
University Life Happiness of Local and International Student in Malaysia: An Analysis Econometrics

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Abstract

The key aim of the analysis was to assess the university's happiness level with data from a random survey of 381 students local and foreign university students at Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS). The students will be asked to link happiness with financial difficulties, lifestyle and health, religion, academics achievement, and other factors. This study will use Pearson's correlation to determine the relationship between dependence and independence variables. The expected finding will reveal the most important influences factors of the level of university life happiness.

Keyword: education, econometrics, happiness

Introduction

On 1 January 1962, the university education industry in Malaysia began to develop the first university, namely Universiti Malaya. However, in the 1960s and 1980s, the sector grew steadily. This is how the public market monopolized the sector. During the 1960s-1980s, the private sector (by the government of Malaysia) was not permitted to set up the university. In the mid-nineties, however, the growth in the university-industry was accelerating, when the government liberalized its university education sector by enabling private universities to be founded in Malaysia in 1996 (Lim, Kuar, and Thi, 2007). This condition stimulated and significantly led to the rising number of universities in Malaysia. The number of universities in Malaysia before 1996 was just nine: Universiti Malaya, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Since 1996 there has been a substantial rise in the number of universities in Malaysia. By 2020, the number of public universities (IPTA) has grown to 20. There are also 47 private colleges and 34 private associates and 10 overseas universities (Jabatan Pendidikan Tinggi, 2019). Although in Malaysia the number of university students is rising annually (Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi Malaysia, 2007; Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi

Malaysia, 2008, 2010, 2015, 2018). It is partially to satisfy the need for higher education, which grows with time. The government agenda is also partly motivated by the potential of the local universities (IPTA and IPTS) to give local and foreign students more classes. This strategy is following the government's objective of achieving the Malaysian dream of becoming an Asian higher education centre. The federal government spent nearly 20 per cent between 1985 and 2019 in the education sector (Unit Perancangan Ekonomi, 2020^b, 2020^a, 2020^d, 2020^c). The significant expenditure is attributed to the growing number of colleges, although at the same time modernizing and retaining facilities in universities; at the same time upgrading certain college universities to become a full university.

In this context of study, happiness¹ has a great impact on productivity. If he or she is happy, they can be more productive. For everyone, happiness is important to think. In terms of university life, the happiness of the student with university life is a satisfied customer. To draw more foreign and local students, thus a satisfactory degree of satisfaction in university life must be attained. Happiness will help students succeed and satisfy themselves with what they invested in higher education. The government mission of Malaysia must ensure that Malaysia remains an outstanding centre for higher education. As such, the government can give students further courses by private sector involvement. The effectiveness of these policies depends partially on the field of studies, i.e. the student university life happiness. However, the problem is, according to Lim, Kuar & Thi (2007), there are only a few studies on student university life happiness in Malaysia, especially university life happiness of international students.

Education is Malaysia's main agenda. Almost 20 per cent of the total development expenditure was spent annually on policy formulation on average (Unit Perancangan Ekonomi, 2020^b, 2020^a, 2020^d, 2020^c). This is partly because the demand for tertiary education increases over time. The objective of these expenses is to increase local universities (IPTA and IPTS)' ability to offer more courses to local and international students. It is to increase the facility and the university's ability to provide a conducive environment. Finally, all of these will improve the happiness of university students.

This expenditure is also higher than in some developed countries and higher education is developing quickly in Malaysia in New Industrial Countries. Malaysia's education development is not yet competitive with developed countries and new industrial countries. In Malaysia, enrolment for tertiary education at 43%, less than United State (88%), South Korea (94%), Germany (70%), United Kingdom (60%) and Thailand (49%) (World Bank, 2020^a, 2020^b, 2020^c, 2020^d, 2020^e, 2020^f, 2020^g). This can be due to the limited study opportunities available to local and international students from public higher education institutions (IPTA) and private higher education institutions (IPTS). The problem is that studies of the happiness of university students' in particular international students are largely ignored in Malaysia.

The government must take some steps to solve this problem in this context. Overall, Malaysia's higher education sector may not meet its customers' expectations (i.e. students).

¹ Happiness is a condition for mind and feeling characteristic by joy, love, contentment, satisfy and pleasure. Happiness is also synonyms with religiosity and psychological. Peoples will be happy if they are satisfied with their life. They should be happy, if they have done well in their relationship with friends, with family, with neighbour, with God or Gods, income and others.

The students are the main clients and their happiness is therefore one of the conditions for sustainability. Therefore the happiness of the university life of a student should be the main determination to measure the quality of higher education. A thorough study of the happiness of university students is vital.

Literature Review

Generally, these factors are divided into six categories: income and financial, religion, lifestyle and health, academic achievement, and so on. Theoretically, happy work should become more productive in economics. Happiness therefore should be the focus of private and public organizations wishing to improve the productivity of their staff. It is one of the investments in human capital to ensure productive force (Fix, 2018; and Marginson, 2019).

Financial Difficulties

Revenues and finances influence the happiness of an individual's life. Income and financial considerations, *ceteris paribus*, was identified as the determining factors of happiness. People are satisfied if their income and financial problems satisfy them. They're less happy otherwise. In general, citizens with higher wages will receive materialistic enjoyment. They typically have little trouble in spending their money on regular expenses (Lim, Choo & Soons, 2005). The study found evidence that good financial habits relate to financial happiness and in exchange, financial satisfaction leads to life satisfaction (Xiao et al., 2009; and Malcik & Miklosikova, 2019). It's found that one of the factors that determine student's university life happiness is their income and pocket money (Campara, Vieira, & Potrich, 2017; Chan, Miller and Tcha, 2005).

From the macroeconomic viewpoint, income per capita has a strong correlation with satisfaction and the marginal utility of income has declined in contrast to a developed world (Frey and Studzer, 2002; Easterlin, 2005). This is because increased per capita income will contribute to an improvement in people's wealth in this region. If per capita income rises, the marginal utility of income would decline. It is similar to the Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility which produces a Utility Curve that convex to the origin. This law defines products and services utilization: any addition to goods consumption will decrease the utility of those goods. Also, this rule affects income and satisfaction: any rise in a person's income can be smaller increased by additional happiness. Therefore, income and financial indicators are expected to improve at a significant level with the enjoyment of life. In Malaysia, an analysis of the happiness of university students means that they have just experienced moderate financial difficulties. This research has shown that financial problems had a significant association with the happiness of university students (Lim, Kuar, and Thi, 2007).

Many studies have also shown a significant and positive correlation between income satisfaction and the happiness of university life. This is an important factor in the happiness of life, including students. People who are satisfied with their wages and financial difficulties.

Lifestyle and Health

Thi et al. (2020) and Peltzer et al. (2017) found that health behaviour and happiness play a significant role. Furthermore, Kvintova, Kudlacek, & Sigmundova (2016) also found that lifestyle and happiness have a positive influence. Lifestyle and health are determined by illness frequency, quality of sleep and adequate physical activity. To determine happiness, health is important. A person with good health is theoretically happier in life in comparison to people with poor health.

The connection between the happiness of the university student has both positive and negative (emotional and psychological) and grit (Singh & Jha, 2008). Grit refers to the perseverance characteristics described in positive psychology. Positive impact refers to students with positive emotions and psychology. Otherwise, it refers to students with negative emotions and psychology.

Religion

According to Hutchinson, Habib, & Hutchinson (2018), religion is important in determining the happiness of life. Religion is also related not only to one's mind but also to another aspect of life. People who believe in God should be happy, as expected. The study discovered a positive correlation between religion and happiness in life. There is a significant correlation between religion and the happiness of life (Headey et al., 2010). People who are become strong religious over time; they will get the blessing from God, while peoples who are become less religious, their happiness are less. Spiritual and religiosity is a domain factor determined by the personal well-being index (PWI), one of the most subjective well-being (SWB) measurements (Wills, 2009).

Academics Status

Both academic satisfaction and academic achievement are significant factors to determine student happiness (Zakaria, Halim, Nordin, & Alam, 2015; Chow, 2005). Since academic status is an important part of a successful student life. It also is a mediating variable between the satisfaction of university students and the financial condition of students (Xiao et al., 2009). Academic satisfaction includes classrooms and internet, library, sports centre, student support facilities (e.g. bursary and academic department administration) and accommodation. Besides grade point average (GPA), academic achievement is also considered about the participation of student activities to develop soft skills among university students.

Other factors

The number of friends, satisfaction relationship with a friend, level of discrimination, and sharing information among international students is an important part to determine student university life happiness (Sam, 2001). However, the results of these variables in - nation are different. The findings of this research indicate that future research may take into

consideration the differentiation impact of local and international students. Furthermore, their residential conditions, mother relationships, sibling relationships, relationships with colleagues, living environments and the socioeconomic status of families are statistically significant (Chow, 2005). What is the most significant element in the happiness of university students, internally or externally? The internal factors relate to power, concentration, self-restraint and self-esteem. The external factors refer to playing time, student-life freedom, leisure time and joy.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

A survey was conducted among 381 university students in Universiti Islam Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS) and its data will collect for analysis by random sample. Permission was sought from lecturers to explain the purpose of the survey to students before distributing the structured questionnaires for self-reporting voluntarily. The research team also approached students individually at various locations such as the canteen and outside lecture halls to ensure wide coverage.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed based on an extensive review of the literature (Campara et al., 2017; Peltzer et al., 2017; Hutchinson et al., 2018; Zakaria et al., 2015; Chow, 2005; Sam, 2001). The questionnaire assessed the respondents using the Likert Scale and data analysis was carried out using SPSS. The dependent variable is student university life happiness, while dependent variables are financial difficulties, lifestyle, and health, religion, academic achievement, relationship with friends, level of discrimination, sharing information among international student, relationship with mother, relationship with a sibling, relationship with close friends, living arrangement, family's socioeconomic status, level of freedom in student life and leisure time. Pearson's correlation was used to find the association between dependent and independent variables.

Conclusion

The result becomes interesting to find out the most significant factors to determine student university life happiness. It will give information to improve the quality of education services to overcome problematic and stresses among university student either local or international student because student's happiness is an important part to determine the quality of education. The fewer students' happiness will demotivate them to finish the study. This situation reduces the effectiveness of educational goals to increase the number of knowledgeable and skilled workers in the future (Abdullah et al., 2017^a; Abdullah et al., 2017^b). Next, Malaysia will face in terms of lagging behind in global competition. However, there are a few recent studies about student university life happiness among student in

Malaysia such as Malik et al. (2013), Khor (2011), Abdullah (2011) and Boo et al. (2016) but less study found about the comparison between international and local student's university to contribute for future literature review.

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