

# FORGIVENESS AND RESILIENCE AMONG STAFF IN THE GOVERNMENT DRUG TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTRES IN MALAYSIA

<sup>1</sup>HASLEE SHARIL LIM ABDULLAH, <sup>2</sup>MOHD RUSHDAN MOHD JAILANI, <sup>3</sup>SALLINA MANSOR

<sup>1,2</sup>Islamic Science University of Malaysia, <sup>3</sup>AADK, Kajang, Malaysia  
E-mail: sallinaphd@gmail.com

---

**Abstract-** Forgiveness acts as a protective factor which fosters people's ability to deal with psychological stressors. Meanwhile, resilience as the individual's ability to manage stress and to bounce back from adversity. The purpose of this study was to determine the forgiveness influences on resilience. A sample of this study was 380 recruited from the Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres (DTRC) staff throughout the country of Malaysia. The data was analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach. The findings reveal that the forgiveness do have positive relationship that influence resilience among DTRC staffs in Malaysia. It proved that, there is a need for resilient individuals to learn to let go of their painful experiences by expressing forgiveness in order to seek healing for the mselves.

---

**Keywords-** Forgiveness, Resilience, Drug, Drug Abuse

---

## I. INTRODUCTION

National Anti-drugs Agency (AADK) staff carry multitude roles and perform various responsibilities and functions so as to be able to disseminate their duties. The Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres (DTRC) are manned by staff who work with clients of various level and type of drug addiction. Due to the nature of their work and the kind of people they are dealing with on a daily basis, it is inevitable that they would be experiencing a lot of stress in their duties. The stress level of the DTRC staff can be gauged by a number of stressors that are likewise associated with the health and caregiving professions. These stressors include time pressures, workload, multiple roles and emotional issues (Lambert, et al., 2004; Lim, Hepworth & Bogossian, 2011; McCann, Beddoe, McCormic, Huggard, Kedge, Adamson & Huggard, 2013).

While some stress in a person's life can be motivating, frequent and perpetual stress in a work environment particularly those relating to human pain and distress, can create a lot of unhealthy impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of the health professionals. Drug caregivers often face a lot of difficulties in treating their clients. Thus, their resilience is important as without resilience, they may give up and their clients may suffer and become more prone to relapse due to the lack of effective treatment and support.

Resilience is often used in this kind of context for staff who are able to be less affected by the stress they experience in their workplace. From another perspective, resilience simply means having the power to bounce back after a defeat of some sort. If an individual can survive these stress and pressures, and then he/she certainly possesses resilience. There is an abundance of research looking at resilience and

stress and in particular, focus has been given to healthcare practitioners, teachers and other caregivers. However, so far, no attention has been given to the caregivers or staff working at the government's DTRCs in Malaysia, although there has been some research conducted about the programs organized by AADK from 2009 to 2015. While other studies (Zainah, Rohany, Asmawati, Rozainee & Fatimah, 2014; Augustin & Haque, 2011) conducted focussed on clients. This study focused on the influence of forgiveness on resilience among DTRCs staff in Malaysia.

### Resilience

Resilience is considered as a personal trait and Connor and Davidson (2003) described resilience as personal qualities that enable the individual to thrive in the face of adversity. These personal qualities include strong internal resources, optimism, positive emotions, self-esteem, self-efficacy, humour, a sense of purpose in life, positive interpersonal relationships, and creativity. These qualities are categorized as personality traits and effective coping strategies which can be developed over time and can also enhance the individual's resiliency skills (Resnick & Inguito, 2011).

### Forgiveness

The concept of forgiveness is frequently associated with negative thoughts, feelings or behaviors hence, forgiveness can be simply known as a strategy that one adopts in order to transform one's responses toward transgression so that one's emotional stability is maintained. Thompson et al. (2005) noted that the ability to have forgiveness first involves the acknowledgement of the occurrence of those transgressions or misbehaviors. It then proceeds to the level of reframing that occurrence and this entails the related cognitive, emotional or behavioral process to take place concurrently so that it allows forgivers

to reconstruct the person's negative responses to the transgression experienced.

Forgiveness is considered to be a dialectical process because people who can forgive or the forgivers, integrate their personal assumptions and the reality of the transgression into a brand-new understanding of the whole incident. This process encompasses their perception towards transgressors, themselves as being transgressed and other people as well as the world. Therefore, the process of forgiveness involves a creation of new narratives regarding the transgression and transgressor, along with the forgivers. The process may also be accompanied by feelings and motivations underlying the forgivers' behavior. All of these serve as indicators of determining whether the forgivers are forgiving. In this regard, one's justice-seeking behavior noted with the underlying motivation of preventing crimes committed by the same transgressor might be perceived as forgiving. Conversely, one who pursues legal justice for a transgression with the intention of seeking revenge is illustrated as unforgiving (Thompson et al., 2005).

*The Relationship between Forgiveness and Resilience*  
 The observation that forgiveness has an impact on one's psychological well-being, there is also a possible link between forgiveness and resilience, as seen in various empirical studies. Richardson's (2002) Meta-theory of Resilience and Resiliency, for example, supports the notion that forgiveness is one of the resilient qualities. This claim is consistent with the perception derived from Wolin and Wolin (1993) who regarded resilience as a strength. They agreed that there is a need for resilient individuals to learn to let go of their painful experiences by expressing forgiveness in order to seek healing for themselves.

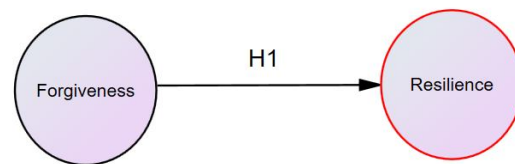
Broyles (2005) conducted a study which examined the association of psychological resilience with forgiveness among older adults. A total of 498 respondents were recruited to complete a mailed survey which include the Resilience Scale, the Trait Forgiveness Scale and a personal profile with selected demographic information. Their results revealed a statistical significant low correlation between resilience and forgiveness. It was noted that as the level of forgiveness increased, the level of resilience also increased slightly.

In accordance with Broyles's (2005) finding, Faison (2007) reported similar findings through a study involving 300 African American women. Their study aimed to explore the relationship between forgiveness and psychological resilience as well as physical and mental health. Their results illustrated a statistical significant weak correlation between forgiveness and resilience but a stronger statistical significant correlation between forgiveness and mental health. Nevertheless, there was no significant correlation

between forgiveness and physical health. As such, the findings implied that respondents who reported a higher level of forgiveness also experienced a higher level of psychological resilience in conjunction with better mental health. The outcome of this study supports the notion that respondents who were more forgiving tend to experience a greater level of self-acceptance thus, a better mental state of mind.

**Conceptual Framework And Hypotheses Development**

The basic research framework in this study is exhibited in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

To meet the research objectives and based on the conceptual framework presented above, the hypothesis is constructed as follows:

H1: Forgiveness is positively related to resilience among AADK's staff.

**II. METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted in Malaysia and it covered DTRCs that are spread across Malaysia. The locations of the study are further listed in Table 1.1 below:

**Table 1.1: Summary of DTRC**

Facilities	Abbreviation	Numbers
Cure and Care Rehabilitation Centre	CCRC	21
Cure and Care Vocational Centre	CCVC	1
Cure and Care 1Malaysia Clinic	C&C 1M	12
Cure and Care Service Centre	CCSC	43
Clients' Integration Centre ( <i>Pusat Integrasi Klien</i> )	CIC/PIK	16
Triage Centre	-	3

As can be seen, the total number of locations covered for this study came to 96 centers.

**Study Sample**

The target population of this study comprised the DRTC staff in Malaysia. In this study, a sample size of 380 respondents from a total number of 3,533 DTRC staff were randomly selected. Based on the sampling adequacy of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), it was found that the sample size of 380 is more than adequate to provide reliable and valid results.

The profile of the sample is that majority of them were males, with more than half (313/380) or 82.37 percent of them as compared to only 17.63 percent (67/380) females. A majority of 63.68 percent were 35 years old and below. About 16 percent possessed at least a bachelor degree while the rest had a diploma

or a higher school certificate. In terms of marital status, 86.84 percent were married while 12.11 percent of them were single and an extremely small percentage of 0.79% were divorced. In regards to their length of services, it appears that majority of the respondents (202/380) or 53.16 percent have worked between six to 10 years. This is followed by 32.63 percent (124/380) who have worked more than 10 years. Only 10.26 percent (39 persons) have worked 3 years or less and 3.95 percent (15 persons) have worked between 4 and 5 years.

**Measures**

**Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS)**

The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) (Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, Michael, Rasmussen, Billings, Heinze, Neufeld, Shorey, Roberts, Roberts & Thompson, 2015) is an 18-items self-report scale which aims to measure people’s dispositional forgiveness of self, others and situations. The scale has three subscales namely, forgiveness of self (item 1 to 6), forgiveness of others (item 7 to 12) followed by forgiveness of situations (item 13 to 18).

Respondents rated their levels of forgiveness based on a 7-points Likert Scale with score 1 reflecting ‘almost always false of me’ and score 7 reflecting ‘almost always true of me’. Out of 18 items listed, items 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17 are reverse coded.

The HFS demonstrated desirable psychometric properties with adequate internal consistency reliability, test-retest reliability and convergent validity. The test-retest reliability is .82 and the range of alpha coefficient is .82 to .87 for the total HFS scores (Thompson et al., 2005). Therefore the HFS is considered as suitable to be use in this study.

**Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)**

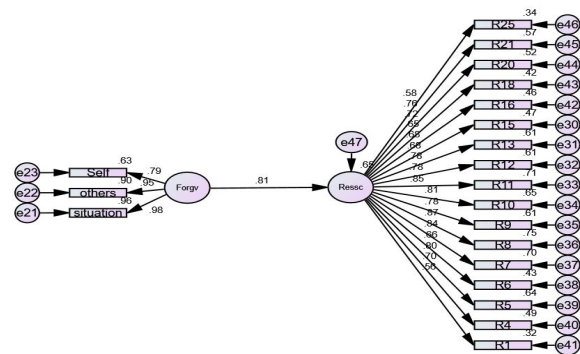
Numerous resilience measurements have been introduced in the resilience literature. Among all of the resilience measures identified from past studies, the choices were narrowed down to the one most frequently used the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003). This is has been identified to be measures of resilience which address the personality aspects of resilience and they have been used quite frequently by other researchers. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale was drawn from a qualitative study with 24 women who had adapted successfully to a major life event in their lives. The scale consists of 25 items based on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The possible score falls within the range of 25 to 175 whereby higher scores would indicate higher levels of resilience.

**III. FINDINGS**

**Hypothesis Testing**

Amos version 21 and SPSS version 20 was utilized to conduct the data analysis. A Two-stage approach was

utilized to minimize the changes to avoid any interaction between the structural and the measurement models (Hair et al, 2010). First, the measurement model for each construct was independently tested for validity and reliability. Construct validity for this study was met with each indicator variables arrived at a minimum value of 0.5 for standardized regression weight (Hair et al, 2010). For reliability testing, the Cronbach’s alpha value was above 0.70, which indicated the existence of internal consistency (Hair et al, 2010) while composite reliability is a measure of the overall reliability of a collection of heterogeneous (Fornel and Larcker, 1981) also met the value of 0.70 (Raykoy, 1997). The standardized loadings are larger than 0.5, all average variance extract (AVE) value exceed 0.5, Composite reliability and Cronbach’s alpha value exceeded 0.70. Thus, the scale has a good convergent validity (Gefen, 2000), discriminant validity requirement been well fulfilled (Kline, 1998) and all Cronbach’s (Nunnally, 1978).



**Figure 2. The relationship between forgiveness and resilience**

The second stage of the two-stage approach involved examining the structural model to test the research hypotheses. The result of factor loading of forgiveness and resilience were found to be good fit. Table 1.6 summarized the goodness-of-fit index, it was revealed that the models met the level of goodness-of-fit for this study.

**Table 1.6: Fitness Indexes indicate the fitness of the construct**

Fitness Category	Benchmark	GDF	Model Index Value	Comments
Absolute Fit	< 0.08	RMSEA	0.08	The required level is
Incremental Fit	> 0.90	CFI	0.928	achieved
Parsimonious Fit	< 5.00	Chi/df	3.990	

**IV. IMPLICATION AND DISCUSSION**

The conceptual framework developed in this study predicted that forgiveness would have a direct relationship with resilience. The results from analysis of the data indicate that a significant and positive relationship exists between forgiveness and resilience. The findings support the proposed model of the forgiveness influence resilience. Previous studies have indicated that, forgiveness is a virtue in Islam and when applied rightly, it can reduce the

tension that one experiences at work since to forgive is to disallow the misbehaviors of others to dwell within oneself and hurt one's emotions or mental state of mind. Forgiveness refers to the process of forgiving the actions of others with no tendency to take revenge (Worthington & Wade, 1999; Safaria, 2014). Forgiveness also reduces the negative effect which one holds due to the negative emotions of resentment, hatred and revenge (McCullough & Witvliet, 2002; Safaria, 2014). Thus, the release of negative emotions can lead to a happy feeling and this can get the person to become more relaxed. Consequently, the person becomes resilient to the situation at hand.

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that forgiveness is essence in creating a resilient individual. Since there were very few studies that relate forgiveness to resilience in a work setting, particularly among staff working at the drug treatment and rehabilitation facilities, the outcome of the current study serves as a novelty which presents very important empirical and practical findings. More interestingly, this study has demonstrated that forgiveness can enhance one's resilience at the workplace. Therefore, these virtues are the qualities that one should look for when employing prospective workers for the DTRCs. These virtues are also the qualities that should be nurtured and encouraged to develop among the staff working at the drug treatment and rehabilitation centers so that they are less affected by the adversities surrounding them at their respective workplace. Overall, this study has shown that forgiveness, is positive, affective and cognitive coping mechanisms which can help the DTRC staff and those working in similar work conditions and situations to cope with stress and adversities. In that regard, the level of resilience among the staff can be heightened. In this regard, it becomes necessary to increase efforts to nurture forgiveness among the staff. In conclusion, this study has provided a strong structural model which was able to show the effects of forgiveness on resilience. It is hoped that the outcomes drawn from this study can be used to develop more effective strategies which can ensure that the staff attached to the respective DTRCs can gain a higher level of resilience which can help them to perform their roles and responsibilities in a professional and exemplary manner.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Augustin, C. V. & Haque, S. (2011). Cognitive factors of male drug users & abusers, *Malaysia Anti-Drugs Journal*, 7(1), June, 133-136
- [2] Bugay, Asli; Demir, Ayhan; Delevi, Raquel. (2012). Assessment of Reliability and Validity of the Turkish Version of Heartland Forgiveness Scale. *Psychological Reports*, 111(2), 575-584

- [3] Connor, K. K., Y Davidson, J. R. T. (2003). Development of a new resilience scale: the Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC), *Depression and Anxiety*, 18, 76-82
- [4] Downey, R. A. (2014). Exploring job stress among drug court personnel, Dissertations, Paper 266, The Aquila Digital Community, The University of Southern Mississippi, <http://aquila.usm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1284&context=dissertations>
- [5] Fornel, C., & Larcker, D.F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50.
- [6] Gefen, D., Straub, D.W. and Boudreau, M.C. (2000), "Structural equation modeling and regression; guidelines for research practice", *Communication of the Association for Information System*, Vol. 4 No. 7, pp. 1-70.
- [7] Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. 2010. *Multivariate data analysis: A global perspective* (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- [8] Kline, R.B. (1998). *Principles and practice of structural equation modelling*. New York, NY: The Guildford Press
- [9] Lambert, V. A., Lambert, C. E., Itano, J., Inouye, J., Kim, S., Kuniviktikul, W., ... Ito, M. (2004). Crosscultural comparison of workplace stressors, ways of coping and demographic characteristics as predictors of physical and mental health among hospital nurses in Japan, Thailand, South Korea and the USA (Hawaii). *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 41(6), 671-684. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2004.02.003>
- [10] Lim, J., Hepworth, J., & Bogossian, F. (2011). A qualitative analysis of stress, uplifts and coping in the personal and professional lives of Singaporean nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 67(5), 1022-1033. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2010.05572>
- [11] Luthans, Fred. (2009). Successful vs. effective real managers. *Change management*, 410-419
- [12] McCann, C. M., Beddoe, E., McCormick, K., Huggard, P., Kedge, S., Adamson, C., & Huggard, J. (2013). Resilience in the health professions: A review of recent literature. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 3(1), 60-81. doi:10.5502/ijw.v3i1.4
- [13] McCullough, M. E., & Witvliet, C. V. (2002). The psychology of forgiveness", In Snyder, C. R., and Lopez, S. J. (Eds), *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 446-458
- [14] Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [15] Raykov, T. (1997). Estimation of composite reliability for congeneric measures. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 21(2), 173-184.
- [16] Rees, C. S., Breen, L. J., Cusack, L. & Hegney, D. (2015). Understanding individual resilience in the workplace: the international collaboration f workforce resilience model, *Hypothesis and Theory Article*, 6(73), February, 1-7
- [17] Resnick BA, Inguito PL. (2011). The Resilience Scale: Psychometric Properties and Clinical Applicability in Older Adults. *Arch Psychiatr Nurs*. 25:11-20.
- [18] Richardson, G. E. (2002). The metatheory of resilience and resiliency, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 58(3), 307-321
- [19] Safaria, T. (2014). Forgiveness, gratitude, and happiness among college students, *International Journal of Public Health Sciences*, 3(4), 241-245
- [20] Shatte, A. & Bruce, J. (2015). The science behind resilience, a study of psychometric measures & business outcomes, meQuilibrium, New Life Solutions, Inc., retrieved from <https://www.mequilibrium.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The-Science-Behind-Resilience-12-22.pdf>

- [21] Stamm, B.H. (2010). The Concise ProQOL Manual, 2nd Ed. Pocatello, ID: ProQOL.org
- [22] Thompson, L. Y., Snyder, C. R. & Hoffman, L. (2005). Heartland forgiveness scale, Faculty Publications, Department of Psychology, Paper 452
- [23] Thompson, L. Y., Snyder, C. R., Hoffman, L., Michael, S. T., Rasmussen, H. N., Billings, L. S. et al. (2005). Dispositional forgiveness of self, others, and situations. *Journal of Personality*, 73(2), 313–359.
- [24] Worthington, E. L., & Wade, N. G. (1999). The social psychology of unforgiveness and implications for clinical practice, *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology*, vol. 18, pp. 385-418
- [25] Zainah, A. Z., Rohany, N., Asmawati, D., Rozainee, K. & Fatimah, Y. (2014). Family functioning, cognitive distortion and resilience among clients under treatment in Drug Rehabilitation Centres in Malaysia, *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 140: 150-154

★ ★ ★