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Identifying Major Traits of Personality towards Life Satisfaction among Married Students

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Abstract

This study intends to identify major traits of personality that affect life satisfaction among married participants in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Random sampling was used to select the participants of this study. The sample consists of 158 married students. In order to find this relation, Satisfaction with Life Scale questionnaire, and Tajma Personality Profile questionnaire (TPP2) were used. The results show that major traits such as self-confidence, extrovert, and resiliency have strong effect on life satisfaction.

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1. Introduction

According to cognitive, judgmental process of wellbeing (SWB) forms; life satisfaction can be defined as a global assessment of one's quality of life based on his chosen criteria (Shin, 1978). On the other hand, individuals set standards for themselves to make a judgment about how they are satisfied with their present state of affairs (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Studies show that higher life satisfaction is prospectively associated with greater occupational success, better health, and even delayed mortality (Diener, & Chan, M. Y. , 2011; Lyubomirsky, 2005; Maike Luhmann, 2012; Oishi, 2007). Moreover, the final target of psychology is to improve life quality. Although there is not a clear definition that is universally accepted for life quality, it can be referred by psychological well-being, and the supportive relationships in one's life (Johanna J. Mytko, 1999; R Sawatzky, 2005).

One may state that our personality plays a big role in explaining why we function in a certain manner throughout life (Ro, 2010). Life satisfaction is a valuable supplement to personality variable in the prediction of life outcomes. The major correlations are constantly observed with personal capabilities in handling life problems (Maike Luhmann, 2012). Personality refers to an unobservable quality present within the individual that is thought

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to be responsible for that individual's observable behavior (Whitbourne, 2005). Personality has a nature (as a structure) and nurture (as experience); it is also affected by past memories, plus present and future concerns (Pervin, 1996). Researchers (McCrae, & John, 1992) defined personality traits as a set of characteristic dispositions that determine emotional, interpersonal, experiential, attitudinal, and motivational styles.

Many researchers (Diener, & Lucas, 1999; Diener, 2003; Extremera, 2005) try to find the relation between life satisfaction and personality trait. Life satisfaction is influenced by certain personality variables (e.g., trait positive and negative affect), satisfaction in one's central life domains (e.g., work, family), participation in valued life tasks, progress in fulfilling salient personal goals and resilience (Lent, 2009). Some researchers (Roeser, 1999; Rubin, 2006) believe that satisfaction in life for adolescents is achieved by some factors such as social competence, academic success and avoidance of risky behavior. It appears that resilient students are conscientious, responsible and friendly. They also experience higher academic success and are cognitively superior (Werner, 1992). It is also reported that resilience cause in the students the ability to distance from dysfunctional situations and realistic goals (Hawkins, 1992).

Life satisfaction reports are differentially related to a number of important psychological states and behaviors, including depression (Lewinsohn, 1991), self-esteem (Arrindell, 1999), and hope the construct is considered to be a key indicator of an individual's successful adaptation to changes in life circumstances (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Personality dimensions such as extraversion and neuroticism proved to have important role in life satisfaction (Diener & Lucas, 1999; Diener, 2003; Extremera, 2005). Researchers (Watson, 2004) reported that partners' personality characteristics like neuroticism and agreeableness contributed slightly to targets' life satisfaction. Common characteristics among satisfied people are good physical health and psychological resilience and mental health (W.E., 1996). Nonetheless, satisfied and dissatisfied people differ in social skills. Based on (Roberts, 2007) high life satisfaction is reported to lead to social assertiveness and good empathy attributes. Also, high neuroticism increases the risks of divorce, whereas high agreeableness and high conscientiousness decrease the risks of divorce. Studies have shown that satisfied people tend towards internal control beliefs while dissatisfied ones tend to feel they have little control over happenings. Therefore, ability to control one's environment directly illustrates satisfaction in person's life. Although, it has been observed that some social behaviors happen frequently in satisfied people (active, outgoing, friendly), such conducts happen in dissatisfied people, too. Non-verbal behaviors such as frequent smiling or enthusiastic movements seem to be merely a little related to self-report of life-satisfaction (W.E., 1996).

The results of a study on culture, personality and subjective wellbeing (SWB) by (Diener, 2003) shows that subjective wellbeing (SWB) can be named as the results of people's cognitive and emotional evaluations of life. It includes what put people name life satisfaction, fulfillment, peace and happiness. SWB can be influenced by personality character such as self-esteem, neuroticism and extraversion. Therefore, personality significantly explains variability in subjective well-being.

Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) is also studied by (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) on undergraduate students. The results show that the correlation between personality measures and SWLS was high in self-esteem, symptom checklist, neuroticism, emotionality, activity, sociability, and impulsivity, respectively. It also revealed that people who have satisfaction in life are generally well-adjusted and free from psychopathology. Researchers (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985; Pavot, 1993) also claimed that SWLS has positive correlation with extraversion and negative correlation with neuroticism. With a complete review on available definitions about personality and quality of life, it is obvious that there is a relationship and connection between both above mentioned terms. Researchers (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999) also proved that internal determinants such as personality and biological factors have stronger evidence for satisfaction in life than external determinants such as social and economic factors. Moreover, it is shown by previous studies that life satisfaction is influenced by

personality characteristics of partners. So, this study intends to introduce strong personal characteristics that have effect on satisfaction in life. This will help to increase quality of life and life satisfaction in mates.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

For the purpose of this study total sample of 158 Iranian married students was selected randomly. This study focused on students in four public universities in Malaysia which are UM, UTM, UKM, and UPM. These universities have the highest number of Iranian students in Malaysia.

2.2 Instrument

Quantitative method; questionnaire was used to collect the data from the sample. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) of (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985); SWLS scale consists of five items 7-point scale and measures global life satisfaction. This scale was shown good convergent validity with other scales and a degree of temporal stability and the internal consistency of the scale is 0.84. Scores on the SWLS correlate predictably with specific personality characteristics (Pavot, 1993).

Tajma Personality Profile (TPP2) of Ninggal (2012); TPP2 consists of 90 items of 3-point scale and it measure 12 basic personality traits. These traits are as follows: assertive, analytical, extrovert, self-confidence, leadership, resiliency, caring, cross-cultural, achievement, integrity, patriotism, distortion. The reliability coefficient of the TPP2 is .9 (Ninggal, 2012).

2.3 Data analysis

Data analysis consisted of inferential statistics by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 18. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the relationships among all predictors and life satisfaction.

3. Findings

To determine which variables are more predictive to life satisfaction among married Iranian students in Malaysia, we interred personality traits into a regression analysis (stepwise model) predicting overall life satisfaction. Results for the model presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Stepwise regression analysis summary for variables predicting life satisfaction

Coefficients ^a							
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	F
			Std. Error	Beta			
	(Constant)	1.063	1.062		19.841	.000	
	Self-confidence	.682	.151	.340	4.512	.000	
	(Constant)	4.470	1.440		16.991	.000	
	Self-confidence	.988	.172	.492	5.740	.000	

	Extrovert	.631	.187	-.290	-3.377	.001	
	(Constant)	2.859	1.613		14.170	.000	
	Self-confidence	.830	.186	.413	4.466	.000	20.355
	Extrovert	.732	.191	-.336	-3.840	.000	16.560
	Resiliency	.297	.140	.189	2.125	.035	12.796
a. Dependent Variable: Life satisfaction							

As regard personality traits, Self-confidence ($p < 0.001$), Extrovert ($p < 0.001$), and Resiliency ($p < 0.001$) highly correlated with life satisfaction. As can see in Table 1, the important factors on life satisfaction are Self-confidence ($F=20.355$, $\beta=.413$) Extrovert ($F=16.560$, $\beta=-.336$), and Resiliency ($F=12.796$, $\beta=.189$) respectively.

4. Conclusion

This study was designed to identify the major traits of personality towards life satisfaction among married students in Malaysia. Regression analysis showed that self-confidence, extrovert, and resiliency were highly predicting life satisfaction. Based on Tajma personality traits, self-confident individuals are self-control, calm, and confident. Moreover, according to (Fritz Strack, 1991) life satisfied individuals have more self-confidence. Extroversion is found as another major trait of life satisfaction. According to (McCrae, & Costa, 2003) an extravert person is a gregarious one full of positive emotions and activity. In line with previous studies (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Diener, 2003; Extremera, 2005) extraversion has important role in life satisfaction. This study also shows the same results. So, extrovert people have more life satisfaction. Resiliency is a major personality trait highly correlated with life satisfaction. According to previous researches, resilience was positively correlated with life satisfaction (Abolghasemia, 2010; Cohn, 2009; Extremera, Durán, Rey, 2009; Lent, 2009; Roeser, 1999; Rubin, 2006).

The concept of resiliency is quit new and the previous works in the area of education is not sufficient to make pedagogical applications.

Resiliency is the ability to thrive in the face of adverse circumstances. Researchers in (Rutter, 1984) also showed that the resilient students perceived to have greater control over their lives. It seems that resilient individuals were those who believe their ability to control their environment. On the other hand, ability to control one's environment directly illustrates satisfaction in one's life (W.E., 1996). Consequently, the finding of this study supports resiliency as a life satisfaction predictor.

As a result, this study introduces strong personal characteristics that have effect on mates' life satisfaction. This will help counsellors to know about certain personal characteristics in order to facilitate counselling sessions and help mates for more success, health, and well-being in life.

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