

## DIFFERENCES OF LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG ACEHNESE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA MALE AND FEMALE

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### ABSTRACT

International student mobility has over the past 10-15 years become an increasingly, more students from across the world are able to participate in higher education abroad, especially those from countries with rapidly growing economies in Asian country (i.e. Malaysia, Indonesia, etc). The high educational ranking of Malaysia is appealing to many Acehnese students including to study in Malaysia. Studying abroad can be a challenge having to adapt and adjust oneself to a whole new environment, culture, language, education system, lifestyle, and new friends. This study aims to investigate the levels of life satisfaction among Acehnese university students in Malaysia male and female. T-test analysis has performed to analyze the mean life satisfaction between male and female students. The result of this study reveals there was no significant difference in life satisfaction across gender. Further discussions are displayed in full view of this study.

**Keywords:** *Life Satisfaction, Acehnese university student, study in Malaysia*

### Introduction

International student mobility has over the past 10-15 years become an increasingly, more students from across the world are able to participate in higher education abroad, especially those from countries with rapidly growing economies in Asian country (i.e. Malaysia, Indonesia, etc) (Verbik, Hobsons, & Lasanowski, 2007).

Malaysia is a country in Asia which is a popular education hub for its neighboring countries. Universities in Malaysia offer a variety of courses that also target international students. Malaysia's strategic regional position have unique multi-lingual, multi-cultural society is quite appealing to its neighbors for the similarities that they share in some way (Verbik, Hobsons, & Lasanowski, 2007). Many initiatives have been offered to attract

international students to Malaysia as a destination of education such as the scholarships provided by the Malaysian government (Latif, 2011). Since 1999, a total of 562 scholarships have been given to international students to study in Malaysia (Kulasgaran, 2011). Malaysia's private colleges also offered twinning programmes also with institutions of higher learning in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada and there are a number of branch campuses of foreign Universities in Malaysia (MITI, 2006). Most access to higher learning education in Malaysia for cohorts between 17 to 23 years old was 40% (AHEA, 2011).

Malaysia has achieved a world ranking of 11th in terms of total international student population from around the world (Chi, 2011). Currently, there are more than 40,000 foreign students are studying in Malaysia (MITI, 2006) which has risen above 90,000 or the equivalent of around two per cent of the total international student population in the world (Chi, 2011) international students from 27 countries (Kulasgaran, 2011). Based on the statistical breakdown provided by the MOHE website, the top five countries from which the majority of students were derived in 2009 were Iran, Indonesia, China, Nigeria and Yemen (Chi, 2011). Indonesia is one of its neighboring countries with many of its students currently studying in Malaysia. The tuition fees and the cost of living are much more affordable and lower than other countries like Singapore. Many other countries sponsor their students to study in Malaysia. There in 2009 there were about 2000 Indian students in Malaysia (MIDA, 2009) apart from Indonesia according to the Malaysian Education Centre (Salim, 2007). Aceh is one of the areas in Indonesia that also send many of its students to study abroad such as in Malaysia. These Aceh students either study at their own expense or on a scholarship from the government (Inggried, 2011).

Aceh government make a program to provide scholarships for student who have a good achievement in Aceh (Atjeh, 2012). This program purposes to improve human resource of Acehnese people (Serambi, 2012). In 2010 government of Aceh make main program during period 2009-2011 for educational sector with increase fund for scholarships and send 905 people to study outside the country (Seuramoe, 2012).

Malaysia provides good quality education in this region. image of the higher educational institutions to meet the challenges of increasing global competition, rising student expectations of quality (Arambewala, Hall & Zuhair, 2006). The high educational ranking of Malaysia is appealing to many Acehnese students including to study in Malaysia (Symonds, 2011).

## **Past Research of Life satisfaction among International College Students**

One of the notable developments within the field of psychology in the past decade has been the emergence of a broad perspective termed “positive psychology” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Its’ proposed mission was the scientific study of human strength, resilience, and optimal human functioning. One way to approach positive psychology is through life satisfaction.

The main responsibility for college students is to study alongside other skills that they need to develop such as time management, planning, and balancing their study with other activities including leisure time. Being able to do this well will reduce pressure and increase life satisfaction in the students (Edginton et al, 2006). This endeavour is seen to be in line with one current view of health where emphasis is now placed on well-being as an objective to be attained (Beardsley and Pedersen, 1997). In adolescents, high life satisfaction may thus help them to meet challenges in terms of dealing with school issues, managing resources, and finding a suitable track, while adolescents with low life satisfaction may begin to avoid challenges and develop negative attitudes towards schooling (Salmera-Aro & Tuominen-Soini, 2010).

According to Sousa and Lyubomirsky’s study (2001), life satisfaction is correlated with the cultural environment, income, employment, education and marriage, as well as gender and age.

Previous study also addressed possible gender effects. Among girls, the lower their self-esteem, the more their life satisfaction increased during the educational transition. A happiness gap seems to exist between girls and boys: adolescence seems to be harder on females than males. Previous research has explained girls’ higher vulnerability to low well-being by changes in hormonal levels (Costello, Sung, Worthman & Angold, 2007), entering puberty early (Ge et al. 2001).

### **Life Satisfaction**

Life satisfaction is defined as an individual’s overall appraisals of the quality of his or her life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985), including the perception that one is progressing towards important life goals (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999).

Life satisfaction refers to a cognitive process (Diener et al. 1985). Life satisfaction represents the inner outcomes of life. As we deal with conscious humans this quality boils down to subjective appreciation of life. Happiness is also defined as as the result of

evaluation process. The affective side of happiness consist in what we commonly call a sense of well being, find your life enriching or rewarding or feeling satisfied (Veenhoven, 2006).

Components of Life Satisfaction are component to change life, satisfaction with current life, satisfaction with past, satisfaction with future and significant others views of one's life (Diener et al, 1999).

### **Research Questions**

1. Is there a difference in life satisfaction between male and female Acehnese college students?

### **Objectives Study**

This study aims to investigate the levels of life satisfaction among Acehnese students in Malaysia. And to see the difference in life satisfaction level between male and female Acehnese college students in Malaysia.

### **Significance of Study**

This study will add to the understanding life satisfaction Acehnese students in Malaysia (government policy, educator, student).

### **Hypothesis**

1. There is a difference in life satisfaction level between male and female Acehnese college students in Malaysia.

### **Method**

Purposive sampling. A type of nonprobability sampling in which the researcher consciously selects specific elements or subjects for inclusion in a study in order to ensure that the elements will have certain characteristics relevant to the study. Characteristic of respondent is male and female from universities in Malaysia.

Descriptive analysis in this study will be used to explain the demographic distribution of sample. For example gender.

Participants consist of female and male Acehnese students from universities in Malaysia (e.g., UKM, IIUM, UM, UPM, USM, UPSI). Nearly all the students were aged 19-27 years old.

## Procedures

Participants will complete a set of questionnaire hosted online (e-mail or social network) on demographic information, and a measure on life satisfaction. The questionnaire took about 15 minutes to complete.

## Measures

*Satisfaction with Life Scale.* It is a five-item scale on general life satisfaction. Individuals indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement on a 6-point Likert-scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985).

The Life Satisfaction Survey (LSS: Krapu, Meinke, Krames, Friedman, Voda, 2006) to measure general happiness and satisfaction with life.

The researcher uses original scales in this study, English version. An internet form was created for students to complete survey.

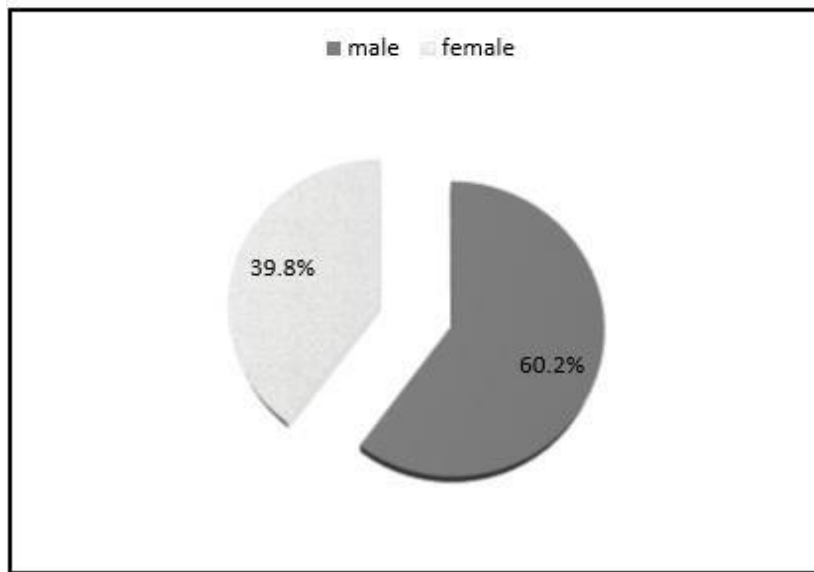
## Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics has been applied to analyse the demographic data. A t-test analysis has also be performed to analyze the mean life satisfaction between male and female students.

**Table 1.**

**Descriptive statistics for frequency distribution of the respondents according to gender**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>n = 83</b>
Gender	
Male	50 (60.2)
Female	33 (39.8)



**Figure:** states the frequency distribution of the participants according to gender

## Results

### Life satisfaction between male and female Acehnese college students

An independent sample t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in life satisfaction. The results are presented in Table.

**Table 2:**  
**Independent Sample T-Tests using SWLS**

Gender	n	Mean	t	df	p value
Male	48	1.94	-1.687	79	.096
Female	33	2.12			

There was no significant difference in life satisfaction (using Satisfaction with Life Scale) between male students ( $M = 1.94$ ,  $SD = .433$ ) and female students ( $M = 2.12$ ,  $SD = .545$ ),  $t(79) = -1.687$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected.

**Table 3:**  
**Independent Sample T-Tests using LSS**

Gender	n	Mean	t	df	p value
Male	48	1.90	-.695	79	.489
Female	33	1.97			

There was no significant difference in life satisfaction (using Life Satisfaction Scale) between male students ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD = .472$ ) and female students ( $M = 1.97$ ,  $SD = .467$ ),  $t(79) = -.695$ ,  $p > .05$ . Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected.

## Summary

Relating to life satisfaction and gender, there were no statistical differences between male and female Acehnese University students in Malaysia using t-test reveal. However, mean of females' life satisfaction is consistently higher in both used instruments (2.12 or 1.97) than males' (1.94 or 1.90). This result has shown a new pattern of life satisfaction level across gender, as the previous research, that measured gender differences on life satisfaction among adolescents, has shown that boys scored higher than girls (Moksnes & Espnes, 2013). The similar report also has reveal that an indication that the males control life satisfaction (mean: 3,61) was higher than females' control life satisfaction (mean: 3,53) among international university students in Malaysia but the differences was not significant (Fitria, Khan, & Almigo, 2013). Further study by Utami (2009) also mentioned that was no significant life satisfaction differences between males or females university students but gender control toward life satisfaction has. Hence, the current study has been supported by previous studies that reveal the issue about gender and life satisfaction.

This finding has proved that between males and females have no difference responses to evaluate their life, either in global life, in university environment, or personal life. It's mean both gender have sufficient level of affection, satisfied enough, and fulfilled their important needs in their life (Utami, 2009).

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