

UNIVERSITI MALAYA

ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

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Registration/Matric No: **EHA 080017**

Name of Degree: **Doctor of Philosophy**

Title of Project Paper/Research Report/Dissertation/Thesis (“this Work”):

**SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND STRESSORS AFFECTING WELLBEING
HIGH SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN KUALA LUMPUR: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND
BEHAVIOURAL OUTCOMES**

Field of Study:

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ABSTRACT

Past studies have found that socioeconomic status (SES) impacts social and psychological development of children and adults. Although these relationships are documented, there is ongoing debate on the operationalization of SES and the adequacy of conventional indicators of SES (occupation, education, income) in measuring the SES construct in association with wellbeing. To address this gap, this study conceptualizes individuals SES as a function of “capital”, also known as the CAPSES. The CAPSES scale is based on individual’s access to resources such as material capital, human capital and social capital. The objectives of the study is threefold; first, to demonstrate the validity of the CAPSES indicator in relation to adolescents’ psychological and behavioral wellbeing. Second, to ascertain the relationship among CAPSES, stressors, behaviour and depression. Third, to examine the mediating effect of parent, teacher and peer stressors in the relationship between SES and psychological and behavioral outcomes in adolescents. The data was obtained through survey method in secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur, supported with focus group discussions.

The study finds that CAPSES serves as a useful indicator of SES and its influence is substantial on parent stressors. The stressors variables appear to be more strongly related to adolescent psychological and behavioral outcomes than SES. Parent stressors had a significant influence over negative mood, peer and teacher stressors, while teacher stressors significantly influenced maladaptive behavior and risky behavior. It was also found that parent and peer stressors played an important role as mediators in the relationship between SES and psychological outcomes.

To further investigate the influence of CAPSES on the outcomes, the respondents were segregated according to their academic achievements (achievers and under achievers). The findings suggest respondents in the lower SES group who perform well academically are more exposed to feeling stressful with their parents and feeling negative self-esteem whereas higher SES respondents who do not perform well academically face higher possibility of feeling stressful with parents, teachers and peers. The current findings propose that interventions in school are imperative, particularly programs fostering positive peer support.

ABSTRAK

Kajian lepas mendapati terdapat kesan status sosioekonomi (SES) ke atas pembangunan sosial dan psikologi kanak-kanak dan orang dewasa. Bagaimanapun, masih terdapat banyak perbincangan dan kekurangan mengenai definisi SES dan penunjuk konvensional SES (pekerjaan, pendidikan, pendapatan) dalam mengukur kesejahteraan kanak-kanak dan remaja. Objektif utama kajian adalah untuk membuktikan kesahihan penunjuk alternatif SES yang dilabelkan sebagai CAPSES yang terdiri daripada modal aset, modal insan dan modal sosial. Objektif kedua adalah untuk menentukan hubungan antara CAPSES, tekanan, tingkah laku dan kemurungan. Objektif ketiga adalah mengkaji kesan pengantara tekanan daripada ibu bapa, guru dan rakan sebaya tekanan dalam hubungan antara SES dan psikologi dan tingkah laku di kalangan remaja.

Kajian telah mendapati CAPSES merupakan penunjuk berkesan dan berpengaruh ke atas tekanan daripada ibu bapa. Pembolehubah tekanan mempunyai kesan ketara ke atas emosi dan tingkah laku remaja. Tekanan daripada ibu bapa mempunyai kesan penting ke atas emosi remaja dan tekanan daripada rakan dan guru. Manakala tekanan daripada guru pula mempunyai kesan ke atas perlakuan remaja. Kajian juga mendapati tekanan daripada ibu bapa dan rakan memainkan peranan penting sebagai pengantara dalam hubungan antara SES dan emosi manakala tekanan daripada guru mempunyai pengaruh yang besar ke atas perlakuan.

Kajian lanjut ke atas pengaruh CAPSES dengan membahagikan responden mengikut prestasi akademik, telah menunjukkan yang responden berprestasi baik dalam akademik dan tergolong di dalam kumpulan SES rendah adalah lebih terdedah kepada rasa tertekan dengan ibu bapa mereka dan mempunyai perasaan negatif dalam diri mereka manakala

responden yang berada di dalam golongan SES tinggi dan berprestasi akademik rendah lebih merasa tekanan ibu bapa, guru dan rakan-rakan. Kajian ini mencadangkan yang campur tangan di sekolah adalah penting terutamanya melalui program yang memupuk sokongan rakan secara positif di sekolah.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious and Most Merciful.

Throughout this PhD journey, I have been fortunate to know and work with many individuals who have contributed in terms of knowledge, wisdom and support until the completion of my thesis. The list is too long to acknowledge each and every one of them; nevertheless there are a few people that deserve special thanks for their contributions.

I am very much indebted to my supervisors, Professor Dr. Low Wah Yun and Dr. Lee Hwok Aun for their dedication, patience, and guidance in seeing me through my studies until the successful completion of this thesis. It was a great privilege to be under their tutelage. Their professionalism, constructive comments and advice put me on the right track. I would also like to express my gratitude to Professor Ramayah Thurasamy from Universiti Sains Malaysia for his profound kindness in allowing me to consult him and for the help that he generously extended to me when I'm desperately seeking for clarification in my statistical techniques and methods. My gratitude is also due to Dr. Leo Frederick and Professor Goh Kim Leng for their tremendous support, advice and invaluable help especially in enlightening me on research methodology.

I am also extremely grateful to all my respondents and principals of the schools involved for their valuable time during my fieldwork. I would also like to extend my deepest thanks to Adrian Wong, Derrick Chan, Adrian Stevenson and Azrul Shaffiq for their dedication during the fieldwork and my special thanks to University of Malaya for its financial support.

My sincere affection and admiration goes to my study mates, Rosita Hamdan, Azmah Othman, Asiah Ramli, Taluder Gulam Rabby and Surena Sabil whom I share part of my postgraduate life with since I started this journey. Thank you for your words of encouragement and for being there for me especially during chaotic times.

My deepest thanks go to my parents and parents in-law, whom I owe a lot for supporting me and in trusting me with every decisions I make. Words cannot express how much I respect and love you. I thank you for blessing me in your prayers. To my dear husband who has been very supportive of my decision to pursue my studies, the sacrifices that you have made were invaluable and I'm grateful for all your help and commitment towards our family. To my daughters, Sofea, Allysha and Adrianna, you mean the world to me and I hope I have inspired you enough to do the right things in life and to continuously pursue in knowledge.