

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MOTHERS' PARENTING ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT CHILD-REARING AND CHILDREN'S RESILIENCE AND HAPPINESS (QOL) IN MALAYSIA

Aminah Ayob¹; Poh-Tin Tan²; Mazlina Che Mustafa¹, Iylia Dayana Shamsudin³; Norazilawati Abdullah¹, Masayu Dzainudin¹, Norsayyidatina Che Rozubi³, and NorMashitah Mohd Radzi³

¹ National Child Development Research Centre, Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), Malaysia.

² Public Health Trained Paediatrician, Malaysia

³ Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), Malaysia.

ABSTRACT

This study is part of an international collaborative research project to compare the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the quality of life and wellbeing of childrens ages 5 and 7 years old in 8 countries in Asia. This report exclusively referred to the outcome of the study conducted in Malaysia.

Purpose of the study: This study examines the state of children's resilience and happiness (QOL), mothers' perspective of childrearing and their childrearing attitude and the impact of mothers' childrearing attitude on their children's resilience and happiness (QOL).

Method: The study used questionnaire survey techniques via online using a questionnaire developed by the CRNA research team with input from members of eight Asian countries involved. For the measurement of children's resilience, the study used the 'Person Most Knowledgeable-Child & Youth Resilience Measure-Revised' (PMK-CYRM-R) developed by the Resilience Research Center (RRC). Meanwhile for measurement of children's happiness, the research adopted the original questionnaire for Measuring Health-Related Quality of Life in Children and Adolescents, also known as the KINDL-QOL developed by Ravens-Sieberer & Bullinger (2000). The samples were 250 mothers of children ages 5 and 7 years respectively.

Analysis: Simple and multiple linear regression analyses were used to explore factors associated with children's resilience and happiness and parental attitude and perception, as well as emphasized aspects of childrearing and marital support. An independent two-sample t-test was used to compare samples of 5 and 7 years old. Pearson correlation was used to evaluate the interrelationship between PMK-CYRM-R and KINDL-QOL and other measured variables. Factor analysis (using ML, Promax, 2 factors) and regression models were used to identify the latent constructs underlying Parenting Attitude.

Results. On average children's resilience are generally moderate and high for children ages 5 and 7 years old respectively. Analysis of caregiver resilience shows almost similar result as that of children's personal resilience. Three dominant factors contributed to children's happiness were feeling of self-worth (self-esteem), good family relationship (family) and having friends around. In addition, children's resilience correlates significantly with happiness (QOL) for both age groups of children. There were no statistical differences found between children's resilience and happiness and no differences found between boys and girls for both age groups. The findings also showed the majority of mothers exhibited positive parenting attitude rather than negative and punitive attitudes; and positive attitude correlate significantly with children's resilience and happiness (QOL). Lastly, spouse's support also found to be the important contributing factor toward children's happiness and their quality of life.

Conclusion: Children's resilience and happiness (QOL) depend on the well-being of their parents and other caregivers during the challenging times. While there are many factors associated with resilience, many studies highlighted parents-child and family relationships are the fundamental building block. Recommendation for further research was given in the report.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought two years of fear and anxiety, loneliness and lockdown to people all over the world, including Malaysia. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting every aspect of people's lives in an unprecedented manner. While many of its implications, economically and emotionally such as confinement-related psychological distress and social distancing measures affect all of society - different age groups experience these impacts in distinct ways. The children are described as the most vulnerable groups to feel the impact due to these adverse experiences (UNICEF, 2020; 2021).

In Malaysia, the rate of unemployment rose to 4.8% in 2021 from 4.5% in 2020 according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia and a total of 9,015 domestic violence cases were recorded since the start of the movement control order (lockdown) in February 2020 until September 2021 - a 20% increase from before (The Star, 23 September 2021). The full impacts and length of the crisis inadvertently poses very real risks to children. Temporary school closures exacerbated these tendencies, as parents look for new ways to allocate children's time at home.

This report represents Malaysia's study of the state of its children's resilience and happiness (QOL) during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of a collaborative research with seven other countries in Asia organized and supported by the Child Research Network Asia (CRNA) housed in Japan. This report focuses on the state of children's resilience and happiness (QOL) after experiencing the adversity that the pandemic has caused into their lives, and the association between parental attitude, emphasized aspects of childrearing practices, and marital support with children's resilience and happiness (QOL).

Definition of Resilience

Resilience can be broadly defined as the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt and reorganize itself under conditions of adversity in ways that promote and sustain its successful functioning – for example, in human, it's their wellbeing (Ungar 2011, Masten 2014). In this study, children's resilience is defined as the ability of the child to navigate to, and negotiate for, family and social support systems that are available in order to achieve normal functionality and wellbeing because to the closure of schools/preschools and the 'lockdown' measures imposed by the government due to COVID-19 pandemic. According to Ungar (2018), *supportive relationships, close attachment bonds with a caregiver and effective parenting play an enormous role in children's resilience.*

Definition of Happiness and Quality of Life (QOL)

The word "quality of life" (QOL) is the term used by the World Health Organization (WHO) to describe the state of "well-being", i.e. the "state of complete physical health, mental and social well-being". The UNICEF defines child well-being as, *'the true measure of a nation's standing – that is how well it attends to its children - their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies in which they are born'* (Innocenti Report Card 7, 2007). This definition takes an ecological approach to child well-being, encompassing a child's life as a whole and

recognizing that all childhood experiences will contribute to their overall well-being. In a broad sense, well-being describes the determinants of a good life for children, the promoters of growth and development, and factors that enhance a child's feelings of happiness and satisfaction with life. Hence, happiness is the state of which children feel very satisfied with their lives and the social environment around them. In other words, a happy child experiences frequent positive emotions, such as joy, interest, and pride, and infrequent (though not absent) negative emotions, such as sadness, anxiety, and anger (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005).

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is to study the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on mothers' perspectives and childrearing attitude on their children's resilience and happiness (QOL).

Research questions

1. What is the state of children's resilience and happiness (QOL) after experiencing two years of disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What is the association between children's resilience and happiness (QOL) amongst the 5 and 7 years old?
3. What are the differences between 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness (QOL)?
4. How do parenting attitudes contribute to 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness (QOL)?
5. What are mothers' perception and awareness about childrearing during COVID-19 pandemic?
6. How do mothers' emphasized aspects of child-rearing contribute to 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness (QOL)?
7. How does marital support contribute to 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness (QOL)?

Null Hypothesis

Ho1: Children's resilience and happiness (QOL) do not correlate significantly among children aged 5 and 7 years old.

Ho2: Children's resilience and happiness (QOL) do not differ significantly between 5 and 7 years old.

Ho3: Parenting attitudes do not contribute significantly to children's resilience and happiness (QOL).

Ho4: Emphasized aspects of mothers' child-rearing behavior do not contribute significantly to 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness (QOL).

Ho5: Marital support does not contribute significantly to 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness (QOL).

Methodology

(i) Research Design

This is a survey research conducted via online using questionnaire developed by the CRNA research team with input from members of eight Asian countries involved. The questionnaire

was translated by a team of experts from the National Child Development Research Centre at the Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) into Malay language and the construct validity was established through 'back-translation technique' (Tyupa, 2011; van de Vijver, 2015; van de Vijver & Hambleton, 1996) and a pilot test. The online questionnaire was piloted to a small group of 5 and 7 years old mothers and adjusted according to their feedbacks. The final version of the questionnaire was sent to the CRNA research team for verification. The survey took approximately 25 to 30 minutes to complete and parents (mothers) were requested to answer all questions. Items included a mix of close-ended questions and items scored on a 4 or 5-point Likert scale.

The Google-link to the questionnaire was sent to all states agencies in charge of preschool education, to forward to all preschool teachers in their states, and the teachers, to blast the questionnaire's Google-link to parents with children aged 5 and 7 years old. Parents completed the questionnaire in mid-September 2021.

(ii) Research Instruments – the Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire consists of 21 major questions: on the demographics of children (gender, order of birth, number of siblings, sleeping hours, preschool/school attendance, and academic achievement); parents (education level, occupation before and during the pandemic); and family (marital supports in childrearing tasks and household income), as well as questionnaires for measuring resilience, happiness (QOL), mothers' attitudes, perceptions and emphasized aspects of childrearing, and also marital support received.

a) The Measure of Children's Resilience

For the measurement of children's resilience, the research used the 'Person Most Knowledgeable–Child & Youth Resilience Measure-Revised' (PMK-CYRM-R) Questionnaire - developed by Resilience Research Center (RRC)¹, Halifax, Canada. The measure, described by Windle, et al. (2011) as having the best psychometric properties and rigor, consists of 17 items - 10 of which are about children's personal resilience and 7 items about mothers' or caregiver resilience (McGarrigle & Ungar, 2018).

The PMK-CYRM-R questionnaire has been previously translated into 20 languages of the world, but not yet into the Malay language. Therefore, the reliability of the PMK-CYRM-R-Malay version was locally calculated and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the personal resilience subscale were 0.936 and 0.961 for 5 and 7 years old children respectively, while for the caregiver resilience subscale, the alpha values were 0.904 and 0.972 each for 5 and 7 years old. The high alpha coefficient values for both subscales and groups of children indicated that the scale, i.e. the PMK-CYRM-R-Malay version has good internal consistency and reliability.

b) The Measure of Children's Happiness

The research adopted the original questionnaire for Measuring Health-Related Quality of Life in Children and Adolescents, also known as the KINDL-QOL developed by Ravens-Sieberer & Bullinger (2000). The KINDL-QOL-revised questionnaire consists of 24 Likert-scaled items associated with six dimensions/subscales namely, physical well-being, emotional well-being, self-esteem, family relationship, friends, and everyday functioning. The six

¹ Resilience Research Center (2018). CYRM and ARM user manual. Halifax, NS: Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University. Retrieved from <http://www.resilienceresearch.org>

dimensions/subscales can be combined to produce a total score of happiness (QOL). However, after conducting a reliability analysis using samples from all the eight countries involved, the CRNA research team found the Cronbach's alpha for subscales 'physical well-being' and 'everyday functioning' were low for 5 and 6 countries. Therefore, by consensus, the collaborating team agreed to drop these two subscales from the statistical analysis for KINDL-QOL questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha values for four other sub-scales were around $\alpha \Rightarrow 0.1$ to $\alpha=0.9$.

While for Malaysia, the synthetic variable of the sum of the 24 items came out as 0.549 for 5 years old and 0.792 for 7 years old children – which means that the KINDL-QOL questionnaire has low reliability for the 5 years old children, but acceptable reliability for the 7 years old. However, three subscales of the KINDL-QOL questionnaire, the 'self-esteem', 'family relationship' and 'friends' were found to have good alpha values for one or both age groups (for example, $\alpha_{\text{self-esteem}} = 0.78$ and 0.87 for both age groups respectively, $\alpha_{\text{family relationship}} = 0.92$ and 0.93 also for both age groups respectively, and $\alpha_{\text{friends}} = 0.56$ only for 7 years old group). Henceforth, these three subscales of the KINDL-QOL questionnaire were used for the synthetic analysis in this study.

c) Parenting Attitudes Questionnaire

Factor analysis was done using the maximum likelihood method and promax rotation, with fixed two factors to investigate variable/item relationships in the questionnaire. Two factors were fixed as the parenting attitude generally can be referred as positive and negative attitude. The KMO value is 0.789 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954; Pallant, 2016) was significant indicating that the sample is adequate and factor analysis is warranted. Factor 1 is accounted for 33.59% of variances, while Factor 2 is accounted for 15.49% of variances from the total variances. All seven items referred to the positive parenting attitude load into Factor 1, meanwhile the three items referred to the negative parenting attitude loaded into Factor 2. The following Table 2 showed the structure and pattern matrix for the factor analysis completed.

Table 1. Structure and pattern matrix

Q8: Item	Factor	Structure matrix	Pattern matrix	Communalities
1. I provide an environment where my child can work on what he/she wants to do.	1	0.744	0.744	0.553
2. I am proud when my child does something well.	1	0.742	0.738	0.553
3. I respond to my child's needs.	1	0.677	0.681	0.461
4. We have physical contact.	1	0.600	0.600	0.360
5. When my child is about to do something, I don't interfere and watch them through to the end (except when it's dangerous).	1	0.542	0.548	0.299
6. I provide opportunities for playing and experiencing things that expand my child's interests.	1	0.527	0.512	0.312
7. I talk to my child in a warm and gentle manner.	1	0.525	0.532	0.283
8. I hit my child when he/she doesn't listen to me.	2	0.542	0.542	0.294
9. If my child makes a mistake, I become very critical of him/her.	2	0.514	0.523	0.276
10. I let my emotions get the best of me when disciplining my child.	2	0.456	0.451	0.212

Data Analysis

Simple and multiple linear regression analyses were used to explore factors associated with children's resilience and happiness (QOL), parental attitude, emphasized aspects of childrearing practices and marital support. An independent two-sample t-test was used to compare samples of 5 and 7 years old. Pearson correlation was used to evaluate the interrelationship between PMK-CYRM-R and KINDL-QOL and other measured variables. Factor analysis methods (Maximum Likelihood/ML, Promax, 2 factors factoring) and regression models were used to identify the latent constructs underlying Parenting Attitude. Two distinct clusters emerged from the analysis: (i) a 'warm, responsive and permissive' or positive parenting attitude, and (ii) a 'sad, hostile and punitive' or negative parenting attitude. The Cronbach's alpha for the 'positive attitude' construct was 0.793 and the 'negative attitude' construct was $\alpha=0.491$. All missing data or 'no answer' options were eliminated from the analysis.

The demographic factors as independent variables were built-in to identify factors associated with resilience (CYRM-R) and happiness (KINDL-QOL). Descriptive statistics were used to examine the characteristics of the respondents and the measured variables.

Information of Demographic Background of the Study

The focus of the study is children aged five and seven years old. The total sample is 250 for each category of age. The gender representation is approximately equal. The order of birth for the majority of the sample is either the first or second child (Table 2).

About 60% of children were living in a 'lockdown' situation at the time this study was conducted; 30% were not attending schools and about 70% were learning via remote learning (online) programs.

Table 2: Children's demographic information

• Gender	5 years old (%)	7 years old (%)
Boys	47.2	50.4
Girls	52.8	49.6
• Order of birth	5 years old (%)	7 years old (%)
first	50.8	43.2
second	25.2	24.0
third	15.6	18.0
>fourth	8.4	14.8
• School attendance	5 years old (%)	7 years old (%)
attends	30.8	26.8
hybrid	66.0	71.2
Not attend	3.2	2.0

In terms of mothers' educational background, the majority of the mothers are high school leavers and still have permanent jobs during the pandemic, although approximately 45% to 50% of mothers for children aged five and seven years old are housewives (Table 3).

Table 3. Parents' demographic information

	5 year-olds (n=250)		7 year-olds (n=250)	
	Mother (%)	Spouse (%)	Mother (%)	Spouse (%)
Highest educational level				
• Compulsory education	1.2	2.8	4.0	8.0
• Secondary education	62.8	66.8	59.2	62.0
• Vocational /Diploma	18.0	14.0	17.6	11.6
• Higher Education	17.2	13.2	19.2	13.2
• Others	0.8	1.2	0	2.8
• No spouse	-	2.0	-	2.4
Occupation	Mother (%)	Spouse (%)	Mother (%)	Spouse (%)
• Employed	50.4	88.4	53.2	73.2
• Unemployed	49.6	7.6	44.0	14.8
• Others	0.0	2.0	2.8	10.0
Household income	5 years old (%)		7 years old (%)	
• Upper	11.2		14.8	
• Middle	12.8		16.8	
• Lower	76.0		68.4	
Change of income during pandemic	5 years old (%)		7 years old (%)	
• Decreased	35.2		39.6	
• Not changed	51.6		32.4	
• Increased	0.0		2.0	
• Do not know	13.2		26.0	

In terms of household income, the data shows parents of children aged five and seven years old respectively are from lower income group; 45% claimed that their income decreased, and 50% stated that their income has not changed since the pandemic. Meanwhile, 15% of the parents lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they had to take on two or three jobs to make ends meet.

Table 4. The COVID-19 Pandemic Situation

Lockdown measures	5 years old (%)	7 years old (%)
• Yes	59.2	58.4
• No	40.8	41.6
Vaccination status of mothers		
• Yes	94.0	96.8
• No	6.0	3.2
Satisfaction toward COVID-19 measures by the government		
• Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied	80.0	81.2
• Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16.0	12.4
• Fairly dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied	4.0	6.4
Concerns toward spread of infection		
• Very concerned/Fairly concerned	99.6	99.6
• Neither concerned nor unconcerned	0.0	0.0
• Fairly unconcerned/Very unconcerned	0.4	0.4

In summary, the children in the study were mostly from families with many siblings (average of three to four siblings), low education level, low-income and decreasing income groups. More than 60% of them were from states (in Malaysia) which were still under lockdown (MCO) and that the schools/preschools were still not opened for face-to-face learning. Thus, the majority of the children had their lessons through the online learning platforms and the educational TV programs provided by the Ministry of Education. However, 30% of the children in this study were not attending schools/preschools. Although, about 80% mothers were satisfied with the government measures to protect the people and their children from COVID-19 pandemic, 90% of them were still very concerned about the spread of disease.

Findings

1. What is the state of children's resilience and happiness (QOL) after experiencing two years of disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- (i) The state of Children's personal resilience during the pandemic

The PMK-CYRM-R scale which was used to measure children's resilience in this study has two subscales, namely personal resilience and caregiver resilience. Table 5 showed the responses given by the 'PMK' (mothers) about their children's personal resilience.

On average about 43% of mothers of 5 years old agreed their children exhibited some degree of personal resilience, whilst 69% of 7 years old mothers indicated their children have good personal resilience. The obvious differences can be seen in the first 3 items where only around 16% of 5 years old mothers, as compared to 72% of 7 years old mothers agreed that their

children can cooperate with others or behave properly in different situations or felt their child believes getting an education or doing well in school is important.

Using the CYRM-ARM Manual (RRC, 2018) as guide, the sum of mean scores of 10 items for personal resilience was calculated. They were 25.14 scores for the 5 years old and 33.7 scores for the 7 years old, which mean, the level of personal resilience of 5 years old is moderate, and that of the 7 years old is high. The result demonstrates that the 7 years old are more resilience to hardships caused by the of the COVID-19 pandemic than the 5 years old children.

Table 5. Measure of children's personal resilience using PMK-CYRM-R Questionnaire

Item no.	PERSONAL RESILIENCE	5 years old		7 years old (%)	
		%	Mean	%	Mean
Q6-1	My child cooperates/shares with others.	16.4%	2.22	72.8%	3.39
Q6-2	My child believes getting an education/doing well in school/preschool is important	16.8%	2.28	72.0%	3.44
Q6-3	My child knows how to behave/act in different situations.	15.2%	2.17	72.4%	3.40
Q6-7	My child are fun to be with/others like him/her.	56.0%	2.70	71.2%	3.44
Q6-9	My child feels supported by their friends.	55.2%	2.69	61.6%	3.16
Q6-10	My child feels he/she fits in at school/preschool.	52.8%	2.54	71.2%	3.39
Q6-12	My child has friends who care.	59.2%	2.76	55.6%	3.09
Q6-13	My child is treated fairly.	55.6%	2.71	66.0%	3.32
Q6-14	My child is given chances to show he/she is growing up and can do things.	50.4%	2.54	68.8%	3.42
Q6-16	My child has chances to learn useful things.	53.6%	2.53	74.0%	3.57
	Average (% and Mean scores)	43.1%	2.51	68.6%	3.36
	Sum of Mean scores of 10 items (Min.10, Max.50)	25.14		33.70	
	*LEVEL OF PERSONAL RESILIENCE	Moderate level		High level	

*Score of 10-20 = low; 21-30 = moderate; 31-40 = high; 41-50 = Exceptional resilience.

(The percentage values in the table above are the addition of Likert scale 3 and 5 ('somewhat' and 'a lot' which means 'setuju' and 'sangat setuju' in Malay – which indicate the degree of agreement by the respondent to the statements.)

(ii) Children's caregiver resilience during the pandemic

Analysis of children's caregiver resilience shows almost similar result (Table 6) as that of children's personal resilience (Table 5). The average percentage of 7 items scored by mothers'/caregivers' of 5 years old was 42% and that of 7 years old was 77%. Using the CYRM-ARM Manual (RRC, 2018), the level of 5 years old children's caregiver resilience was inferred as moderate and that of 7 years old as high. The result demonstrates that the parent/caregiver resilience of 7-year-old children is higher than that of 5-year-olds in facing the adversity of the pandemic.

Table 6. Measure of caregiver resilience using PMK-CYRM-R Questionnaire

Item no.	CAREGIVER RESILIENCE [PMK-CYRM-R]	5 years old		7 years old (%)	
		%	Mean	%	Mean
Q6-4	My child has a parent(s)/caregiver(s) who knows where he/she is and what he/she is doing.	17.2%	2.22	80.8%	3.56
Q6-5	My child has a parent(s)/caregiver(s) who knows a lot about his/her feelings.	18.0%	2.20	76.8%	3.57
Q6-6	My child has enough to eat at home when he/she is hungry.	58.0%	2.87	78.8%	3.59
Q6-8	My child talk to his/her family/caregiver(s) about his/her feels.	60.8%	2.95	71.6%	3.48
Q6-11	My child has a family/caregiver who cares.	57.6%	2.97	76.4%	3.64
Q6-15	My child feels safe when with family/caregiver(s)	54.4%	2.62	79.6%	3.76
Q6-17	My child likes the way his/her family/caregiver(s) celebrates things (like holidays or culture)	30.0%	2.30	77.6%	3.63
	Average (% and Mean scores)	42.3%	2.59	77.4%	3.60
	Sum of mean scores of 7 items (Min.7, Max.35)	18.14		25.23	
	** LEVEL OF CAREGIVER RESILIENCE	Moderate level		High level	

**Scores of 7.0-13.5 = low; 14.0-20.5 = moderate; 21.0-27.5 = high; 28-35 = exceptional resilience. (The percentage values in the table above are the addition of Likert scale 3 and 5 ('somewhat' and 'a lot' which means 'setuju' and 'sangat setuju' in Malay) –to indicate the degree of agreement by the respondent to the statement.

(iii) The measure of children's happiness (QOL) during the pandemic

Children's happiness was measured using KINDL-QOL questionnaire which has 6 subscales. Due to low reliability of the Malay-translated version of the questionnaire, only 3 subscales are described in this study. Table 7. Measure of Children's happiness using KINDL-QOL Questionnaire

Subscale Self-esteem		5 years old	7 years old
Q7-9	My child was proud of him-/herself	53.6%	52.4%
Q7-10	My child felt on top of the world	60.0%	40.8%
Q7-11	My child felt pleased with him-/herself	62.0%	49.2%
Q7-12	My child had lots of good ideas	83.6%	57.2%
	Average (%)	64.8%	49.9%
Subscale Family relationship		5 years old	7 years old
Q7-13	My child got on well with us as parents	88.4%	84.0%
Q7-14	My child felt fine at home	24.4%	83.2%
Q7-15	We quarrel at home	10.0%	8.8%
Q7-16	My child felt that I was bossing him/her	45.2%	9.6%
	Average (%)	42.0%	46.4%
Subscale Friends		5 years old	7 years old
Q7-17	My child played with friends.	68.4%	34.0%
Q7-18	My child was liked by other kids	76.0%	66.0%
Q7-19	My child got along well with friends	17.2%	69.2%
Q7-20	My child felt different from other children	52.4%	12.0%
	Average (%)	53.5%	45.3%

(* the percentage shown is sum of Likert scales 'often' and 'all the time' - to indicate mothers' agreement to the statement).

The results in Table 7 showed, on average 5 and 7 years old mothers/caregivers are quite divided in their views about their children's happiness (QOL) on the three subscales. For examples, 65% of 5 years old mothers think that their children very often have high self-esteem, but only 50% of 7 years old mothers think so. In contrast, only 42% and 46.4% of 5 and 7 years old mothers respectively think that their children are having good family relationship. With regard to friendships, 53.5% of mothers of 5 years old agreed that their children have many friends to play with and got along well with, whilst only 45.3% of 7 years old mothers said so about their children.

2. What is the association between children's resilience and happiness (QOL) amongst the 5 and 7 years old?

Spearman's correlation analysis was used to find out the relationship between children's resilience and happiness (QOL). Result of the analysis confirmed that there is a significant positive correlation between children's resilience and happiness (QOL) for both, 5 years old and 7 years old children. The Spearman's coefficient value for 5 years old is $r=0.243^{**}$ ($p<0.01$) and for the 7 years old the value is $r=0.419^{**}$ ($p<0.01$).

3. What are the differences between 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness (QOL)? (Mann-Whitney U test)

The Mann-Whitney U test was performed and there were statistical differences found for both children's resilience ($U = 50236$, $p < 0.01$) and happiness (QOL) ($U = 45579$, $p < 0.01$) according to their age groups. Seven years old children's resilience is higher than five years old children with median rank of 326.4 and 174.5, respectively. Similarly, 7 years old children's happiness (QOL) is higher than the 5 years old children's happiness (QOL) with median rank of 307.8 and 193.2, respectively.

Children's resilience and happiness (QOL) do not differ among boys and girls (U -Resilience = 31810.0, $p > 0.05$; U -Happiness (QOL) = 32211.5, $p > 0.05$). Median rank for resilience (Boys = 248.1, Girls = 252.8) and happiness (QOL) (Boys = 246.49, Girls = 254.33) are generally similar for both gender groups.

4. How do parenting attitudes contribute to 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness?

(i) Parental Attitude and Children's Resilience

Parenting attitude was categorized into two components, positive (warm, permissive, responsive) and negative (punitive). The findings in Table 8 show 48.2% and 46.5% of mothers exhibited positive attitudes toward both 5 and 7 years old children. The mean scores for both

groups are almost the same. Meanwhile, 24.3% of mothers for both age groups exhibited negative attitudes toward their children.

Table 8. Parental attitude (Q8) and Children's Resilience (Q6)

Parenting attitudes (Q8)	5 years old		7 years old		Correlation Q8 and Q6 - Personal resilience	Correlation Q8 and Q6 – Caregiver resilience	Correlation Q8 and Q6 – Overall resilience
	%	Mean	%	Mean			
Positive attitude	48.2	3.323	46.5	3.317	$r=0.183^{**}, p<.01$	$r=0.205^{**}, p<.01$	$r=0.189^{**}, p<.01$
Negative attitude	24.3	2.62	24.3	2.43	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant

There was significant positive correlation between positive parenting attitude and overall resilience ($r=0.189, p<0.01$). This positive attitude was also significantly correlated with children's personal resilience and caregiver's resilience in the same direction ($r_{\text{personal resilience}}=0.183, p<0.01$; $r_{\text{caregiver resilience}}=0.205, p<0.01$). Meanwhile, there was no significant correlation found between negative parenting attitude and children's resilience for both subscales.

(ii) Parental Attitude and Children's Happiness (QOL)

Children's happiness (QOL) in this study is described in three subscales: self-esteem, family relationship, and friends.

Table 9. Parental attitude (Q8) and Children's happiness (QOL) (Q7)

Q7: Measure of Happiness (KINDL-QOL)	Correlation between Q7 and Q8 - Positive attitude	Correlation between Q7 and Q8 - Negative attitude.
Q7-1: Self esteem	$r=0.291^{**}, p<0.01$	$r= - 0.066, p>.05$ (Not significant)
Q7-2: Family	$r=0.158^{**}, p<0.01$	$r= - 0.122^{**}, p<0.01$
Q7-3: Friends	$r=0.131^{**}, p<0.01$	$r= - 0.034, p>.05$ (Not significant)
Q7: Overall	$r=0.241^{**}, P<0.01$	$r= - 0.095^*, p<0.05$

The findings show significant positive correlation between positive parenting attitude and overall children's happiness ($p<0.01, r=0.241$) as well as for all the subscales. However, the finding also showed inverse (negative) correlation between negative parenting attitude with family relationship subscales ($r= - 0.122^{**}, p<0.01$) and overall children's happiness ($p<0.05, r=-0.095$). These findings mean that strict and punitive parenting attitude is detrimental to children's relationship with their families and their happiness (QOL).

5. What are mothers' perception and awareness about childrearing during COVID-19 pandemic?

Child-rearing perception and awareness is described in six items: trying to be a good parent, child has grown fairly well, enjoyable role, parents do not have to be with him/ her all the time, as much support as possible, and concerned about children's inferiority. There were differences of mother's perception as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Mothers' childrearing perception and awareness during the COVID-19 pandemic

Q16: Child-rearing perception and awareness	5 years old	7 years old
1. Overstrain myself trying to be a good parent	16%	56.4%
2. Child has grown fairly well.	18.4%	91.6%
3. Childrearing is enjoyable and a happy role.	59.6%	97.6%
4. Parents do not have to be with him/ her all the time.	40.8%	56.0%
5. As much support as possible.	42.4%	58.0%
6. Concerned whether my child is inferior to other children.	31.2%	67.2%

(* the percentage shown in the table above` is a combined of two scales, 'very much so' and 'fairly so', indicating mothers' agreement to the statement).

The findings show that 84% of mothers of 5 years old felt less strain in trying to be a good parent and 59.6% enjoyed the parenting role. While only 18.4% of mothers felt that their child has grown fairly well, 68.8% are less concerned whether their child is inferior to other children.

Although 56.4% of mothers of 7 years old overstrain themselves in trying to be a good parent, 97.6% enjoyed the parenting role and 91.6% perceived that their child has grown fairly well. However, 67.2% were concerned whether their child is inferior to other children.

The higher level of strain to become a good parent for 7 years old compared to 5 years old may be due to higher stress in managing learning from home for their 7 year old during the Movement Control Order / Lockdown due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

6. How do emphasized aspects of child-rearing contribute to 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness (QOL)?

Emphasized aspects of child-rearing can be divided into two factors, namely social emotional skills and miscellaneous. The social emotional skills consist of the followings; i) to help the child acquire social manners/follow rules, ii) to encourage basic daily habits, iii) to encourage the child to care about others, and iv) to let the child express his/her feelings and thoughts. The miscellaneous includes various educational aspects such as broaden children's interests and experiences.

Table 11 shows on average 98.4% of mothers of 5 years old emphasized social emotional skills and 89.3% emphasized miscellaneous aspects. Meanwhile 97.2% of mothers of 7 years old emphasized social emotional skills and 90.5% emphasized miscellaneous aspects. Overall, mothers' perception of both aspects are high.

Table 11. Correlation between Emphasized Aspects of Childrearing and Children's Resilience and Happiness (QOL).

Q17: Emphasized aspects of childrearing	5 years old	7 years old	Correlation of Q17 with Resilience (Q6) & Happiness-QOL (Q7)
• Social-emotional skills	98.4%	97.2%	Q17 & Q6 -Resilience: Not significant Q17 & Q7 - Happiness-QOL: $r=0.169^{**}$, $p<0.01$
• Miscellaneous	89.3%	90.5%	

(* the percentage shown above is sum of two Likert scales, 'very much so' and 'fairly so' – indicating mothers' agreement to the statement).

The findings show no significant correlation between emphasized aspects of child rearing and children's resilience ($p > 0.01$). However, there is a significant positive correlation between emphasized aspects of child rearing and children's happiness (QOL) ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.169$).

7. How does marital support contribute to 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness (QOL)?

Marital support can be divided into two factors, namely childcare support and emotional support. The childcare support consists of the followings; i) Plays with the child, ii) Talks with the child, iii) Teaches the child and iv. Looks after the child. Meanwhile the emotional support consists of i) Splits house chores, ii) Listens to childcare concerns, iii) Understands childcare, housework, work difficulties, etc. iv) Supports stress relief, and v) Considers how to cope with COVID-19, together.

Analysis showed 92.4% and 91.5% of mothers of 5 and 7 years old received childcare support from their spouses, while 92.3% and 89.7% of 5 and 7 years old mothers also received emotional support from their spouses. Overall, the results showed both categories of marital support received by mothers are high.

The findings also show significant correlation between childcare support and children's happiness (QOL) ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.169$). However, there are no significant correlation for the rest.

Table 12. Correlation between Marital Support and Children's Resilience and Happiness

Q19: Marital Support	5 years old	7 years old	Correlation of Q19 with Q6 & Q7
• Childcare Support (CS)	92.4%	91.5%	CS & Q6: Resilience (Not Significant) CS & Q7: Happiness ($r = 0.169^{**}$, $p < 0.01$)
• Emotional Support (ES)	92.3%	89.7%	ES & Q6: Resilience (Not Significant) ES & Q7: Happiness (Not Significant)

(* the percentage shown is sum of two scales, 'very much so' and 'fairly so', to indicate mothers' agreement with the statements).

Discussion

The current study was administrated to examine the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on 5 and 7 years old children's resilience and happiness (QOL) and factors contributing toward nurturing their resilience and happiness (QOL). The results showed in general children's personal resilience are moderate and high, and personal resilience of 7 years old was higher than the 5 years old, while children's caregiver resilience shadows those of their children's personal resilience. Similar results were also reported by Cusinato, et al. (2020). It is known fact that most children are resilient and have the resources and protective factors to cope with disruptive events. They become resilient when the effect of the protective factors as in this case, their parents support outweighs the risk factors. The differences observed between

5 and 7 years old children are perhaps due to the differences in childcare experiences between younger mothers (of 5 years old) and the more matured mothers of the 7 years old children.

Childhood happiness (QOL) is multi-dimensional, which in this study, includes dimensions of self-esteem, family relationships and friendships. The results showed, in general Malaysian children are quite happy with their lives and there is a close association between children's happiness (QOL) and family relationships, self-esteem and good friendships with friends. All of these factors were found to support children's happiness (QOL) even in lockdown situations. Culturally, Malaysian mothers are generally strict and very protective of their children as they believe that it is important to instill discipline when the children are young, so that they will grow up with strong values - truly, they always have their children's best interest at heart.

Positive parenting attitudes such as responsive to children's needs, provide conducive environment to play and explore, interact to with the children in a warm and gentle manner as well as physical contact promote children's resilience and contribute significantly to the children's resilience and happiness (QOL). On the contrary, mothers who are critical and emotional do not contribute to their children's resilience (Masten, 2014; Weir, 2017). These findings support the idea that of all the factors that boost children's resilience and happiness (QOL), good parenting is often the most significant especially during the pandemic (Diniz, Brandão, Monteiro, & Verissimo, 2021; Mousavi, 2020).

The home quarantine and lockdown situation caused by the COVID-19 crisis have affected the well-being of families and challenged the ability of parents to carry out parenting responsibilities by imposing more education and care responsibilities (Mangiavacchi, et al., 2020). Despite the studies on tensions and conflicts that may increase disrupting family's wellbeing and child behavior (Coyne, et al., 2020; Cluver, et al., 2020; Wang, et al., 2020) during COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of mothers in this study received marital support from their spouses and that marital support significantly correlated with children's happiness. In the same vein, there have been studies that highlight the importance of spouses support during the pandemic (Diniz, et al., 2021; Mousavi, 2020).

Whereas previous studies have shown that longer periods of lockdown are related to worse psychological adjustment (Luo, et al., 2020 and Tull, et al., 2020), our findings suggest that children's resilience and happiness (QOL) may not be affected as long as good parenting attitudes and marital support are there. Hence, we may theorize about the importance of parental relations and competencies to positively influence child adjustment, especially during the challenging situations.

Conclusion

The pandemic has caused unpredictable and uncertain impacts that can pose a threat to the wellbeing of the children. Nevertheless, children's resilience and happiness (QOL) depends on the well-being of their parents and other caregivers during the challenging times. While there

are many factors associated with resilience, many studies highlighted parents-child and family relationships are the fundamental building block.

It is recommended for future studies to consider other factors associated with resilience such as community services which include community facilities and social support. In addition, longitudinal studies on resilience associated with the pandemic are able to provide data that illuminate trends that occur overtime. Many variables are not static, interacting dynamically and changing overtime, therefore, longitudinal methods must be employed to disentangle these relationships. Consequently, these studies may provide greater insights into the nature of the phenomenon.

Reference

- Bartlett, M.S. (1954). A note on the multiplying factors for various chi square approximations. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 16, 296-298.
- Cluver, L., Lachman, J. M., Sherr, L., Wessels, I., Krug, E., Rakotomalala, S., Blight, S., Hillis, S., Bachman, G., Green, O., Butchart, A., Tomlinson, M., Ward, C. L., Doubt, J., & McDonald, K. (2020). Parenting in a time of COVID-19. *Lancet*. 2020 Apr 11;395(10231):e64. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30736-4. Epub 2020 Mar 25.
- Coyne, L. W., Gould, E. R., Grimaldi, M., Wilson, K. G., Baffuto, G., & Biglan, A. (2020). First things first: Parent psychological flexibility and self-compassion during COVID-19. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 2020 May 6;14(4):1092-1098. doi: 10.1007/s40617-020-00435-w. eCollection 2021 Dec.
- Cusinato, M., Iannattone, S., Spoto, A., Poli, M., Moretti, C., Gatta, M., & Miscioscia, M. (2020). Stress, Resilience, and Well-Being in Italian Children and Their Parents during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2020 Nov 10;17(22):8297. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17228297.
- Diniz, E. & Brandão, T. & Monteiro, L. & Verissimo, M. (2021). Parenting and child well-being during the COVID-19 outbreak: The importance of marital adjustment and parental self-efficacy. *Análise Psicológica*. XXXIX. 277-286. 10.14417/ap.1902.
- Innocenti Report Card 7 (2007). *Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries*. Unicef Innocenti Research Centre ISSN: 1605-7317 ISBN-10: 88-89129-43-3 ISBN-13: 978-88-89129-43-2.
- Luo, M., Guo, L., Yu, M., Jiang, W., & Wang, H. (2020). The psychological and mental impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on medical staff and general public – A systematic review

and meta-analysis. *Psychiatry Res.* 2020 Sep;291:113190. doi: 10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113190. Epub 2020 Jun 7.

Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing Happiness: The Architecture of Sustainable Change. *Review of General Psychology* Copyright 2005 by the Educational Publishing Foundation 2005, Vol. 9, No. 2, 111–131 1089-2680/05/\$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/1089-2680.9.2.111

Mangiavacchi, L., Piccoli, L., & Pieroni, L. (2021). Fathers matter: Intra-household responsibilities and children's wellbeing during the COVID-19 lockdown in Italy. *Economics & Human Biology*, 42, 101016.

Masten, A. S. (2015). *Ordinary magic: Resilience in development*. Guilford Publications.

Mousavi SF (2020) Psychological Well-Being, Marital Satisfaction, and Parental Burnout in Iranian Parents: The Effect of Home Quarantine During COVID-19 Outbreaks. *Front. Psychol.* 11:553880. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.553880

Pallant, J. (2016). *SPSS survival manual* (6th ed.). Melbourne: Allen & Unwin.

Ravens-Sieberer, U., & Bullinger, M. (2000). *Manual KINDL-R. Hamburg, Germany.*

Tull, M. T., Edmonds, K. A., Scamaldo, K. M., Richmond, J. R., Rose, J. P., & Gratz, K. L. (2020). Psychological outcomes associated with stay-at-home orders, and the perceived impact of COVID-19 on daily life. *Psychiatry Res.* 2020 Jul;289:113098. doi: 10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113098. Epub 2020 May 12.

Resilience Research Centre (2018). *CYRM and ARM user manual*. Halifax, NS: Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University. Retrieved from <http://www.resilienceresearch.org>

Tull, M. T., Edmonds, K. A., Scamaldo, K. M., Richmond, J. R., Rose, J. P., & Gratz, K. L. (2020). Psychological outcomes associated with stay-at-home orders, and the perceived impact of

COVID-19 on daily life. *Psychiatry Res.* 2020 Jul;289:113098. doi: 10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113098. Epub 2020 May 12.

Tyupa, S. (2011). A theoretical framework for back-translation as a quality assessment tool. *New Voices in Translation Studies*, 7(1), 35-46.

Ungar, Michael. (2018). Systemic resilience: principles and processes for a science of change in contexts of adversity. *Ecology and Society*. 23. 10.5751/ES-10385-230434.

Ungar, M. (2011). The social ecology of resilience: addressing contextual and cultural ambiguity of a nascent construct. *The American journal of orthopsychiatry*, 81 1, 1-17.

Van de Vijver, F., & Hambleton, R. K. (1996). Translating tests. *European psychologist*, 1(2), 89-99.

Van de Vijver, F. (2015). Methodological aspects of cross-cultural research. In M. Gelfand, Y. Hong, & C. Y. Chiu (Eds.), *Handbook of advances in culture & psychology* (Vol. 5, pp. 101-160). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Wang, G., Zhang, Y., Zhao, J., Zhang, J., & Jiang, F. (2020). Mitigate the effects of home confinement on children during the COVID-19 outbreak. *The Lancet*, 2020 Mar 21;395(10228):945-947. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30547-X. Epub 2020 Mar 4.

Weir, K (2017). Maximizing children's resilience. *American Psychological Association*, 48(8).

Yoo, J. (2020). Relationships between Korean parents' marital satisfaction, parental satisfaction, and parent-child relationship quality. *J. Soc. Pers. Relationships*. 37:026540752092146.

Windle, et al. (2011). A methodological review of resilience measurement scales. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*. 2011, 9:8. Doi:10.1186/1477-7525-9-8.

Helliwell, John F., Richard Layard, Jeffrey Sachs, and Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, eds. 2021. *World Happiness Report 2021*. New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network. ISBN 978-1-7348080-1-8

UNICEF (2020). *Annual Report 2020: Responding to COVID-19* (published 2021). ISBN 978-92-806-5223-9.

APPENDIX

- A. RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE (MALAY LANGUAGE) – 5 years-old
- B. RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE ((MALAY LANGUAGE)– 7 years-old