

# Life Satisfaction Based on Gender

Miqdad Daly Ahmad

University of Muhammadiyah Malang  
miqdadahmaddaly@gmail.com

Silfiasari

University of Muhammadiyah Malang  
silfiaasari@umm.ac.id

*Abstract. The purpose of the research was to examine the difference in life satisfaction between men and women. The aspects studied are psychological well-being, subjective well-being, and life satisfaction. This research applied a quantitative design. This research involved 32 men and 40 women from various ethnic groups in Indonesia. The data were analyzed using Independent Sample T-test with a probability value of  $p = 0.685$  ( $p > 0.05$ ). The results of the research showed that there is no life satisfaction difference between male and female.*

*Keywords: Life satisfaction, psychological well-being, subjective well-being, gender*

## Introduction

Men and women are born with various similarities and differences from various aspects. There have been many research that have examined gender differences in various things. A research found that gender differences affect the brain and human behavior (Ngun et al., 2012). Another research also revealed gender differences in psychological aspects such as personality. Weisberg, Yoing & Hirsh (2011) reported that there are differences between the sexes with the Big-Five personality, where a woman tends to have a higher extraversion than a man.

However, there are still many contradictive results on the gender of the psychological aspects, for example in a research on sex differences in psychological well-being. Some research found gender has an influence on psychological well-being that a woman tends to have lower autonomy and higher environmental mastery than a man (Li, Kao & Wu, 2015). Moreover, Akhter (2015) confirmed that a research on students, where it was found that there were differences in psychological well-being in the gender (Akhter, 2015). However, this is contradictory with a research by Visani et al. (2011) conducted in Italy, that there were no psychological well-being differences between the gender (Visani, Albieri, Offidani, Ottolini, Tomba & Ruini, 2011). Moreover, Perez (2012) reported that there were no differences in psychological well-being between man and woman (Perez, 2012).

The contradiction not only appeared on psychological well-being research, but also found on subjective well-being research. There was a research conducted in 90 different countries, women tend to have high subjective well-being rather than men (Meisenberg & Woodley, 2014). Furthermore, Graham & Chattopadhyay (n.d.) revealed that women have higher subjective well-being than men (Graham & Chattopadhyay, n.d.). The results of this research are contradictive with Roothman, Kirsten and Wissing (2003), there was no significant difference in subjective

well-being between women and men (Roothman, Kirsten & Wissing, 2003).

As a result, there are numerous results of the research between men and women on psychological and subjective well-being. According to Peterson, Park, and Seligman (2005), psychological and subjective well-being is one of the important aspects of an individual life satisfaction (Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005). This is in line with several research that stated gender is related to life satisfaction (Al-Attayah & Nasser, 2013; Giusta, Jewell & Kambhampati, 2011). While other researches revealed that different gender does not have an impact on life satisfaction (Mayungbo, 2016). So the results of gender differences and life satisfaction research are still ambiguous. The purpose of this research is to analyze whether there were differences in life satisfaction between men and women.

## Literature Review

Based on Veenhoven (1993), welfare is the extent to a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his life as a whole. An individual welfare is also defined as the desire to change lives, satisfaction about the past and future, and significantly change the individual perspective of it. Life satisfaction is considered a sign of how life quality is favorable and it is also an indicator of good mental and physical health (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffen, 1999). It is assumed that the less a person perceives disagreement between his desires and achievements, the higher the life satisfaction he has (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003).

Peterson, Park & Seligman (2005) found that there are three supporting factors of an individual welfare, namely happiness obtained through hedonism, happiness obtained through meaning (Eudemonism), and happiness by engaging in social involvement (Engagement) (Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005). Discovery of life happiness through pleasure is closely related to subjective well-being (SWB) and is a topic of

Hedonic psychology that is widely studied by various literature in the world of modern western psychology (Kahneman et al., 1999). The happiness through meaning is related to Eudemonism psychology in which a person tends to search for functions that are entirely on him, self-actualization, psychological well-being, and self-determination (Rogers, 1951; Maslow, 1970; Ryff & Singer, 1996, Deci & Ryan, 2000). Aside from the search for happiness through Hedonism and Eudemonism, it was also found that the welfare of life can be influenced by engagement (Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005).

### Method

The subjects involved in this research were 72 participants with overall age of 24. The participants consisted of 32 men and 40 women coming from various ethnic groups in Indonesia, such as Javanese, Bugis, Sasak, etc. The subjects were selected using purposive sampling technique aimed at obtaining subject clarification which is proper with this research.

This research applied a quantitative design. The data were collected using a scale with 17 items (has been translated into Bahasa Indonesia) designed by Peterson, Park, and Seligman (2005). The scale aims at examining life satisfaction with three aspects, namely seeking pleasure, discovery of meaning, and engagement. Each item consists of four options, namely (1) Very Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; and (4) Very Agree. The scale was distributed by Google Form to many people in Indonesia. Then, the data were analyzed using Independent Sample T-test by comparing the data based on the gender.

Hypothesis proposed on this research is:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no difference between life satisfaction and gender

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a difference between life satisfaction and gender

### Results

The subjects involved in this research were 32 men and 40 women coming from various ethnic groups, such as Javanese (58), Maluku (1), Malay (1), Madurese (1), Sasak (2), Minangkabau (2), Osing (1), Sundanese (1), Aceh (1), Bugis (1), Dayak (1), Banjar (1), and other (1). The participants are ranging from 19-34 years old with an average of 24 years old.

From normality test, the probability value was  $P = 0,852$  in other word bigger than  $P > 0,05$ . So data on this research was normal distributed. From Independent Sample T-Test, probability value was  $P = 0,685$  which means  $P > 0,05$  so this research accepted H<sub>0</sub> and rejected H<sub>1</sub>, in other word there was no life satisfaction differences between gender.

### Discussion

The subjects of the research were 32 men and 40 women coming from various ethnic groups in Indonesia. The participants are dominated by Javanese (58 from 72). However, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2010), the highest population in Indonesia is dominated by Javanese (40.05% from total population). Therefore, the research—may represent Indonesian population in general.

According to Independent Sample T-test, the probability value is  $P = 0.685$  which means that is greater than  $P > 0.05$ . Thus, it could be interpreted that there is no difference in life satisfaction between men and women. Meanwhile, Peterson, Park, and Seligman (2005) implied that life satisfaction has three important aspects, namely psychological well-being, subjective well-being and engagement. This statement is in accordance with another research conducted in Italy and Philippines; different gender does not have an impact on psychological well-being (Visani, Albieri, Offidani, Ottolini, Tomba & Ruini, 2011; Perez, 2012). In addition, different gender does not influence life satisfaction (Mayungbo, 2016; Roothman, Kirsten & Wissing, 2003). In other words, the results of this research are not proper with the results of research conducted in Taiwan, India, and various countries stating that gender is deeply related to psychological well-being (Li, Kao & Wu, 2015; Akhter, 2015; Graham & Chattopadhyay, n.d.). This research also not in line with a research which that resulted in gender is related to subjective well-being and happiness (Meisenberg & Woodley, 2014). Meanwhile, the results of research in Qatar and Britain reported that gender is related to life satisfaction (Al-Attayah & Nasser, 2013; Giusta, Jewell & Kambhampati, 2011). The difference in life satisfaction between men and women on this research could be due to cultural differences, the participants in this research coming from various ethnic groups races but limited only in Indonesia. The other cause could be due other variable that we did not measure on this research, those variables might have impact on life satisfaction such as marriage, socio-economic, health, and job satisfaction variables (Graham & Chattopadhyay, n.d; Al-Attayah & Nasser, 2013; Giusta, Jewell & Kambhampati, 2011).

### Conclusions

The total subjects involved in this research were 72 participants, 32 men, and 40 women. The results of the research showed that there is no difference in life satisfaction between different gender could be due to cultural and other factors. However, the limitation of this research was, the researcher did not measure other variables that possibly influenced life satisfaction. The

researcher believed that there was another variable influencing life satisfaction.

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