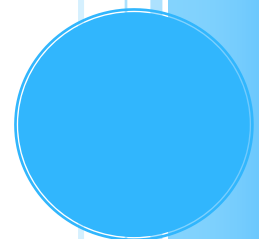# [Single fathers and life satisfaction]

Summary of Results

Dr Bronwyn Harman

Dr Craig Harms

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This study is part of a five year research program that examines which factor, or combination of factors, of resilience, social support, and self-esteem predict life satisfaction. This stage examined single fathers in Australia. Data was collected in 2011.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were recruited via online forums (such as bubhub.com.au), social media (Twitter and Facebook), personal contacts, and snowballing. They were drawn from all states and territories Australia wide. A total of 81 participants began the survey. Three responses were excluded, as those surveys were incomplete, leaving 78 responses in this data set.

THE SURVEY

Participants were asked to complete an online survey consisting of: Resilience Scale for Adults; Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support; Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; and, Satisfaction With Life Scale. Resilience items were scored 1 to 7, with higher scores denoting greater resilience. The scale is semantic style, with items 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9. 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 27, 28, and 33 reverse scored; and range of total score equals 1 to 7. Social Support items were scored 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating greater support. There are no reverse scored items, and the range of total scores equals 12 to 84. Self-esteem items were scored 0 to 3, with Strongly Agree presented on the left end of the Likert scale. Higher scores indicate greater self-esteem. Items 3, 5, 8, and 9 were reverse scored; and the range of total score equals 0 to 30. Life Satisfaction items were scored 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating greater life satisfaction and no items were reverse scored. The range of total scores equals 5 to 35.

RESULTS

The means and standard deviations for resilience ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 1.59$, range 1 to 7), social support ($M = 51.98$, $SD = 22.67$, range 12 to 84), self esteem ($M = 18.03$, $SD = 8.64$, range 0 to 30) and life satisfaction ($M = 16.44$, $SD = 8.67$, range 5 to 35) were calculated. Analysis of the data was by standard multiple regression, and all variables were entered simultaneously. In combination, the three factors assessed in this study predicted a significant and large (62%) amount of variation in life satisfaction, $F(3, 74) = 39.69$, $p < .001$. Social support and resilience (but not self esteem) made a significant and relatively equal contribution to the prediction of life satisfaction for the single fathers who participated in this study.

DISCUSSION

Overall, single fathers with greater social support or higher personal resilience were more likely to report greater life satisfaction. On average, life satisfaction was relatively low for the fathers who participated in this study. Social support and resilience were equally important factors for predicting the life satisfaction for the participants in this study. Organisations intending to provide support for single fathers should consider providing services that enhance social support as well as providing single fathers with the skills to tap into social support provided by friends, family, and community organisations.

QUERIES

Please contact Dr Bronwyn Harman, b.harman@ecu.edu.au