as "the ability to successfully cope with change or misfortune". Life satisfaction refers to "an individual's personal judgment of wellbeing and quality of life based on his or her own chosen criteria". Hope is defined as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful a) agency (goal-directed energy) and b) pathways planning to meet goals. Middle aged adults (35-60years) not only are vulnerable due to their developmental tasks, but are exposed to the stressors of daily hassles and, in some cases, life events. The aim of the study was to assess the relationship between resilience, life satisfaction, and hope. The study also investigates the relationship between demographic factors such as gender, age, and educational status with resilience, life satisfaction, and hope. Convenient sample method was used and administered the Resilience in Midlife Scale (RIM Scale), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SwLS), and the Adult Hope Scale to 159 participants. A significant positive correlation was noted for scores on the Resilience in Midlife Scale (RIM Scale), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SwLS), and the Adult Hope Scale. Non significant relationship was found for the demographic variables.*
Keywords: *Age, Educational level, Gender, Hope, Life satisfaction, Midlife, Resilience*

I.   Introduction

Most of the resiliency research and practice has been associated with at risk children, problem adolescents, and dysfunctional families. Those who were strong enough to lead a "normal" life after facing traumatic experiences were labeled "survivors" and admired as "exceptional" individuals [1]. The construct of resilience has gained considerable attention over the last four decades. Research endeavors flourished in an attempt to determine the characteristics, traits, or other protective mechanisms that allowed these individuals to adapt, cope and be successful in spite of adverse conditions [2]. Resilience in psychology refers to the idea of an individual's ability to cope with stress and adversity. This coping may result in the individual "bouncing back" to a previous state of normal functioning, or experience the exposure of adversity to produce a "steeling effect" and function better than expected. Resilience can indicate a capacity to resist a sharp decline in functioning even though a person temporarily appears to get worse [3]. Resilience has been most often considered as a personality characteristic that moderates the negative effects of stress and promotes adaptation [4]. Hope, self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and seeking social support are protective factors for resiliency [5].

Hope is defined as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful a) agency (goal-directed energy) and b) pathways planning to meet goals [6]. Hope is a cognitive or thinking state in which an individual is capable of setting realistic but reaching out for those aims through self-directed determination, energy, and perception of internalized control. This is what the authors refer to as "agency" or "willpower". The second component of hope is referred to as the "pathways" or "waypower". In this component of hope, people are capable of generating alternative paths to their desired destinations should the original ones become blocked. Higher hope consistently is related to better outcomes in academics, athletics, physical health, psychological adjustment, and psychotherapy [7]. A study reported that those who were hopeful about their own future as well as that of their children were more intellectually vigorous and psychologically resilient than those not characterized by this orientation [8].

Life satisfaction refers to an individual's personal judgment of well being and quality of life based on his or her chosen own criteria [9]. Life satisfaction is positively related to many personal characteristics and protective factors for resiliency. Resiliency significantly predicted life satisfaction; people who have a higher level of resilience will gain benefits in many life domains from their positive state of mind, including larger social rewards, superior work outcomes and more activity, energy, satisfaction with their life [10]. Life satisfaction was positively related to hope, self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and seeking social support.

According to life span developmentalist middle adulthood lasts from ages 35 to 60 years, which is arbitrarily and culturally derived. The major developmental tasks in middle age are: Managing a career, nurturing an intimate relationship, expanding caring relationships, managing the household. People in middle adulthood experience gradual changes in physical characteristics and appearance. The acuity of the senses, particularly vision and hearing and speed of reaction decline slightly during middle age. Sexuality in middle age

changes slightly, but middle-aged couples, freed from concerns about children, can often progress to a new level of intimacy and enjoyment [11]. This stage has often been referred to as the 'sandwich generation,' as individuals attempt to meet the competing demands of two generations – their children and their aging parents. It has been reported that middle-aged people report the highest levels of stress, which relates to how much control people perceive to have over their lives. Although stress affects people of all ages, it is during midlife that the effects become most apparent. It is now understood to be a time of good health, stable relationships, many responsibilities, and high satisfaction for most people. It is also a time when people cope quite successfully with the changes such as menopause and other signs of aging to achieve peak levels of cognitive functioning [12].

As a concept, resilience is significant in the study of individuals who are exposed to stressors. It is well known that middle aged adults not only are vulnerable due to their developmental tasks, but are exposed to the stressors of daily hassles and, in some cases, life events. Research has proposed that resiliency is enhanced by protective factors. Therefore, it is of great importance to study resilience in middle aged adults, along with protective factors of hope and life satisfaction which serves to cope with mid life stressors. The present study hypothesizes that there is a relationship between resiliency, hope, and life satisfaction. The research study also aims to explore the relationships among a set of correlates such as age, gender and educational status in a well-adjusted population.

1.1 Objectives
1.1.1 To assess the level of resilience, hope, and life satisfaction in midlife.
1.1.2 To explore the relationship between resilience, hope, and life satisfaction in midlife.
1.1.3 To study the relationship of gender, age, and educational status on resilience, hope, and life satisfaction.

1.2 Method
1.2.1 Sample
The population to be studied includes middle aged adults who were between 40 to 60 years old from Mumbai, and met the sample selection criteria which were: (a) 40 to 60 years old (b) able to read and write in English; and (e) can physically complete the questionnaires. The demographic data collected included gender, age, and educational status. The total sample recruited consisted of 159 participants, 92 female and 67 male.

1.2.2 Tools used
1.2.2.1 The Resilience in Midlife Scale (RIM Scale):
The RIM scale developed by Ryan and Caltabiano [13] contains 25 items, each of which is rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The Spearman-Brown coefficient for the RIM scale was .88 and Cronbach's alpha for the total RIM scale was .87

1.2.2.2 The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SwLS):
The Satisfaction with Life Scale developed by Diener et al. [14] is a five item measure that assesses an individual's global judgment of life satisfaction as a whole. The two-month test retest correlation coefficient was .82 and coefficient alpha was .87

1.2.2.3. Adult Hope Scale (Ahs):
Adult Hope Scale developed by Snyder et al. [6] is a 12-item measure of a respondent's level of hope (Cronbach's alpha = .80).

II. Procedure
Participants aged between 40 and 60 years from Mumbai, were recruited through friends and colleagues via convenience sampling method. Participation in the study required subjects to complete the questionnaires taking approximately ten to fifteen minutes. The participants were assured of confidentiality of the information given to the researcher.

III. Results And Discussion
To establish the relationship between resilience, life satisfaction and hope Pearson' Moment Correlation was calculated, as well as the means, and standard deviations. Demographic differences were assessed using t tests. In the present study the RIM scores for the total sample ranged from 38 to 91. The total scores can range from 0 – 100, with higher scores reflecting greater resilience. The mean score for the total group was 69.36, which falls within the above average level of resiliency among middle aged adults. The SwLS scores ranged from 5 to 35, with mean of 24.39, indicating slight satisfaction with life. The AHS scores ranged from 17 to 64, with a mean score of 51.30, indicating hopeful disposition in mid life.

Table 1: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients of resilience, life satisfaction, and hope (N = 159)

	RIM	SLS	AHS
RIM	1.000		
SLS	.308*	1.000	
AHS	.593*	.445*	1.000

Table 1 shows the Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficients of all the variables. There were significant positive inter correlations among all factors under study viz., resiliency, life satisfaction and hope. A statistically significant and almost moderate correlation was found between RIM and AHS (.593). It may be inferred that middle aged adults with higher resiliency scores, report being more hopeful. A statistically significant but a weak correlation between RIM and SLS (.308) was observed. Though a weak relationship between the two variables it indicate that higher resiliency level, higher the life satisfaction of the individual. A statistically significant and almost moderate correlation was found between SLS and AHS (.445). This implies that middle aged adults with higher scores on life satisfaction were more hopeful. The present findings indicate that resiliency, hope and life satisfaction are correlated, supporting past studies.

Table 2: Mean, Standard deviation, and t value on the score of resilience, life satisfaction, and hope

GENDER										
	RIM				SLS			HOPE		
	N	SD	Mean	t value	SD	Mean	t value	SD	Mean	t value
F	92	11.47	68.72	- 0.726 ns	5.74	24.72	0.68 ns	9.35	50.39	- 1.25 ns
M	67	10.44	70.00		6.47	24.06		8.68	52.21	
Total	159		69.36			24.39			51.30	
AGE										
	RIM				SLS			HOPE		
	N	SD	Mean	t value	SD	Mean	t value	SD	Mean	t value
41-50	105	10.48	68.83	- 0.68 ns	6.35	24.14	- 0.86 ns	9.15	50.97	- 0.36 ns
51-60	54	12.10	70.09		5.42	25.02		9.05	51.52	
EDUCATION										
	RIM				SLS			HOPE		
	N	SD	Mean	t value	SD	Mean	t value	SD	Mean	t value
SSC	38	11.31	66.16	- 1.93 ns	6.41	23.13	- 1.47 ns	10.92	48.29	- 2.07 ns
PG	106	10.95	70.20		6.16	24.87		8.40	51.86	

Gender difference in level of resiliency was investigated. The sample composed of 92 female and 67 men. The mean score for females was 68.72 and for males 70.00 which falls in average level of resiliency (Refer Table 1). The results of this study indicated that there was no significant difference between the resilience levels of men and women in midlife which supported past study [13]. Few studies that have focused on gender differences in resilience have found girls/women to be resilient than boys/males.

Effect of age on resiliency was also explored. A t test revealed no significant difference between the two age groups within the midlife age range, therefore it can be stated that individuals 41-50 yrs had similar resilience levels to those between 51-60 years (Refer Table 1). It was expected that individuals in the 51-60 group will be more resilient as they may have developed accommodative coping strategies due their experience with stressors in beginning of mid life.

Additionally, there was no significant difference found between the educational status - individuals with lower educational level SSC (Mean 66.16) and higher educational level (PG Mean70.20) having similar resilience levels. Generally, it is believed that education empowers an individual to understand and cope well with stressors. Education also helps to rationally deal with stressors by adopting behaviors that will promote psychological health. It has been found that building resilience is a personalized process and that one individual's strategy for building resilience may be different from another's [14].

The variables life satisfaction and hope were investigated to find whether they facilitate as protective factor to enhance resiliency. In the present study a statistically significant and positive correlation was found between SLS and AHS and RIM and SLS (Refer Table 1). It may be inferred that life satisfaction and hope can greatly influence resiliency levels of an individual. However a mean of 24.39 (slight satisfaction) in SWLS, and a mean of 51.30 (high level of hope) indicating hopeful disposition help them to tide with various stressors in midlife. Although stress affects people of all ages, it is during midlife that the effects become most apparent. Each issue that individuals face has the potential to become a stressor; that is, an event that damages a person's physical or psychological well being [15].

IV. Limitations Of The Study

The participants were all educated and from urban areas. More females participated in the study than males; hence the results may not reflect the actual population. Stressors experienced by the participants were not known to the researcher at the time of study. Hence the results cannot be generalized to the larger population.

V. Conclusion

Middle adulthood brings new challenges, a reformulation of ambitions and goals, and new levels of competence in the world of work, balancing work and family life. Nurturing, managing, caring, and the attainment of new levels of skill – provide a foundation for establishing the emotional and social support for oneself and others [16]. All these can be very stressful in midlife. The implications of present study focus on the ability to reduce stress and enhance positive adaptation to stress and coping in mid life. Additionally, middle aged adults need to be taught ways in which they can deal with these increased stresses and techniques for effective coping by being more resilient, hopeful and satisfied with the life they lead.

References

[1].   F. Luthans, C. Youseff, and B. Avolio, Psychological capital: Developing the human competitive edge (Oxford University Press Inc. 198, New York, 2007).

[2].   N. Ahern, (2007), Resiliency in Adolescent College Students, doctoral diss., University of Central Florida Orlando, 2007. Retrieved from http://etd.fcla.edu/CF/CFE0001627/Ahern_Nancy_R_200705_phd.pdf

[3].   S. Masten, Ordinary Magic: Lessons from research on resilience in human development. Education Canada, 49 (3), 2009, 28–32. Retreived from http://www.cea-ace.ca/sites/default/files/EdCan-2009-v49-n3-Masten.pdf.

[4].   G. Wagnild and H. Young, Development and psychometric evaluation of the resilience scale. Journal of Nursing Measurement, 1(2), 1993, 165-178.

[5].   C. Bailey and R. Snyder, Satisfaction with life and hope: A look at age and marital status. The Psychological Record, 57, 2007, 233-240.

[6].   R. Snyder and et al., The will and the ways: Development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60,1991, 570-585.

[7].   R. Snyder, Hope theory: Rainbows in the mind. Psychological Inquiry, 13, 2002, 249-275.

[8].   E. Erikson, Identity and the life cycle (Norton, 1980)

[9].   E. Diener. Subjective well being. Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 95, 1984, 542-575.

[10].   M. Akbar, M. Ahmed, M. Hussian, V. Lal, S. Ljaz et.al., Relationship between Resilience and Life Satisfaction among Nomadic. International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies, Vol. 6 No. 3, 2014, 515-529. Retrieved from http://www.ijias.issr-journals.org/

[11].   R. Feldman, Development across the life span (Dorling Kindersley (India) Pvt., Ltd., 2014).

[12].   R. Kail and J. Cavanaugh, Human development: A life-span view (Belmont, Wadsworth, Thomson Learning, 2004).

[13].   L. Ryan, and L. Caltabiano, Development of a New Resilience Scale: The Resilience in Midlife Scale (RIM Scale), Asian Social Science, Vol. 5, No.11. 2009. Retrieved from www.ccsenet.org/journal/html

[14].   E. Diener, R. Emmons, R. Larsen, and S. Griffin, The Satisfaction with Life Scale. Journal of Personality Assessment, 49, 1,1985

[15].   R. Newman (2005), APA's resilience initiative. Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 36(3), 227-229.

[16].   K. Berger, The developing person: Through the life span (New Tork, Worth publishers, 2005).

[17].   M. Newman, and P. Newman, Development through life: A psychosocial approach (Thomson and Wadsworth, 2003).