

Predictors of life satisfaction: Perspectives from Malaysia

S-Y. LEIN, M-M. LAI, S-H. LAU, M-L. LAI. **Predictors of life satisfaction: Perspectives from Malaysian adults.** *Gerontechnology* 2014;13(2):243; doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.02.092.00 **Purpose**

This paper examines the relationship between physical functioning, financial condition, and personal factors with life satisfaction among Malaysian adults. **Method** Convenience sampling is employed to conduct a questionnaire survey among 42 adults aged 40 and above from Melaka, the historical state of Malaysia. Financial condition measures the ability to finance daily expenses, emergencies, and medical care. Physical functioning refers to instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), or the ability to perform activities for independent living. Social connectivity refers to how often respondents meet with relatives or friends at least once a week. Age is divided into two groups: below 65 years old (younger adult) and above 65 years old (older adult)¹. The sample consists of 27 younger adults and 15 older adults. Psychological factor measures emotional and cognitive well-being. Health status is self-reported by the respondents. Financial condition, IADL, and psychological factor indicated high levels of internal consistencies with Cronbach's alpha more than 0.8. **Results & Discussion** Multiple regression results as shown in *Table 1* reported that financial condition was the strongest predictor of life satisfaction² and this result was consistent with past studies. IADL and younger age were also found as significant predictors of life satisfaction. The dummy variable of older age negatively related to life satisfaction³. On the other hand, social connectivity, psychological factors, and health did not significantly contribute to life satisfaction. A possible explanation is that 86% of the respondents have received adequate functional and emotional support from family members given that they are living together. The result suggests the potential need for help with IADL by intelligent and person-ware technology besides human assistance. Smart home furnishing with technology such as sensors, alarms, monitoring systems, and automatic devices that support aging and independent living should be introduced. Technology facilitates physical and financial independence promotes life satisfaction when one ages.

References

1. Emlet CA, Mocerri JT. *Journal of Aging Research* 2012;1-9; doi:10.1155/2012/173247
2. Chou KL, Chi I. *Aging & Mental Health* 1999;3(4):328-335; doi:10.1080/13607869956109
3. Doyle D, Forehand MJ. *Research on Aging* 1984;6(3):432-448; doi:10.1177/0164027584006003008

Keywords: housing & daily activities, IADL, financial condition, life satisfaction

Address: Faculty of Management, Multimedia University, Cyberjaya, Malaysia

E: leinsy@gmail.com

*Table 1. Multiple regression results of life satisfaction with predictors; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ^a1=strong disagree, 5=strongly agree. ^bIADL=Instrumental activities of daily living: 0=dependent, 4=independent. ^cDummy: 1=above 65 years old, 0=below 65 years old. ^dDummy: 1=meeting with friends or relatives at least once a week, 0=meeting with friends or relatives less than once a week. ^e0=Never, 5=Always. ^fDummy: 1=Healthy, 0=Unhealthy*

Predictors	Coefficient	p-value	t-statistics	Cronbach's alpha
Financial condition ^a	0.465	0.000**	3.832	0.878
IADL ^b	0.305	0.010*	2.722	0.932
Older adult ^c	-0.284	0.022*	-2.388	
Social connectivity ^d	0.136	0.314	1.022	
Psychological factor ^e	-0.082	0.473	-0.724	0.860
Health status ^f	0.089	0.433	0.793	
R ²	0.543			
Adjusted R ²	0.507			
F-statistic	15.047	0.000		