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Subjective Well-Being Among Malaysian Students

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Subjective Well-being among Malaysian Students

By

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A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to examine the determinants of well-being in Malaysian students at home and overseas. Prior to the main study, interviews were conducted with seven PhD students of Malaysia studying in Plymouth, to explore their needs and values, and their adaptation experiences in terms of missing and enjoyment experiences abroad. Based on the interview findings and literature reviews, a questionnaire was developed and named as the Adaptation to Life Index, which consisted of two scales - 'missing experience' and 'enjoyment experience'. A longitudinal survey was carried out using Malaysian students in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, the US, Ireland, and Canada as well as students who remained in Malaysia.

At Time 1, data were collected from 1118 students who were enrolling at various overseas preparatory studying programmes and 972 first year students in one of the public university in Malaysia who were continuing their education in Malaysia. Measurements used were the *Big Five Personality Inventory* (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991), *Schwartz's Short Value Scale (SSVS)* (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005; Schwartz, 1992), *Positive and Negative Affect Scales (PANAS)* (Watson, et al, 1988), *Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)* (Diener, et al., 1985), perceived stress scale (based on the results of Malaysian Certificate of Education and perceived English language fluency), and a section on socio-demographic background. At time 2, 30 % of the participants (N= 628) were retained.

Life satisfaction for home students remained constant over time. However, life satisfaction for overseas students started much lower at Time 1 but increased at Time 2. Results showed that life satisfaction at time 1 strongly predicted life satisfaction at Time 2, but neither personality nor values were predicted life satisfaction at Time 2. Personality and values at Time 1 predicted 'missing experience at Time 2 and in the overseas students, being fluent in English predicted less 'missing experience'. There were few predictors of Time 1 for 'enjoyment' at Time 2, but fluency with English predicted better enjoyment.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee. The studies presented within this thesis all received independent ethical approval from the University of Plymouth.

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RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethical approval was obtained for all the empirical studies included in this thesis from the Science and Technology Research Ethics Committee (STREC), at the University of Plymouth. The STREC complies with both American Psychological Association, and British Psychological Society ethical standards. All participants provided fully informed consent before participating, and were informed of their right to withdraw at any point once they had commenced the study. Participants were notified that their data would be held in the strictest confidence, but would not be anonymous as would the researcher be using their email address to contact them. There was no deception used in any of the studies. A copy of ethical approval letter is provided in the Appendix C.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Research background

For many years psychology researchers have often ignored the study of the positive side of human beings (Compton, 2005). However the emergence of a new direction or orientation in psychology known as “positive psychology” has brought insights into research on human strengths and well-being. Positive psychology has been termed in various ways: such as “the scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues” (e.g. Sheldon & King, 2001, p.216) or the scientific study of optimal human functioning which aims at identifying and elevating elements that enable individuals, communities, and societies to thrive and flourish (e.g. Sheldon, Frederickson, Rathunde, Csikszentmihalyi, & Haidt, 2000).

1.2 Research motivation

This research was inspired by the question of how people increase their well-being by understanding their own values. This can be achieved by identifying which values that people think as important to their lives and having the opportunity to satisfy those values. Personality may contribute in selecting which values important to individuals, but environment may also contribute to the process. People may change the importance ranking of their values to suit the immediate environment in order to survive in the community they are living within.

Studies on values in Malaysian samples have been conducted in various perspectives, including the relations between ‘internet ethics’ and the big five personality traits amongst students (Karim, Zamzuri & Nor, 2009), comparison studies in education involving different ethnic groups (Fung, 2010) or countries (Malaki, Soriano & Valdez, 2009), body image issues (Swami & Tovée, 2005), teenage admired values (Yusof & Amin, 1999), preferences for shopping decisions and TV advertising content preferences (Ramaprasad, 1998), creating, testing and elaborating a model of values on a Malaysian sample (Keats, 1986), and in-depth understanding of a particular ethnic group in Malaysia (e.g. Malay folk beliefs (Osman, 1989)).

However, to the researcher’s knowledge, there is no empirical data on the relationship between values, personality, and subjective well-being amongst Malaysians. Therefore the aim of the research is to fill in the gap by examining the associations of these factors amongst Malaysian students. This research also investigates the extent to which adaptation experiences of Malaysian students who are studying abroad and at home may contribute to the students’ subjective well-being and values.

1.3 Definitions of subjective well-being

Definitions of what constitutes the good life are numerous and are focused on a variety of goals (Compton, 2005). Achieving important goals will commonly make one happy and feel satisfied with life. Contemporary studies in psychology have referred to ‘happiness’ and ‘life satisfaction’ as ‘subjective well-being’ (SWB) which is a common term in psychology (Compton, 2005; Minkov, 2009).

The meaning of the term SWB is ambiguous in the literature. It has sometimes been taken to mean positive affect minus negative affect (Harding, 1982; Joshanloo, 2010), sometimes life satisfaction (Veenhoven, 2012), and sometimes a combination of life

satisfaction, positive affect and low negative affect (Diener, 2000; Lu, Gilmore, Kao, Weng, Hu, Chern, Huang, & Shih, 2001; Vittersø, 2001). However, more commonly the concept of subjective well-being has been described as “a person’s evaluative reaction to his or her life either in terms of life satisfaction (cognitive evaluations according to subjectively determined standards)” or “affect (ongoing emotional reactions)” (Diener & Diener, 1995, in Minkov, 2009, p. 153). Schimmack, Radhakrishnan, Oishi, Dzokoto and Ahadi (2002) referred to “affect” as “hedonic balance” (the balance between pleasant (positive affect) and unpleasant affect (negative affect)); whilst Veenhoven (2007) referred to the cognitive facet as “contentment”.

The concept of SWB has also been broadly defined when researchers attach other positive cognitions, such as vigour and mental alertness, to it. For example, Cheng (2004) uses the term well-being appraisal (WBA) to refer to an overall evaluation of life as a whole. The same domain also includes questions pertaining to global happiness and satisfaction.

According to Ryan and Deci (2001), well-being is a complex construct which relates to optimal experience and functioning. They argued that the contemporary research on well-being has actually stemmed from two general perspectives; the *hedonic* approach, which focuses on happiness and defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance; and the *eudaimonic* approach, which focuses on meaning and self-realisation and defines well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning.

1.3.1 Hedonic wellbeing

The good life through the perspective of hedonic wellbeing is fundamentally the pursuit of individual sensual pleasures; therefore, they are short-lived (Ryan & Deci, 2001). This has resulted in continuous efforts, though they never produce a lasting effect on personal growth. However, in a broader sense, hedonic wellbeing acts as the basic motivating force behind most human behaviour, but also recognises that certain pleasures require positive social interactions

with other people (Compton, 2005). Given this view, the main aim for hedonic wellbeing is to maximise happiness in a variety of ways. The good life is defined in terms of positive emotions such as happiness contentment, satisfaction or joy (Compton, 2005).

1.3.2 Eudaimonic wellbeing

Eudaimonia tends to focus on wellbeing as a function of fulfilling one's potential. In this approach, not all the outcomes that a person might value would bring happiness if achieved, but fulfilling of one's *daimon* or 'true nature' and finding one's 'true self' (Ryan & Deci, 2001) would. Happiness is achieved when an individual lives in accordance with the values and virtues that are the most desirable and most indicative of the best good (Ryan & Deci, 2001). By doing this human potential can be expanded and more opportunities cultivated for personal growth. Eudaimonia has been explained by Robinson (1990, in Compton, 2005, p.15) as:

That condition of flourishing and completeness that constitutes true and enduring joy...[E]udaimonia is not merely a set of pleasures or creature comforts or Epicurean delights. It is a life lived in a certain way, where life here refers to life-on-whole, not some number of moments strung together. Progress toward this end calls for the recognition that the better course of action is not the one that invariably satisfies the current desire or even an abiding desire...To be wise is to strive for a condition of moral perfection or virtue (arête) by which the "golden mean" is found and adopted in all of the significant affairs of life.

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to wellbeing have played a major role in defining the good life. Aristotle, for example, proposed twelve basic virtues as dispositions of character that, when cultivated, lead a person toward a state of eudemonia, i.e. courage, liberality, pride (as self-respect), friendliness, wittiness, justice

temperance, magnificence, good temper, truthfulness, shame (or appropriate guilt for our transgressions), and honour (Compton, 2005, p. 16).

1.3.3 Cultural elements in defining subjective well-being

Previous studies have found a few indications of the important role of culture in defining subjective well-being. People from individualistic, rich and democratic societies, are often reported to be happier than people from collectivist, poor and totalitarian societies (Schimmack et al., 2002). Positive correlation between hedonic balance and life satisfaction is frequently reported amongst individualistic people (Kang, Shaver, Sue, Min & Jing, 2003). In a study involving 52 nations for the World Values Survey and European Values Study it was demonstrated that people in high-income countries are much happier and are more satisfied with life than are people of low-income countries; however, in the richest societies, economic development was found to be a weak contributor to higher levels of subjective well-being (Inglehart, Foa, Peterson and Welzel, 2008). These results showed that people are more led by a growing sense of freedom, including maximising self-expression and free choice, rather than emphasising economic development in contributing to rising happiness (Inglehart et al., 2008).

However, the typical trend of psychological research which tends to be Western in origin, ideas and instrumentation, has already been criticised as ignoring other cultural elements that are more salient in defining happiness in some cultures, such as “harmony of interpersonal relationships, achievement at work, and contentment with life” (Lu, Gilmour and Kao, 2001, p. 480). The variations in the meaning of happiness could be explained by different ways of construing the self, others and the relations between the self and others in the society (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, 1994, in Lu et al., 2001a). People with independent self-construal are believed to be bounded with tasks concerning articulating the self, appreciating inner features, upholding one’s own goals, and having straightforward communication, which characterises an individualist culture (Lu et al., 2001a, p. 480). Therefore, they are expected to

be in control of their own actions, whereas for people with interdependent self-construal, they encounter tasks of belonging and fitting-in, occupying one's proper place, engaging in appropriate action, encouraging others' goals, and being indirect in social interactions which require them to preserve harmony in order to fulfil these tasks, which characterises a collectivist culture (Lu et al., 2001a, p. 480).

Lu et al. (2001a) examined the relationships between interdependence and independent self-construal and 'relationship harmony' and 'active control' beliefs amongst 550 and 196 country residents in Taiwan and in the UK. They also studied the whether these beliefs could guide people's everyday social interaction and contribute to overall happiness. The results showed that in both samples, significant correlations were found between independent self-construal and control belief, as well as between interdependent self-construal and harmony belief. The first correlation was found to be stronger among the British and the latter to be stronger among the Taiwanese. Also, both beliefs correlated with the overall and specific experiences of social interaction. Experiences of social interaction and both beliefs contributed to happiness. Results further revealed that independent self-construal was predictive of greater negative and conflictual feelings only for the Taiwanese, but it was not related to negative feelings and predictive of fewer conflictual feelings for the British. These interesting findings suggest that cultural elements do play an immense role in shaping the psychological process, including in defining happiness.

Recently, a more situational definition of subjective well-being has been produced in this line of research. Tananuraksakul and Hall (2011) have examined the psychological concept of wellbeing amongst international students in Australia from the perspective of emotional security and dignity responses to their English language proficiency. This study proposed that low English proficiency will turn one into being less confident; thus intensifying the feelings

of being emotionally insecure. These negative emotions will be seen as a threat to one's face and identity, which downgrades the dignity of the person.

1.4 Theories of happiness

1.4.1 Set-point theory

In psychology, it is believed that every individual has his own 'set-point' of happiness which stems from genetics and personality (Easterlin, 2003). The idea of a happiness set point, which was originally proposed by Lykken and Tellegen (1996), explains that most people have an average level of happiness or a baseline level of well-being (set point) that they return to after adjusting to the effects of temporary highs and lows in emotionality. People may vary in terms of their set points. If a person's set point is directed towards positive emotionality, he or she may tend to be optimistic and cheerful most of the time.

On the contrary, if a person's set point leans toward negative emotionality, there might be a tendency for him or her to be pessimistic and worry most of the time compared to others. This is also explained by studies on temperament or basic emotional reactions to events by Jerome Kagan (in Compton, 2005) which implied that a person who is born with an outgoing or extroverted temperament tends to feel happy, whilst in the study by Schimmack et al. (2002) happiness was characterised as "a stable extroversion".

1.4.2 Self-actualisation and well-being

According to the humanist psychologist Carl Rogers (1959), every human being shares the same basic motive, i.e. a tendency to self-actualise (in Compton, 2005). In order to achieve self-actualisation, people must be in the state of 'congruence', i.e. when ideal self is in equilibrium with actual self (self-image) (Compton, 2005). People who are highly aware of

their own capabilities and live in a supportive environment can find ways to fulfil their potential. By reaching this, the person will be a fully-functioning individual (Compton, 2005).

1.5 Working definitions for well-being variables

For this research, subjective well-being has been described in terms of the levels of positive and negative affect, and satisfaction with life. However, throughout this research, both affect variables and life satisfaction will be analysed separately, as they are different in their predictive power regardless of being connected to one another (Schimmack et al., 2002).

1.5.1 Positive and negative affect

Emotional experiences can be described by two broad dimensions. These dimensions have been defined in terms of activation or arousal, and pleasantness or evaluation (Larsen & Diener, 1992; Averill, 1997, in Carr, 2004). Activation or arousal ranges from highly activated or aroused to a low level of activation or arousal. Pleasantness or evaluation ranges from pleasant or positive to unpleasant or negative. Positive affectivity is correlated with the personality trait extroversion and negative affectivity is correlated with the trait neuroticism. Positive affectivity is made up of sub-dimensions of joviality (e.g. cheerful, happy, lively), self-assurance (e.g. confident, strong, daring), and attentiveness (e.g. alert, concentrating, determined).

Both negative and positive affectivity represent the experiential components of neurobiological systems that have evolved to address different evolutionary tasks (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). Negative affectivity is one aspect of the avoidance-oriented behavioural inhibition system (Carr, 2004) whose function is to instigate avoidance- behaviour and inhibit approach-behaviour in order to protect the organism from situations that may involve danger, pain or punishment. On the contrary, positive affect is part of the behavioural facilitation system which grooms the organism toward possibly gratifying situations that may

produce joy or contentment. In this study the definition of positive and negative affect is based on the 20-item Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) of Watson et al. (1988).

1.5.2 Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction refers to a cognitive-judgemental aspect of well-being. It is often used to describe how people generally assess their quality of life according to their chosen criteria or appropriate standard (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). A cognitive process is involved here when a person needs to consider the outcomes in life against the alternative outcomes and make a judgement whether he/she is satisfied with the result of that comparison (Compton, 2005) based on the standard which an individual sets for him/herself (Diener et al., 1985).

In this study, the definition of life satisfaction is based on the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) of Diener et al. (1985). As individuals may have different views or place different values on some criterion of life satisfaction, Diener and associates thought it would be a better solution to ask people for their overall evaluation of their life, rather than summing across assessment of their satisfaction with specific domains, in order to acquire a measure of life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985).

1.6 Definition of personality

Personality has been described as “consisting of more or less stable internal factors that make one person’s behaviour consistent from one time to another, and different from the behaviour other people would manifest in comparable situations” (Child, 1968, in Eysenck, 1996, p. 317). Personality is believed to be determined by biological processes, which result in certain types of predispositions within individuals. These predispositions – otherwise known as temperament - describe an individual’s typical moods and activity level which is assumed to

be largely determined by heredity (Eysenck, 1996). The assumption that the invariance of personality would be reflected in the stable rank-ordering of individuals in their behaviour in any given dimension assessed with the cross-situational consistency coefficient has been challenged by persistent findings that yielded low correlations in the individual's behaviour found from one situation to another, which has led to a prolonged "person vs. situation" debate in personality research (Mischel, 2004). As there is a need to consider both person and situation in explaining an individual's behaviour, the social cognitive view of personality was proposed which took "into account the situation and its meaning for the individual, and may be seen in the stable interactions and interplay between them" (Mischel, 2004, p. 5).

Personality also has been referred to an individual's unique pattern of traits – any "distinguishable, relatively enduring way in which one individual differs from others" (Guilford, 1959, in Bilsky & Schwartz, 1994, p. 165). A working definition of personality in this research is described by John and Srivastava (1999) through the 44 items of the Big Five Inventory (BFI).

1.7 Theories of personality

1.7.1 The Big Five personality

The Five Factor Model of personality has been assumed to derive from Cattell's (1943) pioneering study in identifying a shared taxonomy of standard applicable personality adjectives (in John, Nauman & Soto, 2008). As a starting point, based on Allport and Odbert's (1936) list of personality lexicon, Cattell made a massive reduction from 4,500 trait terms to 35 variables (in John et al., 2008). He then performed several oblique rotational factorial analyses on the variables, and finally came out with twelve factors which formed a part of the 16 personality

factors (John et al., 2008). The validity and reliability of Cattell's 16 personality factors have been questioned by other scholars. For example, Barret and Kline (1982, in Eysenck, 1991) ran extensive factorial analyses on a sample of data on 491 university students and suggested that only between 7 to 9 factors were verified. This has inspired researchers to undertake further investigations, such as Fiske (1949), who constructed much simplified descriptions of Cattell's variables and found a similar factor structure of personality across different types of rating system; and Tupes and Christal (1961) who reanalysed Fiske's factors across different samples and rating systems, eventually finding five relatively strong factors (in John et al., 2008).

This five-factor structure was replicated by a few researchers later on, including Norman (1963), who labelled the factors as: "(i) Extroversion or Surgency (talkative, assertive, energetic) (ii) Agreeableness (good-natured, cooperative, trustful), (iii) Conscientiousness (orderly, responsible, dependable), (iv) Emotional stability vs. Neuroticism (calm, not neurotic, not easily upset), and (v) Culture (intellectual, polished, independent-minded)" (in John, et al., 2008, p. 119).

Five factors have been assessed in the 240 items of the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) or the briefer 60-item NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) (Costa and McCrae, 1992). Goldberg (1992, in Carr, 2004) also developed 100-unipolar item and 50-bipolar item trait descriptive adjective checklists to assess the five factors. Later, the Big Five Inventory (BFI) was developed which consisted of 44 items (John & Srivastava, 1999). The reliability and validity of these instruments were reported to be good (in Carr, 2004). The five factors are known as: Extroversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Openness, and Neuroticism. Brief explanations on each of the five factors are as follows (in Carr, 2004): (a) Extroversion is associated with good social adjustment and success in leadership, management and sales positions, (b) Emotional stability, which is the opposite end of Neuroticism, is associated with good mental health and physical health, (c) Openness to experience is

associated with creativity and a disposition towards absorption and peak experiences, (d) Agreeableness is associated with altruism, good interpersonal relationships, within work and social contexts, and (e) Conscientiousness is highly predictive of occupational performances.

1.7.2 Inter-correlation studies of the Big Five Inventory measures

Personality traits in the Big Five theory are conceptually distinct, but have been found to be empirically correlated. DeYoung, Peterson and Higgins (2002) in their study amongst 245 university students and 222 individuals of a community sample recruited around Toronto, Canada, found that Neuroticism correlated negatively with Extroversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. However, the Openness scale did not significantly relate to Neuroticism, but its correlation magnitude remained negative, while significant positive correlations were found between Extroversion and Openness, Agreeableness, Openness, and Conscientiousness. However, Openness did not correlate significantly with Conscientiousness.

In a larger sample of 16,363 participants across 52 countries, Extroversion positively correlated the most to Openness, followed by Conscientiousness and Agreeableness (Schmitt, 2004). A similar negative pattern of correlation emerged between Neuroticism and the rest of the personality traits, with Agreeableness being the strongest. Positive inter-correlation was also found between Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Openness. Finally, positive correlation showed between Agreeableness and Openness was the lowest, which apparently aligned with the theory.

1.7.3 Higher-order personality theory

Recent findings have shown that the description of personality that is normally explained by the five factorial model of personality may also be described in the broadest sense by more higher-order factors. Through a factorial analysis, Digman (1997) found two higher-order

personality factors, which he termed as Alpha and Beta. Alpha was made up by a combination of Agreeableness, Emotional stability and Conscientiousness, whilst Beta was composed of the combination of Extroversion and Openness. This study has been replicated by DeYoung, et al. (2002) who found the same results and named the two factors as ‘Stability’ and ‘Plasticity’.

Using the exploratory factorial analysis method, Blackburn, Renwick, Donnelly and Logan (2004) tested the NEO-FFI and confirmed the existence of the ‘big two’ personality dimensions, known as ‘impulsivity’ (I) and ‘withdrawal’ (W) traits, which is the resemblance of the Alpha and Beta personality factors. However, the effort to explain personality as broadly as possible does not stop there.

More recently, researchers have come out with a one-factor solution to personality. For example, Erdle, Gosling and Potter (2009) found that both the Stability factor (denoted by Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Emotional stability) and the Plasticity factor (denoted by Extroversion and Openness) positively correlated with self-esteem, which was later on reconfirmed in Erdle, Irwing, Rushton and Park’s (2010) study. Detailed reviews of the higher-order factors of personality can be found in Chapter 2.

1.8 Values

Values have been understood by scholars of various disciplines as the criteria people use to evaluate actions, people, including the self, and events (William, 1968; Kluckhohn, 1951, in Schwartz, 2003). According to Martynowicz (2006), people evaluate actions based on what they perceive as “ought to” be done or following what has been normally accepted in the society.

Rokeach (1973) defines values in a much broader perspective as the ability to unify the apparently diverse interests of all the sciences concerned with human behaviour, while Schwartz (1990) defines values in a narrower sense as: “people’s conceptions of the goals that serve as guiding principles in their lives” (p. 142). Locke and Henne (1986) describe goals as “a means of actualising value...” which are “the mechanism by which values are translated into action” (in Parks & Guay, 2009, p. 676). Values express basic human needs (Schwartz, 1992; Roccas, Schwartz, & Amit, 2010) that are necessary or required in life, and also things that are desirable, worthwhile and important. As motives are a cognitive representation of a goal regardless of having a connection to either action or affect, therefore values can also be considered as an individual’s motives (Feather, 1995; Kagan, 1972).

Feather (1995) commented that values do not change, but people may feel restless and react if their core values are challenged or not fulfilled. The strength of the motives or values may affect the extent to which efforts are invested in the person’s activity. If the efforts do not reach a satisfactory level, the individual’s subjective wellbeing may be affected (Feather, 1995).

Schwartz (1992; 2003) proposed a unifying theory of human motivation, encapsulating aspects of different needs, motives and goals, later known as the theory of basic values. According to Schwartz, values may contradict one another, while others are congruent. However, the degree of importance attributed to each value may vary across culturally diverse groups. The working definition of values throughout this research is based on Schwartz’s (2003) explanation on ten values which are explained further in a section on theories of motivation of this chapter. In this research, there are two ways of studying values, i.e. (i) the importance of each value as a guiding principle of life, and (ii) satisfaction of values through fulfilment of the goals of each value. According to Fornerino, Jolibert, Sánchez and Zhang (2011), satisfaction derives from fulfilment of goals from a specific situation which indicates

that they are more concrete than values, such that they enable a person to articulate needs in a concrete way by focusing on specific stimuli such as money, prestige, power, curiosity or achievement. Fornerino et al. (2011) confirmed this through a study on 720 participants from three countries: the United States, China and France. They found that the explanatory power of goals was greater than the explanatory power of values in terms of intention to stay abroad amongst the French and Chinese samples. They concluded that, because values represent a higher level of abstraction than goals, they are less capable of explaining people's behaviour. Therefore, in this study, values satisfaction is measured through fulfilment of the goals of related values.

1.9 Theories of motivation

1.9.1 Needs theory

The things people perceive as the most important and thrived for are considered as needs or necessities that may vary between people and their situational contexts. According to Maslow (1970), these needs motivate people towards accomplishing certain goals related to the needs (in Compton, 2005). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often represented in the shape of a pyramid, with the most basic level of needs at the bottom, and the need for self-actualisation at the top. Maslow called the first four tiers of the pyramid "deficiency needs" or "D-needs": esteem, friendship and love, security and physical needs (in Compton, 2005). With the exception of the most fundamental (physiological) needs, if these "deficiency needs" are not met, then the individual will feel a lack of the qualities that are necessary for basic psychological adjustment. If these needs are met, one feels relatively secure, connected to others, loved, holds a deep self-respect, and the need for self-actualisation or the "being needs" (known as well as "B-needs") – e.g. truth, justice, beauty, wholeness, richness, playfulness,

meaningfulness and goodness - becomes more crucial (in Compton, 2005, p. 162). In fulfilling the B-needs, sometimes one has to encounter a common conflict in life – security versus growth. For Maslow, the self-actualising person is characterised by a willingness to risk the security of the known and comfortable for the potential growth that can come from embracing a new challenge. Therefore, he believed that the self-actualised people are motivated by the B-needs that, in embracing the new challenge, serve as an attempt to realise their potential (in Compton, 2005, pp. 162-163).

However, Maslow's theory of needs has been criticised due to the constraints of defining the concept of need empirically. This has led researchers to translate the understanding of needs into various perspectives such as goals, personal strivings, meaning in life, purpose of life and life aspirations. Humanistic theorists such as Rogers (1963), Fromm (1976) and even Maslow (1954) have suggested that what we perceive as important in life and what we wish for to some extent affect our level of wellbeing (in Chan & Joseph, 2000).

1.9.2 Self-determination theory (SDT)

Self-determination theory (SDT) holds a global perspective of human motivation as it deals with fundamental issues in psychology, including personality development, self-regulation, universal psychological needs, life goals and aspirations, energy and vitality, non-conscious process, the relations of culture to motivation, and the impact of social environments on motivation, affect, behaviour and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 182). People who are intrinsically motivated are often found to be positively associated with self-esteem, creativity, improvements in performance, persistence and general well-being, compared to people who are motivated by external rewards.

According to SDT, there are three basic universal psychological needs, i.e. *autonomy*, *relatedness* and *competence*, that must be satisfied for effective functioning and psychological health (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomy refers to “the need to make

independent decisions about areas in life that are important to the person”; *relatedness* refers to “the need for mutually supportive interpersonal relationships”, and *competence* refers to “the need for mastery experiences that allows a person to deal effectively with her or his environment” (Deci and Ryan, 1985, in Compton, 2005, p. 35). There are two underlying distinctive motivational orientations in SDT, i.e. *autonomous motivation* and *controlled motivation*. Autonomous motivation involves both intrinsic motivation and the types of extrinsic motivation in which “people have identified with an activity’s value”, and “ideally will have integrated it into their sense of self” (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 182).

On the other hand, *controlled motivation* is characterised by both external regulation and introjected regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2008). External regulation explains how one’s behaviour is a function of external contingencies of reward or punishment. Introjected regulation explains that the regulation of action has been partially internalised, and is motivated by factors such as approval motive, avoidance of shame, contingent self-esteem and ego-involvements. When people are autonomously motivated, they experience “volition or self-endorsement of their action”, whilst when people are controlled, they experience “pressure to think, feel, or behave in particular ways” (Ryan & Deci, 2008, p. 182). Past research has shown that greater well-being is associated with “the pursuit of goals that are more meaningful, more integrated with the self, more aligned with the true self, and more autonomous” (Compton, 2005, p. 167).

1.9.3 Self-concordance theory

Another approach in studying motivation is through the self-concordance perspective. Sheldon, Elliot, Ryan, Chirkov, Kim, Wu, Demir, and Sun (2004) extended studies on value priorities

by examining a theory of self-concordance. In the theory, a self-concordant person is assumed to be an individual who voluntarily displays his or her own choice of goals based on his or her actual interests, passions, core values and beliefs. On the other hand, non-concordant individuals are those who pursue goals because they feel like being forced to. The idea of measuring self-concordance was actually derived from self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991, 2000, in Sheldon, et al., 2004), and its concept of perceived locus of causality continuum (PLOC). PLOC raises two important ideas here: whether a person pursues goals because himself/herself wants to choose them (“I” chose them - internal perceived locus of causality or I-PLOC), or because of situational factors, or external perceived locus of causality (E-PLOC) which make them choose those goals.

In previous studies on Western samples, self-concordant was found to be associated with subjective well-being, which increases overtime. Sheldon et al. (2004) suggested that self-concordant might be a “culturally invariant need” or benefit for human beings although they found no support for this idea. However, there was some empirical data later on that focused on the importance of internal motivation within a non-Western sample as well, such as the work done Chirkov, Ryan, Kim and Kaplan (2003), Hayamizu, (1997) and Yamaguchi and Tanaka (1998) (in Sheldon, et al., 2004). These findings were somewhat unconvincing as they contradicted the results of previous studies with non-Western samples, stressing that not all cultures (especially collectivist ones) support proactive effort towards self-betterment. In an interdependent society, goals are directed towards ‘fitting’ in and maintaining harmonious relationships with others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and goals related to self-expression and independence are not encouraged (Oishi, 2000). This led Sheldon et al. (2004) into studying this area again by assessing personal goals, self-concordance and subjective well-being (SWB) within four different cultures: the United States, China, Taiwan and South Korea. The results

showed that self-concordance significantly predicted subjective well-being in almost every culture, which also explained that people were mostly autonomous than controlled.

1.9.4 Schwartz's value theory

Schwartz (1992) came up with a theory of basic values that comprised of ten motivationally apparent value orientations and specified the dynamics of conflict and congruence among these values. This theory explains elements of the human psychological structure that are fundamental and common to all individuals. This theory was actually constructed by Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, 1990) through a conceptual definition of values, which outlined five common characteristics of values: “(a) concepts or beliefs, (b) about desirable end states or behaviours, (c) that transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance” (p. 551). The major content aspect of a value holds a motivational concern or a type of goal (Schwartz, 1992).

Values are cognitive representations of three types of universal human requirements, i.e. the biologically based needs of the organism, needs of coordinated social interaction, and the welfare and survival needs of a social institution (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990). Initially, eight universal and distinctive motivational domains or types of values were drawn from literature reviews on these universal human requirements, known as enjoyment, security, achievement, self-direction, restrictive-conformity, pro-social, social power and maturity (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). Each domain was followed by a description in parenthesis that clarified or elaborated the meaning of each motivational domain. Value descriptions from Rokeach's (1973) value questionnaire were used as value markers. Because there was no direct marker relevant to social power in Rokeach's list of value descriptions, social power had been excluded from the study (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987).

A 36-value item questionnaire was completed by 455 Israeli teachers and 331 Germany college students in separate studies. They were asked to rank the values in a list for importance as guiding principles in their life, and then they were instructed to compare each adjacent pair of values

and to indicate how much more important the higher ranked value was than the value ranked below it, by using a 7-point scale (7= much more important, 1= virtually identical importance (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). Data were analysed through Pearson correlation coefficients that were based on the value importance ratings serving as the data matrix. Guttman Lingoes Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), which is one of the non-metric multidimensional scaling analysis techniques for structural analysis of similarity data, was run on the data matrix (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). This technique will generate a series of two-dimensional projections of multidimensional space.

The results are based on interpretations of the regional configurations of items of these two dimensional projections. The division into meaningful regions was accomplished by drawing partition lines according to the facet definition of the values, and regions are marked by empty space around them (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). The results displayed that people distinguished values according to the theorised end-state behaviour dichotomy - instrumental and terminal values. The relations amongst the seven theoretically derived motivational domains were found to be distinguishable by interests. For example, achievement, enjoyment and self-direction values would serve individualistic interests, whereas pro-social and restrictive conformity values would serve as collectivist interests. Several sets of motivational domains were contiguous (e.g. smooth social relations was characterised by pro-social, restrictive conformity, and security; self-enhancement by achievement and enjoyment, and being comfortable with and relying on one's unique experience and capacities by maturity and self-direction). Values were found to be contradicted by one another in the following sets of domains; (a) self-direction vs. restrictive conformity, (b) pro-social vs. achievement, (c) enjoyment vs. pro-social, (d) achievement vs. security (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987).

This study had been extended by comparing data from seven countries: the United States, Australia, Finland, Hong Kong and Spain, including the earlier German and Israeli samples (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987; 1990). In this study, the samples were taken from various groups representing university students, teachers and adults. Excluding the Hong Kong and German and

Israeli samples, all participants were asked to rank the 18 terminal values and 18 instrumental values from most to least important, and for the Hong Kong participants, they were asked to rate each of the values on a 9-point scale ranging from (1) “no importance for me at all” to (9) “supreme importance for me”. The data were analysed using the same statistical method as in the previous study with German and Israeli samples. The results confirmed the universal existence of 7 basic motivational domains and replicated the findings of compatibility of values. The findings also revealed that the universality of the principles values priorities were similar across cultures except in Hong Kong, which suggested that value interest might impact distinguishing values in all samples (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990).

Another study carried out by Schwartz (1992) involved some modifications to the earlier version of the theory. In this study, a 56-value item questionnaire, tapping on 11 motivational types of values: self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, spirituality, benevolence and universalism were used. This questionnaire was administered to a much bigger sample from 20 countries (Australia, Brazil, China, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Taiwan, United States, Venezuela and Zimbabwe). Most samples were teachers and university students. Participants were asked to rate each value as “a guiding principle in my life”, using a nine-point scale from “supremely important” (7) to “opposed to my values” (-1) (Schwartz, 1992, p. 17). The same statistical analysis was run on the data. The results showed that spirituality types as a distinct region of values were found in only 8 samples. Therefore, it was dropped from the value list in future studies. From then on, the remaining 10 motivational types of values were integrated as the Schwartz Value Scale (SVS) and have since been robustly used in values research. The following is the explanation of the values and related goals according to Schwartz (2003):

- i. Self-direction – derives from the organismic needs for control and mastery; and interactional requirement of autonomy and independence. Among the defining goals are

creativity, freedom, choosing own goals, curiosity, independence, self-respect, intelligence, and privacy.

- ii. Stimulation – derives from the organismic need for variety and stimulation in order to maintain an optimal, positive rather than threatening level of activation. This need is somewhat redundant with needs underlying self-direction values. Defining goals are excitement, novelty and challenge in life.
- iii. Hedonism – derives from organismic needs and the pleasure associated with satisfying them. Defining goals are to gain pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself or self-indulgence.
- iv. Achievement – derives from the survival needs of individuals and societies in general in order to emphasise demonstrating competence in terms of prevailing cultural standards and thus obtaining social approval. Defining goals are personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standard.
- v. Power – derives as an essential element for social institutions to function effectively which requires some degree of status differentiation. These values emphasise maintaining social self-esteem. The defining goals include social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
- vi. Security – derive from basic individual and group requirements, for example individual healthiness and national security. These two subtypes of values - individual and group - can therefore be merged into a more encompassing value, such as social order, family security, and sense of belonging. The defining goals are safety, harmony, stability of society, of relationship, and of self.
- vii. Conformity – derives from the requirement that individuals inhibit inclinations that might disrupt and undermine smooth interaction and group functioning. Conformity values

emphasise self-restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.

- viii. Tradition – defined goals are respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides. Practices, beliefs, symbols and ideas developed in groups represent the shared experience and fate, which authorises the groups' unity. They are often portrayed as religious rites, beliefs and norms of behaviour. Tradition and conformity values are to some extent redundant in terms of the goal of subordinating the self in favour of socially imposed expectations. However, there are also differences between them. Conformity entails subordination to persons with whom one is in frequent interaction, such as parents and teachers, while tradition entails subordination to more abstract objects – religion and cultural custom and ideas. Conformity values urge responsiveness to current, possibly changing expectations, while traditional values demand responsiveness to irreversible expectations set down in the past.
- ix. Benevolence – derives from the basic requirement for smooth group functioning, and from the organismic need for affiliation. Benevolence values emphasise voluntary concern for others' welfare (such as helpfulness, honesty, true friendship, loyalty), sense of belonging, meaning in life, and spiritual life. Benevolence and conformity share the same features of promoting cooperation and support in social relations; however, the difference between them is benevolence values provide an internalised motivational base for such behaviour, whilst conforming values promote cooperation in avoiding negative outcomes for the self. Defining goal preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the in-group).
- x. Universalism – derives from the survival needs of individuals and groups. These needs are only recognised when people come into contact with those outside the extended primary group and until they become aware of the scarcity of natural resources. There are

two types of concern in the universalism values – for the welfare of those in the larger society and the world; and for nature (e.g. broad-minded, social justice, equality, world peace, world of beauty, unity with nature, wisdom and protecting the environment), and inner harmony (spirituality). Among the defining goals are appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.

In order to see whether simultaneous pursuit of pairs of value types is compatible, these pairs of types would emerge in adjacent regions in all cultures that are being compared. Nine pairs of value types were specified. Results showed that at least 88% of samples were concerned with: “(1) enhancement of others and transcendence of selfish interests (identified by benevolence and universalism), (2) one’s own judgement and comfort with diversity (self-direction and universalism), (3) intrinsic motivation for mastery and novelty (self-direction and stimulation), (4) self-restraint and submission (tradition and conformity), (5) protecting order and harmony in relations (conformity and security), and (6) social desirability and esteem (power and achievement)” (Schwartz, 1992, pp. 42-43). The rest of the pairs showed common organising emphases, supported in at least 70% of samples: (1) “egoistic self-indulgence (hedonism and achievement)”, (2) “desire for affectively pleasant arousal (hedonism and stimulation)”, and (3) “control of uncertainty (security and power)” (Schwartz, 1992, p. 43). The results also revealed that the common structure of value types consists of 4 higher order value types that form two bi-polar dimensions. The first dimension is called “openness to change vs. conservation (later known as embeddedness)” as it locates a combination of stimulation and self-direction values in opposition to a combination of security, conformity and traditional values. The second dimension is called “self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence” as it places a combination of power, hedonism, and achievement in opposition to a combination of universalism and benevolence values. Schwartz (1992) suggested that there could be more variants of the alternative value structure, as the results displayed deviations from the ideal structure, mostly

amongst samples from several countries which shared a common feature of having less exposure to Western culture. The structure of the values is depicted in the circular diagramme in Figure 1.

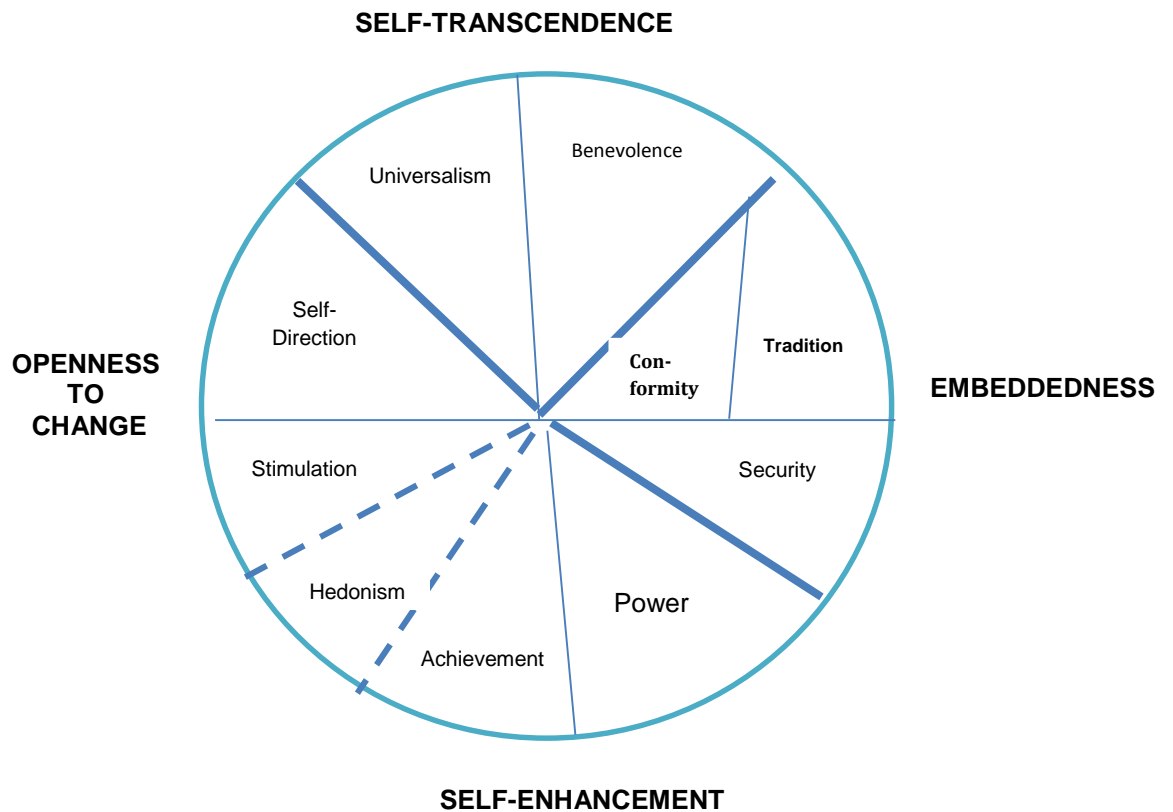


Figure 1: The theoretical structure of relations among motivational types of values
Source: Adapted from Schwartz (1992)

Schwartz's cultural domains vs. Hofstede's cultural dimensions

At the individual level, Schwartz (1992) found two basic dimensions of values, i.e. *Self-transcendence* vs. *Self-enhancement* and *Embeddedness* vs. *Openness*. At the cultural level, based on the data of 122 samples from 49 nations, Schwartz (1994) found seven value types: (1) *Embeddedness* - a society that emphasises close-knit harmonious relations, the maintenance of the status-quo and avoids actions that disturb traditional order, (2) *Intellectual autonomy* - a society that recognises individuals as autonomous entities who are entitled to pursue their own

intellectual interests and desires, (3) *Affective autonomy* - a society that recognises individuals as autonomous entities who are entitled to pursue their stimulation and hedonistic interests and desires, (4) *Hierarchy* - a society that emphasises the legitimacy of hierarchical roles and resource allocation, (5) *Mastery* - a society that emphasises active mastery of the social environment and the individual's right to get ahead of other people, (6) *Egalitarian* - a society that emphasises the transcendence of selfless interests, and (7) *Harmony* - a society that emphasises harmony with nature (in Ng, Lee & Soutar, 2007, p. 169), which is summarised in 3 dimensions: (1) *embeddedness vs. harmony*, (2) *hierarchy vs. egalitarianism*, (3) *mastery vs. harmony* (Schwartz, 1999).

According to Ng, et al. (2007), the findings of Schwartz's (1994) cultural level value types somewhat overlap with Hofstede's (1980, 1983) theory of cultural dimensions. Hofstede derived his cultural dimensional framework from his earlier studies involving IBM employees in 40 countries, which has marked an outstanding attempt to identify national cultural dimensions that could be used in comparing cultures (Ng, et al., 2007). Throughout his research work, four cultural dimensions are identified: (a) *Power distance* – i.e. the extent to which “people accept that power in institutions and organisations is distributed normally”, (b) *Uncertainty avoidance* – the extent to which “people feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity”, (c) *Individualism* – “a preference for a loosely knit social framework in which individuals take care of themselves and their immediate families”. The other end of this dimension explains about collectivism – “a preference for a close social framework in which individuals expect relatives, clan, or others-in-group to look after them, in exchange for loyalty”, (d) *Masculinity* – “a preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material success rather than femininity, which is a preference for relationships, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life” (Ng et al., 2007, p. 167). As both frameworks show similarities between them, especially in their attempts to identify national cultural dimensions that could

be used for culture comparison, and because of the existence of associations in dimensions between both frameworks (Schwartz, 1994), there is a possibility that the two measures of cultural dimensions are congruent. Therefore Ng et al. (2007) ran a comparison study on Schwartz's and Hofstede's frameworks of cultural dimensions using samples from 23 countries to investigate the extent to which the two frameworks are congruent with one another.

In this study, cultural distance scores were calculated between a set of countries for which Hofstede's and Schwartz's data were available. Australia was chosen as the target country, whereby cultural distance scores from Australia were calculated for each of the frameworks and the correlation between the two cultural distance scores was computed. Kogut and Singh's (1988) formula was used to calculate the relevant scores for each of the frameworks, which is an arithmetic average of the variance-corrected differences between Hofstede's (1980) four cultural dimension scores for the two countries of interest (in Ng, et al., 2007). Congruence between the two frameworks was assessed by comparing the correlation coefficients between the two measures (Ng et al., 2007). The results showed insignificant negative correlation, suggesting that the two frameworks are not congruent. Further analyses showed that cultural distance scores based on Schwartz's cultural values significantly predicted international trade, whilst Hofstede's cultural values did not (Ng et al., 2007). Thus, Schwartz's values may have a higher prospect of explaining greater cultural variation than Hofstede's values.

1.9.5 Extrinsic and intrinsic goals

Kasser and colleagues have become involved substantially in researching the attaining of two types of goal, extrinsic and intrinsic goals, and its relations to achieving happiness. The extrinsic goals are also referred to the instrumental or materialistic type of goals which focused on attaining rewards and praise. On the other hand, intrinsic goals are goals that are pursued to satisfy an

individual's internal need. Kasser and Ryan (1993) came out with the original version of the Aspiration Index (AI) which consisted of four domains of aspirations i.e. self-acceptance, affiliation, community feelings and financial success. Later, four more aspirational domains, i.e. image, popularity, physical health, and spirituality (Kasser & Ryan, 1996) were added to the original version of AI. In the AI, participants are asked to rate the importance of a variety of possible goals they may have for the future on different kinds of dimensions.

Later, Grouzet, Kasser, Ahuvia, Dols, Kim, Lau, Ryan, Saunders, Schmuck, and Sheldon (2005) added 3 more dimensions to the previous domains of aspirations, i.e. conformity, safety, security and hedonism, which made up a total of 11 domains. In this study, 47-items of AI were validated in a sample of more than 1,800 college students from 15 countries. Results showed that 11 clusters of aspiration domains emerged and were organised across cultures in a circumplex fashion; intrinsic (e.g. self-acceptance, affiliation) vs. extrinsic (e.g. financial success, image), and self-transcendent (e.g. spirituality) vs. physical (e.g. hedonism). This is almost the same as Schwartz's theory of values as it is also presented in a circumplex way with two dimensions of values: Openness vs. Embeddedness and Self-transcendence vs. Self-enhancement.

1.10 Relationships between values and personality

The relationship between the personality traits and values has been noted by several scholars. Rokeach (1973) mentioned that personality traits can be "reformulated from an interval, phenomenological standpoint as a system of values" (p. 20). In Furnham's (1984) study among 70 college students, using the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire and Rokeach Value Survey, it was found that unstable introverts rated "freedom" and "self-respect" more highly than the other groups – stable introverts, unstable extroverts and stable extroverts. The neurotics rated "inner harmony" more and "comfortable life" less highly than non-neurotics, whereas, stable

and unstable extroverts rated an “exciting life” more than stable and unstable introverts. Furnham concluded that the more fearful, conforming and neurotic a person is, the more likely he or she will be to have a conservative mind; whilst the more impulsive, risk-taking and extroverted the person is the more radical he or she is. These results suggested that people of different needs and self-concepts would also be different in the importance of their values.

Pozzebon and Ashton (2009), who ran a self and peer-reported survey of values, value-related behaviours and personality amongst 252 university students in America, found that correlations existed between personality dimensions and values. In their study, the Schwartz Value Scale (SVS) and the HEXACO Personality Inventory (HEXACO-PI) were used to measure value and personality. The acronym HEXACO derives from six broad dimensions of personality: Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience. The current study used the shorter version of the HEXACO-PI, in which there are 16 items for each of the six broad factor-level scales presented with a 5-point response scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Five correlations were found between the scales. The personality dimension Honesty-Humility negatively correlated with Power ($r = -.53$) and positively correlated with Benevolence ($r = .45$) and Universalism ($r = .36$), whilst Openness to experience correlated positively with Self-Direction ($r = .38$) and Universalism ($r = .42$).

Haslam, Whelan and Bastian (2009) found that the personality dimension Extroversion correlated the most with Stimulation, Hedonism and Self-direction values (which falls in the “Openness to change” component), Agreeableness with Benevolence (“prosocial values”), Conscientiousness with “Embeddedness values” (Conformity, Tradition and Security), Openness with “Self-transcendence”, and “Openness to change” (e.g. Universalism, Self-direction, Stimulation). Neuroticism had a positive association with traditional values and a negative relationship with Stimulation.

The relationship between values and personality has received support by meta-analysis studies. Parks-Leduc, Feldman, and Bardi (2014) ran a meta-analysis on 60 studies that conducted in 13 countries from North America, European, and Asian regions. These studies were retrieved through major electronic databases, such as PsyINFO. Only studies that involved examining the five factor model of personality and Schwartz Value Theory at individual levels were chosen. Apart of looking at the relationship between personality traits and values Parks-Leduc, Feldman, and Bardi (2014) also studies the role of collectivism/individualism and tightness/looseness of culture as moderators towards the relationship between personality traits and values. Results displayed that personality traits and values were related and consistent with previous findings reported earlier in the researchers' article. Openness to experience showed strong positive relationships with self-direction, moderate positive relationships with stimulation and universalism values, and negative moderate relationships with power, universalism, tradition, and conformity values. Agreeableness strongly positively related to benevolence values, and moderately positively related to universalism, conformity, and tradition value, as well as a moderate negative relationship with power. Extraversion exhibited moderate positive associations with stimulation, power, achievement, and hedonism values. Conscientiousness was moderately related to security, conformity, and achievement values. Emotional stability did not yield any significant relationships with the values domains.

Parks-Leduc, Feldman, and Bardi (2014) suggested that cognitively based traits were likely to relate well to values compared to the primarily affective trait (emotional stability). As the findings revealed very few strong relationships between traits and values (with *rho* value greater than .50), it was concluded that traits and values were of different constructs. Finally, this study did not find any support for the idea that cultural dimensions of

individualism/collectivism and tightness/looseness are potential at moderating the relationships between personality traits and values.

Fischer and Boer (2015) found similar results to that of Parks-Leduc, Feldman, and Bardi's (2014) study. They examined the relationship of the universal ten values by Schwartz (1992), and the Big Five traits of personality in a much wider perspective, involving 935 participants from 14 countries. The aim of Fischer and Boer's (2014) research was not only to inform meta-analytical data on the relative connection between the big five personality traits and structure of values, but also to investigate the role of contextual threats in moderating the correlation between personality traits and values. Contextual threats measured in this study were in the form of economic or resources threat, ecological threat, and restrictive social norms and institutions that lie within the participating countries. Most of the participants were reported to be students, aged around 24 years old. Data were gathered in stages; firstly, from articles that used Schwartz Value Scale (SVS) or Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) and the big five personality traits between the year 1992 until 2012, and secondly, from a reference list of articles on identity and unpublished works by researchers in the field. Lastly, after being shortlisted, articles that involved only correlation results between SVS or PVQ and the big five personality traits, and non-clinical samples with age over 16 years were used in the study.

Fisher and Boyer (2015) found that personality traits and values were strongly related. Agreeableness positively correlated to Transcendence values, whilst Openness to experience showed a strong negative correlation to Embeddedness. The strength of these correlations was equivalently found in other measurement of personality traits. Extraversion was found to be negatively correlated with Transcendence values, especially in restricted and threatening contexts. Neuroticism showed to be the weakest personality trait in the connection to values in the overall analysis. Fischer and Boer (2015) suggested that relationship between Neuroticism and values could change in different contextual threats.

1.11 Relationships between personality and wellbeing

Researchers have constantly found that distinctiveness of personality profile could describe the happiness level in a person (Diener et al., 1999 in Carr, 2004). A high level of Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness, and a low level of Neuroticism, have consistently associated with subjective well-being (Joshanloo & Afshari, 2011; Haslam, Whelan & Bastian, 2009; Schimmack, Oishi, Furr & Funder, 2004).

Haslam et al. (2009), in a study among 180 college students, found that subjective well-being had strong to moderate associations with Neuroticism ($r = -.64$), Extroversion ($r = .57$) and Agreeableness ($r = .39$), but smaller correlations for Openness ($r = .33$) and Conscientiousness ($r = .16$). Neuroticism was the most strongly related to Negative Affect ($r = .66$), whilst Extraversion was related to Positive Affect ($r = .55$). Other correlations to Positive Affect were all positively significant with r ranged from .26 to .47.

Joshanloo and Afshari (2011) studied the relations between the Big Five personality traits, self-esteem, and life satisfaction in a sample of 235 Iranian undergraduates. The results displayed that all of the personality traits, except Openness and Self-esteem, correlated with life satisfaction (r ranged from .23 to -.50) with self-esteem being the strongest. Next, a multiple regression analysis was performed in order to examine the contribution of personality traits and self-esteem to life satisfaction. The results revealed that Neuroticism appeared to be the strongest negative predictor of personality dimension towards life satisfaction ($\beta = -.38$), followed by Extroversion ($\beta = .20$) with 25.4% of the total variance in life satisfaction accounted for by the Big Five traits. However, when self-esteem was entered in the second block, it predicted life satisfaction better than the Big Five traits ($\Delta R^2 = .083$, $p < .001$). As self-esteem showed the strongest correlation with and predicted life satisfaction better than the Big Five personality traits, it was indicated that self-esteem might mediate the relation between

personality traits and life satisfaction. Self-esteem was found to mediate the influence of Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism and Extroversion on life satisfaction. Four hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to test whether these mediations were partial or full. In each analysis, self-esteem was entered in the first block, followed by a personality trait in the second block. The results showed that the effects of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness on life satisfaction were no longer significant, indicating that they were fully mediated by self-esteem, whereas the effects of Neuroticism and Extroversion on life satisfaction were still significant, indicating that they were partially mediated by self-esteem.

In Spain, a study amongst 368 university students revealed that Neuroticism and Extroversion (measured by the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire) contributed significantly to subjective well-being (measured by Positive and Negative Affect Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale) (Chico-Librân, 2006). However, Neuroticism predicted far better to subjective well-being as it accounted for 44% of the total variance in subjective well-being, whilst Extroversion accounted for only 8% of the variance.

The relation between the Big Five personality traits, loneliness and mental health has also been studied in Malaysia. Nordin, Talib and Yaacob (2009) conducted a survey amongst 1,468 undergraduate students in five universities in Malaysia. Mental health was measured by the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12; by Goldberg, 1978) with a 4-Likert type scale ranged from '1' to '4'. The higher the score was, the more likely a person was to have mental health problems. Results showed that more than 60% of the sample reported no mental health problems. The big five personality traits and loneliness were found to be correlated with mental health (r ranged from .08 to .24). Students who scored high in Agreeableness, Extroversion, Conscientiousness, Openness, and low in Neuroticism and loneliness were less likely to have mental health problems. The results of multiple regression analysis showed that loneliness appeared to be the most significant contributor to mental health ($\beta = -.26$) among the

participants, followed by Neuroticism ($\beta = .17$) and Extroversion ($\beta = -.10$). The combination of the three predictor variables accounted for only 10.3% of the overall variance in mental health problems. They also found that mental health varied across ethnicity, religion, field and the year of study, suggesting that the studying of mental health in Malaysia should be done with caution and awareness of the uniqueness of Malaysian society.

In general, personality traits play a role in the well-being of university students. From a few studies that have been discussed above, Neuroticism and Extroversion consistently appear to be the central traits which have high influence on well-being.

1.12 Relationships between values and well-being

One of the important elements in positive psychology is the conceptualisation of the good life, which inevitably involves the question of whether holding onto values helps in enhancing life. Past research has supported the idea that those who lead their life based on important values bring positive consequences to themselves and other people within the community, including well-being (e.g. Chan & Joseph, 2000; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000; Sheldon, 2005). However, not all values promote well-being. According to Bilsky and Schwartz (1994), values are based on either 'growth needs' or 'deficiency needs'. The more importance placed on values representing growth needs (e.g. achievement, benevolence), the greater subjective well-being will be.

On the other hand, the more people attribute importance to values that emphasise compensation of deprivation or deficiency needs (e.g. power, security), the more they have to handle other associated goals before they can reach their goals, thus leaving them very likely to experience lower subjective well-being (Hofer, Chasiotis & Campos, 2006). Values that

represent growth needs are also identified as ‘healthy values’, whilst values that represent deficiency needs are often considered ‘unhealthy’ values (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). This could probably link with the results from Kasser and Ryan’s (1993) study that individuals who placed higher importance on goals concerning extrinsic rewards than goals regarding intrinsic rewards, tended to have lower wellbeing.

Sagiv and Schwartz (2000) extended the research interest in well-being by conducting two studies which aimed at: (1) investigating relations between value priorities and both cognitive and affective aspects of subjective well-being, and (2) examining how situational opportunities for realising values may moderate the relations of value priorities to subjective well-being. A set of questionnaires that comprised of the Schwartz Values Inventory (Schwartz, 1992), and three indicators of subjective well-being that measures life satisfaction, affect level, and mental health in general, were used in this study. Data were gathered from 583 students and 678 adults from Israel, West Germany and East Germany.

Results showed a significant positive relationship between achievement values and subjective well-being in every one of the six samples ($r = .22$, in the averaged sample). Self-direction ($r = .16$, average) and stimulation values ($r = .12$, average) correlated positively with subjective well-being, though not all of them were significant. On average, only traditional values displayed a significant negative correlation with subjective well-being ($r = -.15$, average). Stimulation, self-direction and achievement showed the same pattern to positive affect (r ranged from $.10$ to $.13$, average); whilst, security, conformity, and tradition correlated negatively (r ranged from $-.08$ to $-.13$, average). Nevertheless, further findings revealed that none of the value types correlated significantly with the cognitive aspect of well-being in the averaged sample, suggesting that value priorities and satisfaction with life do not vary together across situations. Sagiv and Schwartz (2000) concluded that basic value priorities associated with the affective component of subjective well-being only.

In Sagiv and Schwartz's (2000) second study, it was assumed that the congruence between the person's value priorities and the values prevailing in the environment contribute much to well-being. In order to test the hypothesis, researchers examined the effects of the congruence between students' values and prevailing value culture in the university department. Forty two students from the psychology department and 40 from the business administration department participated in the study. It was presumed that, on average, psychology students would attribute greater importance to benevolence and universalism values than did business students; whereas business students would attribute greater importance to power and achievement values. The results confirmed the predictions which had led the researchers into examining the correlations between emphasising values importance to these students and subjective well-being. As predicted, business students' relative attribution of high importance to power and achievement value congruence correlated with a higher sense of well-being. However, the correlations were very weak for universalism and benevolence values, though in a positive direction; and achievement values did not correlate with subjective well-being. The researchers suggested that homogeneity of the business students sample that entirely ongoing in business and economics imposed the students much with power and achievement values.

In contrast, the fact that psychology students had a variety of second majors could lend an explanation to weaker findings in the sample. As students were exposed to the different courses of their second majors, they might have received varied inputs that to some extent had an impact on their way of looking at things. Thus, there was a possibility that this group of students placed higher importance on values other than those hypothesised (benevolence and universalism), and their subjective well-being might have depended on realising those values which accounted for the weaker findings in the sample. Sagiv and Schwartz in their conclusion emphasised the need to have deeper understanding of the environment of where samples are taken from, as it may contribute to the values of those samples. They further commented that

the notion of ‘healthy’ vs. ‘unhealthy’ values should be consciously interpreted according to the culture that prevails in the sample.

Tartavkovsky and Schwartz (2001) studied the relationships between motivation, values and well-being among 158 potential Jewish emigrants from Russia. Results showed significant correlations between motivations to emigrate and the four higher-order values; openness, embeddedness, self-enhancement and self-transcendence, whereby, preservation correlated positively with embeddedness values, and negatively with openness values. However, self-development motivation correlated positively with openness values, and negatively with embeddedness values. Materialism correlated positively with self-enhancement values, and negatively with self-transcendence values. It was found that preservation motivation was linked to poorer subjective wellbeing – negatively correlated with general mental health, and positively correlated with normlessness, and powerlessness.

The researchers suggested that those inclined to emigrate based on preservation motivation tend to feel anxious, insecure, unable to predict or control the course of their lives, and uncertain of the normative order. Emigration due to self-development motivation correlated positively to general mental health and negatively to loneliness. There were no correlations at all with powerlessness and normlessness, as indices of social alienation. The researchers assumed that high self-confidence, low anxiety and low dependence on others explained these findings. In contrast, materialism motivation correlated with both forms of social alienation, powerlessness and normlessness, and not with the more psychological aspects of wellbeing, which suggested individuals who felt like to emigrate for financial reasons, could probably perceive the disorganised societal conditions, such as lack of order, trust, control, and predictability, hindered opportunities for self-advancement. The researchers further suggested that future research should investigate the role of personality in order to have a better understanding of this phenomenon.

Chan and Joseph (2000) investigated the associations between personality, self-relevant intrinsic and extrinsic values and expectations, and psychological wellbeing in a sample of 107 students at the University of Essex, England. It was found that extraversion positively correlated, and neuroticism negatively associated, with happiness, self-actualisation and self-esteem. However, the contribution of personality towards wellbeing was considered small, as those personality variables did not account for more than 30 percent of the variance in wellbeing. On the other hand, the Aspiration Index explained more than 30 percent of the variance of happiness, 41 percent of self-esteem, and 53 percent of the variance on self-actualisation. Interestingly, psychoticism was found to be associated with higher scores on self-actualisation, which was not aligned with the previous findings. The researchers' assumption was that those individuals who were high in psychoticism had probably been readily imposed to intrinsic values more than those who were low or less 'psychotic'. Nevertheless, it was later suggested that these data needed to be replicated.

The effect of materialism on well-being has been studied by Karabati, Serdar and Cemalcilar (2010). They investigated the extent to which materialism, which is normally seen as a defining element of Western culture, could mediate the relationship between values and wellbeing among Turkish university students, who were believed to be more individualistic compared to Turkish society in general. The findings revealed materialism produced negative effects on wellbeing. However, direct and mediator effects between values and well-being are not clearly understood, as mixed results were produced.

In conclusion to the studies discussed above, individuals who live by their important values have a high wellbeing, providing that they live in a community or culture in which the same values prevail. In a society that promotes values concerning freedom in the making of choices for self-development (e.g. self-direction, stimulation), placing priority on such values is often associated with the high well-being of the people in that society. Thus, the values are

often known as ‘healthy values’. However, people of the same society who place high importance on embeddedness values (e.g. tradition, security) are more likely to have a low wellbeing. Therefore, in this society embeddedness values are considered as ‘unhealthy values’. Apart from the situational factors, the personality factor has been mentioned as playing an important role in determining one’s well-being. In this research, the relations between values important and satisfaction, personality, and well-being will be further examined.

1.13 Values, cultures and social contexts

Individuals’ thinking and action may largely be explained by the norms and values upheld in a particular culture. Situations may also put people into negotiating their original values, which results into changing the priorities of their values. This section will highlight a few studies relating to how values are perceived in different cultural and social contexts.

The effects of cultural norms on individuals are exhibited by differences found in moral judgement between individuals of different cultures. Cultural differences were found amongst Malaysian and American adolescents in a study on moral judgement (Jaafar, Kolondinsky, McCarthy and Schroder, 2004). This study involved 76 Malay and 68 American adolescents aged between 15 and 18 years old, who were asked to respond in writing to Dilemma I of Kohlberg’s Morality theory, or known as ‘Joe’s dilemma’ from Form A Moral Judgement Interview. A 2 x 2 analysis of variance showed significant differences among cultures, but not in gender. However, a significant interaction emerged between gender and ethnicity, whereby the Malays exhibited a slightly higher moral reasoning state than the Americans. Qualitative analysis indicated that the Malays reflected religious values or principles and traditional norms in their judgement, whereas the Americans were more likely to argue based on principles of fairness, individual responsibility and freedom, and economic guilt and self-interest. The

Malays' argument seemed to be aligned with the Stage III Moral theory of Kohlberg which is characterised by reasoning based on values that relate to social contracts and social responsibility. On the other hand, the Americans' arguments were frequently based on Stage II Moral judgement which basically centred on the individual self and protecting self-interest.

In another study, Roccas, Schwartz, and Amit (2010) attempted to find the linkages between personal value priorities and identification with one's nation in three studies. In their first study, they found that identification with one's nation associated positively with embeddedness values and negatively with openness to change values among 101 and 160 undergraduate students in the USA and Israel respectively. In the second study, 38 Israeli undergraduate students were randomly assigned to an 'openness' experimental condition, 38 to an 'embeddedness', and 38 to a control group condition. The participants were then presented with and instructed to read a description of 6 students who applied to live in a university dormitory, before being asked to complete a set of questionnaires on the national identification and demographic items. In this study it was found that increasing the accessibility of 'openness to change' values reduces national identification, while increasing the accessibility of 'embeddedness' values produces greater national identification.

Roccas et al. (2010) held another study to see the extent to which social context affected the relations between values and national identification among 100 students who migrated to Israel from Russia. Participants were asked to complete a set of questionnaires measuring values and acculturation attitudes. Regression analyses revealed that perceived pressure felt to assimilate in the new country moderated the relation of conservation values and identification with the country of residence. It was concluded that the fit between personal motivations and group characteristics influenced identification of a nation. Therefore, in a study of the importance of values, it may be a worthwhile effort to look at the contribution of the interaction

of the importance of values of original culture and the host culture towards value satisfaction and well-being among immigrants.

Another study conducted by Cohen and Shamai (2010) in Israel revealed an interesting conflict between values and commitment among 271 police officers who were enrolling in an undergraduate programme in an Israeli university. Embeddedness values (i.e. tradition and power) were correlated negatively with psychological well-being and positive relationship with benevolence, self-direction and achievement. The higher commitment made to organisation was found to put more these police officers into lower psychological well-being. Further results showed that the higher the achievement valued, the less likely higher commitment, and the more importance placed on power, the more committed they were to the organisation. This study suggested that police officers who placed personal values related to work or job values, such as power and less concern of personal achievement indicated how committed they were to the police force, which however did not really make them happy. In light of this, the fit between a person and his/her environment does not necessarily guarantee one to be happy.

For people who have been raised and have lived in a multicultural society, the multiple cultural elements could have an influence on their perceptions of what constitutes a good life. Realising this gap in well-being research, Wong, Ho, Li, Shin and Tsai (2011) provided some insights into this by running a study on a sample of 210 Chinese Singaporean students who were believed to embrace both the Asian and Western values due to the unique cultural historical background of the country. Wong et al. (2011) proposed that Singaporeans' adherence to Asian cultural values would moderate the link between lay belief about subjective well-being and self-reported subjective well-being.

They referred the lay belief about subjective well-being through dialecticism or dialectical cultural worldviews. Dialecticism is a set of world view that was found common in

far eastern cultures, which is rooted in the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism, emphasising: “(a) the transient and dynamic nature of happiness, (b) that both positive and negative aspects of life should be embraced, (c) that moderation and balance is to be preferred to a sole focus on positive experiences, and (d) a greater acceptance of negative affect and a more cautious attitude toward positive affect” (Wong et al., 2011, p. 823). To measure the participants’ lay belief in subjective well-being, participants were asked to provide opinions on the meaning of happiness. To measure the Asian values, the 42-item Asian American Values Scale-Multidimensional (AAVS-M; Kim, Li & Ng, 2005) was used. Subjective well-being was measured through the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and the 10-item International Positive and Negative Affect Schedule Short Form (I-PANAS-SF; Thompson, 2007).

The participants’ answers were categorised as ‘positivity beliefs’ (if the responses referred to positive emotions, positive thinking or positive self-esteem), and ‘dialectical beliefs’ (if the responses referred to the Asian dialectical worldview). Dichotomous variables were created for the two categories of lay belief. Results showed that positivity beliefs and adherence to Asian values were both positively related to life satisfaction, and the interaction of positivity and adherence to Asian values was found to be significant. The positive relationship between positivity beliefs and life satisfaction was significant only among those who had low levels of adherence to Asian values, whilst dialectical beliefs were inversely related to positive affect. Wong et al. (2011) suggested that the congruency of lay beliefs about the subjective well-being with local’s cultural values may partly explain the effects of the lay beliefs on self-reported subjective well-being.

In conclusion, cultural norms serve as an important basis for value differences amongst individuals of different cultures. However, people may try to find a fit between their own values and the social context that they are dealing with in order to reach for happiness, which may result in a change of values. It is particularly important to note this matter as part of this research

is concerned with finding out whether Malaysian students' values are different between two periods of time, and the predictors of those values. The next section provides theoretical underpinning and support from a few studies on how changes take place in values.

1.14 Changes in values

Values are relatively stable, but still previous studies have suggested that values do change sometimes. Consistently, the literature has shown that people change their values in order to fit the opportunity in their environment. For example, values change as a function of age, whereby as one gets older, hedonistic values may be less preferred, and for young people achievement values may be more important as building up a career is the main developmental task at that age level (Shoham, Florenthal, Rose, & Kropp, 1998).

Two types of possible value change have been discussed in the literature, i.e. mean level change and rank-order change (Bardi et al., 2009b). Mean level change refers to a change in the mean importance of a value across individuals and normally occurs as a function of socio-cultural changes, such as economic development, and changes in the education system; whilst rank-order change refers to a change in the rank order of individuals on a continuum of value importance, also known as 'intra-individual change' (Bardi et al., 2009b).

In order to test the hypothesis regarding the two types of value change, Bardi et al. (2009b) ran a series of studies in different life contexts, time gaps, populations, countries, languages and value measures. The first study involved 811 teenagers in Germany and neighbouring countries and two separate occasions of data collection with a gap of 9 months in between the two time periods. A Portraits Value Questionnaire (PVQ-40; Schwartz, Lehmann & Roccas, 1999) and Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; Schwartz, 1992) were used in

the study. Schwartz's (1992) higher order theoretical structure was used as the baseline for comparison. The results showed that there were significant decreases in the importance of benevolence and universalism, and increases in the importance of power and achievement over time, suggesting values change in a quite consistent way. High correlations between value importance at Times 1 and 2 (the r (s) were more than .50), suggesting stability in values. Further results showed that 36% of variance was explained by a two factor solution represented by these value dimensions: Openness to change vs. Embeddedness, and Self-enhancement vs. Self-transcendence. There were deviations in the order of values, i.e. the exchange of locations amongst achievement and power values, and the change of positions of universalism and benevolence values from the theoretical model of value proposed by Schwartz (1992). However, these deviations were very small. The results have been found to be aligned with previous findings. They were confirmed by a series of multi-dimensional scaling (MDS) analyses, and thus supported Schwartz's (1992) higher order theoretical structure of values.

The second study was a replication of the first study, involving 129 university students in England using the 56-item SVS (Schwartz, 1992). Assessment for Time 1 was done at the beginning of the first year of university studies, and assessment for Time 2 was done at the beginning of the second year studies. Similar results were found in the change direction of the importance of power and benevolence. However, achievement did not load onto any of the value dimensions. These results were confirmed by the MDS analysis which provided further support to the structure of value change as proposed by Schwartz (1992).

The third study was done to see whether the theoretical structure of value change was still apparent for a shorter gap period. Three months after the beginning of the first year, Bardi et al. (2009b) administered the SVS questionnaire online to 119 first year students in England. They found that a significant increase in universalism and power, and the longitudinal correlations, suggested stability in values. The results showed a similar pattern for benevolence

and universalism, and unexpected findings for the location of stimulation which was away from hedonism but close to tradition and conformity. However, the MDS analysis showed that the rank-order value change data supported Schwartz's theoretical model.

Bardi et al. (2009b) ran a fourth longitudinal study to examine whether the structure of value change would also be evident in an adult population, and whether the extent of life changes between the times of assessment was related to greater value change. The study was conducted in Australia amongst 135 members of an online consumer research panel in New South Wales, Australia with a mean age of 39 years old. Values were measured through the Schwartz Value Best-Worst Survey (SVBWS; Lee, Soutar & Louviere, 2008) and the extent of life-changing events experienced was measured by the Holmes and Rahe's (1967) scale. The time gap for this study was 2 years. The results showed that the mean-level change across individuals only increased for hedonism, and the longitudinal correlations indicated lower stability of values than in the three prior studies.

In the discussion, Bardi et al. (2009b) suggested that intra-individual value change should reflect Schwartz's (1992) value model as they found consistency in the results of the four longitudinal studies across people of different backgrounds, contexts of change, time gaps, and measures, suggesting that the findings are generalisable. This study found support for the notion that adjusting to new life situations is so crucial that it demands value change, which in this study displayed far greater effect than age did.

How do values change? Value change may result from an automatic and effortful processing (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). At the initial stage, value change may be automatically activated by an environmental clue which has been associated with certain environmental features that have long been kept in the memory (or known as schema) (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). An environmental cue may prime certain schema which leads to a response to events

using this schema (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). For example, a Malaysian student who studies in the UK and who complies to the theme of a birthday party for his friend - wild in the jungle - by wearing an animal suit like anyone else who attends the party, has automatically activated the value of hedonism which may bring him/her to a “negotiation of values” (i.e. hedonism vs. tradition) – of trying to fit into the society by following a few bits of their culture, whilst thinking of what others of the original culture would say about a manner of having fun that is against the normal practice of the student’s original culture. The automaticity of this process triggers initial value change if resistance to value change is low (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011).

In the effortful route to initial value change, people are directly made aware of and re-evaluate their values and may change their values if it is necessary to do so. The effect of this has been established in a few experiments, but values with established cognitive support may not change as people are aware and able to defend their own values (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). Though challenging values may lead people to value change, people may reject the value-change messages if they are threatened by them (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). For example, challenging “personal freedom” amongst people who are brought up in an individualistic society will probably create more of an uproar rather than sitting back and thinking about the potential for value change. Because values form part of one’s self-concept, value changes may not take place so easily through direct persuasion attempts (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011).

However, values may change permanently through repeated exposure to automatically changing schema until it becomes central and dominant in influencing perception and behaviour (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). For example, in the UK the use of language in daily communication among immigrants brings people to grasp more about the culture of the host society, which could lead to value change. Values may also change after being repeatedly challenged. According to Bardi and Goodwin (2011), five facilitators of value change have

been identified: priming, adaptation, identification, consistency maintenance, and direct persuasion attempts.

Past studies have shown that values change across times and situations (Sheldon, 2005; Sheldon & Kasser, 2001). Sheldon's (2005) study reconfirmed previous findings (e.g. Arnett, 2000) on students' tendency to move towards intrinsic values and away from extrinsic values over time. He ran a longitudinal survey among 109 graduating college students at the University of Missouri in the United States to examine whether or not there would be a shift in each value, and whether changes would be associated with increases in psychological well-being and felt self-determination. The study involved two times of data collection – time 1, when the participants were in their freshman year, and time 2 after spending approximately 3.7 years at university. Sheldon (2005) found that there was a highly significant decrease from freshman to senior year in the aggregate extrinsic value orientation variable, and an almost-significant increase in the overall intrinsic value orientation variable. Only valuing of emotional intimacy was found to be significantly increased over the years, whereas there was no significant change in the valuing of personal growth or community contribution. The decrease of extrinsic values and increase of intrinsic values implies “positive” changes. The movement towards intrinsic values showed association with positive change in psychological well-being, which also showed connection to self-determination.

People may shift to a different perspective on the hierarchy of their values as the principal guidance of their life, if they are being forced by certain threats. Sheldon and Kasser (2008) found evidence for this. They discovered that psychological threat increases the priority that people give to extrinsic compared to intrinsic goals. Sheldon and Kasser (2008) conducted three experiments on college students in examining the effect of three threatening situations on the priority of goals – the existential threat (study 1), economic threat (study 2), and interpersonal threat (study 3).

In study 1, participants were imposed with the existential threat whereby they were randomly assigned to briefly describe their emotions concerning their own death, and things which would happen to them when they died. In study 2, participants were imposed with the economic threat, whereby they were asked to imagine themselves either as secure and fully employed a year after graduation, or as insecure and under-employed a year after graduation. Both studies supported the basic hypothesis that the psychological threat imposed on individuals changed people's mind on what seemed to be important for them. In study 3, the participants were imposed with a conditional positive regard as the source of insecurity which was initially proposed by Rogers (1964). According to the theory, conditional positive regard occurs when important others accept a person only if he or she meets their standards where, in reality, those standards are often unreachable. This has often created chronic anxiety and has become a psychological threat.

In this study participants were asked to envision an important other who accepted them unconditionally. Again, the general pattern of the findings in the earlier studies was replicated – interpersonal threat could also urge people to turn more to extrinsic goals than to the intrinsic ones. These studies showed that, when people are threatened existentially, economically or interpersonally, they orient more towards goals such as financial success, popularity and image, and less towards goals such as personal growth, affiliation and community contribution (Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). At the end of the discussion, Sheldon and Kasser (2008) raised two important issues: the extent to which threats evoke safety and security concerns, and the frequency of threats encountered over a certain length of time, are of concern as the factors that could alter people's priorities in working on more extrinsic goals than intrinsic ones.

In a much recent study, Bardi, Buchanan, Goodwin, Slabu and Robinson (2014) found that new values that are central to new life setting are already embraced by people at the start of their life transitions. Bardi et al. (2014) ran three longitudinal studies focusing on three types

of self-chosen life transitions: *vocational training*, *education*, and *migration*. The researchers concluded that across all the three life transitions participants consistently reported being driven by values that they personally attached to (i.e. value-based self-selection). Whilst, some evidence showed that changes in aspects of life occurred during educational transition which indicates that socialisation might have contributed to some value changes. Compared to the other two life transitions, those who went through migration transition experienced the most changes in various aspects of life which provide an evidence for value socialisation could have taken place during the process of adapting to the new culture. Bardi, et al. (2014) concluded that there is a tendency for value socialisation to occur in a situation where changes are crucial.

1.15 Conclusion

Based on the research motivation, this research is designed mainly to explore the associations between values in terms of their importance and satisfaction, personality, socio-demographic factors and well-being in two samples of Malaysian students, i.e. those who are studying in the home country, and those who are studying abroad, through a longitudinal survey. As it is believed that starting a new life in a new place, such as being overseas for study, marks a major life-transition that could bring a different impact on individuals' values, the research has been extended into comparing the home country and overseas students over two different periods of times (Time 1 and Time 2).

The research incorporates 4 studies (Study 1, 2, 3 and 4) which will be reported separately in four chapters of this thesis. Study 1 is a series of preliminary semi-structured interviews with Malaysian students in the UK to get an overview of the overseas adaptation experience (reported in Chapter 4). Study 2 is the development of the Adaptation to Life Index based on the findings in Study 1 and literature reviews (Chapter 5). Study 3 is the survey at

Time 1 which provides the baseline data (reported in Chapter 6), and Study 4 is the follow-up to the survey study at Time 1 (reported in Chapter 7).

CHAPTER 2

Context of Study: Malaysia

2.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of three parts. The first part is an introduction to Malaysia from the demographic and historical perspectives, including the emergence of ethnic polarisation in the country, and the extent to which it has affected the national ideology and teaching of values in Malaysian societies. This section provides literature reviews on values differences amongst Malaysians, as well as between Malaysians and people from other countries. The second part of the chapter looks at literature reviews on the issues of well-being amongst Malaysians, and the last section of the chapter provides literature reviews on the applicability of the big five personality across cultures.

2.2 History and demography

Malaysia was formed on 16th September 1963, comprising eleven states in the Peninsular Malaysia, namely Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Malacca, Johore, Kelantan, Terengganu, three federation territories (known as Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Labuan, and Putrajaya), and two other states in the Borneo (known as Sabah and Sarawak). Geographically, Malaysia is located in South East Asia, covering an area of 330,803 sq km (Economic Planning Unit, Malaysia, 2013), and divided by two regions known as West Malaysia and East Malaysia. West Malaysia or the Peninsular Malaysia lies between Thailand

and Singapore, and the states of Sabah and Sarawak (East Malaysia) share a common border with Indonesia and Negara Brunei Darus-Salam.

Before the formation of Malaysia, Peninsular Malaysia was known as “Malaya” (locally known as *Tanah Melayu*), which gained its independence from Britain on 31 August, 1957. From the latest census, the population of Malaysian citizens stood at about 26.01 million people, comprising of 13.18 million male and 12.84 million female citizens (Malaysia Statistics Department, 2010). The total population of Malaysia has already reached 28.31 million people, with 7.2% of them non-citizens (Malaysia Statistics Department, 2010).

In terms of ethnic composition, Malaysian citizens can be broadly categorised as the “*bumiputera*” (indigenous people or ‘sons of the soil’ (Kennedy, 2002), and the “*non-bumiputera*” or non-indigenous people. The Malays are the largest indigenous group in Peninsular Malaysia, whilst other “natives” are mostly of Sabah and Sarawak descent; namely the Ibans, Kadazan Dusuns, Dayaks, Murut and many others, which bring the total to 17.52 million native people of Malaysia (67.36 % of the total population of Malaysian citizens) (Malaysia Statistics Department, 2010). The rest of the populations are the Chinese (6.39 million or 25%), Indians (1.91 million or 7.5%) and others (0.19 million or 1.7%) (Malaysia Statistics Department, 2010). The Malaysian Constitution declares Islam to be the official religion of the country, but other religions are given freedom of practice. Most Malays are generally seen as practising Muslims (Haque & Masuan, 2002). Apart from the Islamic religion, others affiliate themselves to the Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Animism, and Atheism. Other races include people known as the “Serani” who are of European descent. Due to the different compositions of ethnic groups, Malaysia is often described as a multiracial, multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious country (Mohd-Asraf, 2009).

2.3 Ethnic polarisation and the growth of plural society in Malaysia

Early Malayan history has lent an explanation to the multicultural background of Malaysian people. The British policy allowed free immigration into the country and resulted in a high flow of foreigners into the workforce in the country before a new ruling banning free migration to Malaya was set up in 1929 (Aziz, Salleh & Ribu, 2010). The Chinese from mainland China were brought mainly to work as tin-miners, the Indians from Sri Lanka and India were brought to work at rubber plantations, laying railway lines and road building, and the Sikhs were brought to serve as policemen and soldiers.

At that time, the British policy of ‘divide and rule’ was launched to help the British exploit the country’s resources and to guarantee their political power in Malaya, which later resulted in the polarisation and separation of various ethnic groups in Malaya. The British had assigned different roles and status amongst the Malays, Chinese and Indians, which caused the three groups to be separated in term of living quarters, careers and education (Aziz et al., 2010). According to Mahli (1988), there were very limited social contacts made between the ethnic groups in the country then. Conversations between various ethnic groups occurred in the office, workplace and the market places, which heightened prejudices amongst ethnic groups and strengthened ethnic identities (Mahli, 1988).

2.4 Values and Education

As a multi-cultural and multi-religion country, unity has become a national agenda since the early days of the establishment of Malaysia. The national ideology, known as the *Rukunegara*, was introduced in 1970 to instil shared values in order to achieve a greater unity amongst Malaysians, which is reflected in its five principles: (1) *belief in God*, (2) *loyalty to King and*

country, (3) the supremacy of the constitution, (4) rule of law, and (5) mutual respect and morality. Being on top of the principles, *belief in God* has been a strong-rooted value amongst Malaysians which has been taught at early age. To the Muslims, the teaching of Islamic values amongst children is obligatory for all parents, and the teaching comes in stages. At an early age, Islamic values are taught to children by parents or caregivers by starting with singing to them some Arabic rhymes or lullabies that acknowledge the supremacy of the Lord (Allah the Almighty) and praising the Prophet Muhammad. Islamic rules and obligations are gradually learned.

The strong adherence to religion is also reflected in Malaysia's education system, through the National Educational Philosophy (*Falsafah Pendidikan Negara*) which states that:

“Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of the individual in a holistic and integrated manner so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of well-being to contribute to the betterment of the family, society and the nation at large”.

(Curriculum Development Centre, 2006, p. ix)

Values associated with religious teachings have been inserted in the Malaysian educational curriculum in schools since the British colonial era (Ahmad, 1998). At that time, Christian ethics was taught at schools which are to some extent similar to the ones taught in any Malay government school; whereas at Arabic or religious schools, Islamic ethics were central and taught as a way of life. After the abolition of different strands of the schooling

system, but still following the British tradition, Islamic Studies was introduced in the curriculum for Muslim students (Ahmad, 1998). On the other hand, the non-Muslim students had to take Civics as a mandatory examinable subject, unlike the Islamic Studies. After a few revisions, the Islamic Studies have been changed into Islamic Education to reflect more of the teachings of Islam as a way of life. Moral Education was introduced as an examinable subject too, and compulsory to be attended by all non-Muslim students after a series of revisions. This subject incorporates the teaching of 16 values identified as the core and relevant values for Malaysians, known as: (1) *Cleanliness of body and mind*, (2) *Compassion and tolerance*, (3) *Cooperation*, (4) *Courage*, (5) *Moderation*, (6) *Diligence*, (7), *Freedom*, (8) *Gratitude*, (9) *Honesty*, (10) *Humility and modesty*, (11) *Justice*, (12) *Rationality*, (13) *Self-reliance*, (14) *Love*, (15) *Respect*, and (16) *Public spiritedness* (Ahmad, 1998). Though these two subjects directly teach about values, in the multi ethnic and religious society of Malaysia they have been treated with caution in order not to cause anyone else's personal values to be imposed on children (Ahmad, 1998).

The teaching of values does not stop at primary or secondary school level only, but it continues to be taught at the tertiary educational level. As a multi-ethnic and multi-belief country, it is crucial to maintain a harmonious life amongst the Malaysian societies. Therefore, a course on Ethnic Relations has been introduced at the beginning of any undergraduate degree as a compulsory subject apart from Civilisation studies, to create awareness of Malaysia's history and its ethnic sensitivities, and the impacts it has had on inter-ethnic relations in the country, thus helping to cultivate unity values amongst the Malaysian people. As unity values are important and crucial to the development of a multi-cultural background country such as Malaysia, the government has been relentlessly promoting unity amongst Malaysian people through various efforts.

Although unity seems to be a widespread national aspiration to the Malaysians, it is still important to acknowledge ethnic-related values in order to promote a better understanding of and respect for other peoples' culture in a harmonious manner. Every Malaysian civilian is given an equal chance to practise their religion and uphold their ethnic traditions. For instance, public holidays are declared upon certain dates that relate to particular religious/ethnic related festivals, and the 'open house' concept or 'opening your house to a visitor' during festive seasons, whereby guests are welcomed with cookies and traditional delights, has been introduced at the national level so as to attract people of different racial and cultural backgrounds to sit together and interact in a cheerful setting.

2.5 Related studies on values in Malaysian societies

Malaysia has been described as a collectivistic nation in which its people commonly embrace the typical Asian values, including: "collective world-view, family recognition through achievement, control over emotions, filial piety, humility, and hierarchical relationships" (Iwamoto, Liao & Liu, 2010, p.17). This statement is confirmed by the interactive data analysis of Hofstede's 5-D Model (<http://geert-hofstede.com/malaysia.html>) which shows that the general values of Malaysian people as accepting hierarchical order in society (marked by very high scores in power distance dimension), favouring in-groups and very committed to maintaining close relationships with and 'saving the face' of group members (marked by low scores in individualism dimension), being quite driven by competition, achievement and success (marked by fairly high scores in masculinity dimension), and having a relaxed attitude to ambiguous or unknown future situations (marked by low scores in uncertainty avoidance dimension).

One of the common and unique values of East Asian societies is filial piety (Sung, 1995). Filial piety is variously defined, but the common conceptualisation of it is referred to as “respect of one’s parents and to care for one’s parent” (Sung, 1995, p. 240), which is deeply rooted in the Confucian philosophy. In this philosophy, every child has to fulfil obligations toward their parents by respecting them, keeping the good name of and bringing no dishonour to the parents and family, and taking good care of parents psychically and mentally (Sung, 1995). Fulfilling obligations to parents is a way of teaching children to repay parents’ love and care, which is passed on from one generation to another. Therefore, filial piety has become a strong underpinning element for the stability and integrity of family, community and wider society of an Oriental nation.

Apart from the Confucian principles, filial piety is also embedded in the Islamic values. In Islam, every child must respect and obey their parents as long as they stay in the right path of Islam, and must provide the best care and support to their parents whilst they are still alive. This duty does not stop, just as a son or daughter is expected to continue performing good deeds that are in accordance with Islamic teachings or values and say prayers for their parents even after they die.

As Islam and Confucian values are practised widely in Malaysia, thus, unsurprisingly, filial piety is highly valued, and stands as a core principle in a family system (Ismail, Jo-Pei, & Ibrahim, 2009). Parents who uphold filial piety values in the family would maintain a positive parent-children relationship, as well as fostering their children in their socialisation process and into becoming positively adjusted and normatively functional (Ismail et al., 2009). Based on a study by Ismail et al. (2009) amongst 108 Malay mother-child dyads, children whose mothers were believed to emphasise filial piety in the family were likely to have less behavioural, emotional, conduct and hyperactivity or inattention problems. In this study, none

of the correlations between parents' reported parental belief in filial piety and children's psychosocial adjustments were significant, indicating that parents were not the only influential persons to instil these values. Ismail et al. (2009) suggested that almost all societies that a child comes into contact with may contribute to the norms of filial piety.

Although the development of children's values may be influenced by individuals other than their own parents, parenting quality may still be crucial in ensuring selected values are passed on to the younger generation successfully. Cheah, Özdemir and Leung (2012) examined the mediating role of perceived parental warmth and support in predicting Chinese Malaysian adolescents' filial behaviour from their age, perceived parental investments and positive filial emotions toward their parents. One hundred and twenty-two children and adolescents of Chinese ethnicity residing in Kuala Lumpur, with age ranged from 9 to 18 years, participated in the study. All of them came from two-parent-middles class families, with 70% of them speaking primarily in Chinese dialect, and 81% identified themselves as Buddhists. The results showed that adolescents' filial behaviour decreased with age, but their perception of filial investment from parents, feeling of positive filial emotion toward parents, and the perceived parenting warmth and support received from each parent were positively correlated with their filial behaviour. Perceived warmth and support from the mother significantly mediated the effect of age, perception of investments from the mother, and filial emotions towards the mother in the adolescents' filial behaviour, which indicated that attachment to mothers is greater than to fathers as they are traditionally the primary caregivers who spend more time attending to children's needs and therefore would probably become the most significant person in the children's lives.

These two studies provided support to the similarity between the two main ethnic groups in Malaysia in the view that filial piety is an important value in a family. There is limited

literature discussing filial piety in Indian society and other ethnic groups in Malaysia. However, given that filial piety plays a big role in maintaining social harmony between in-groups of a collectivistic society (Loue & Sajatovic, 2011), other collectivist groups in Malaysia, such as the Indians, and some other indigenous groups in Borneo, may share the same view as the Malays and Chinese on filial piety.

In addition, maintaining respect and the best care for parents and the elderly is considered a moral obligation of the children, and is viewed as an ideal of human life in South Asian peoples (Choudhry, 2001). The indigenous people in Borneo, such as the Kadazan Dusuns in Sabah, and the Ibans in Sarawak, traditionally belong to agrarian societies in which interdependency is anticipated. In this culture, people look after each other, and accept a hierarchical relationship within society. Children are expected to obey their parents, and show respect to adults and the elderly. Thus, the concept of filial piety is practised in this society. In conclusion, Malaysians in general hold values that are more collectivist or traditional in nature than individualistic, which to some extent signifies similarity amongst various ethnic groups in Malaysia.

A study using a semi-structured interview method by Zawawi (2008) on cultural dimensions amongst Malays, Chinese and Indians who were the management employees of one big company in Malaysia revealed politeness (*sopan-santun*) was the only important value shared by the three main ethnic groups before joining the company. Apart from politeness, the Malays and Chinese were discovered to be similar in several other values – ambition, honesty, being knowledgeable and trustworthiness (Zawawi, 2008). The Chinese and Indians also indicated similarities in their rituals and traditions, whilst the Malays and Indians indicated similarities in piety as an important value (Zawawi, 2008).

Zawawi (2008) also found several other values that were expected to be derived from the different cultural backgrounds of the participants. The Malays indicated values like preferring a work-life balance, affiliation, appreciation, fairness, loyalty, obedience and indirectness. The Chinese expressed their concerns for the values of lifelong learning and self-improvement, and the Indians mentioned values of self-confidence, self-respect, and being authoritative. The degree of importance placed on these cultural values was subjected to a few changes when these participants started working for the company. Tact at work was identified as a common value for the three ethnic groups, whereby being able to deal effectively with other people is seen as crucial, especially when working in such a big company with people from various backgrounds. The other new values which had gained more attention from the participants were modesty, being accommodating and wisdom.

In the discussion, Zawawi (2008) highlighted that the acquisition of values amongst the ethnic groups showed to some extent the connection with what has been practised in the original culture. For example, the Malays showed the importance of controlling oneself when socialising with others or maintaining the *adab* or the code for personal conduct. Being indirect in expression of behaviour is important in order not to cause any disharmony in society. The Chinese were concerned with improving oneself as implied by their cultural values, such as lifelong learning, being knowledgeable, ambition and self-improvement. These probably stemmed from their seriousness in providing education for their children, whereby at one time in Malaya the Chinese children formed the biggest community in schools (Zawawi, 2008). The hardships the Chinese experienced as immigrants and minority groups in the early years in Malaya has been raised as responsible for re-shaping their value orientation towards becoming more adventurous, money driven and adaptable to their new surroundings (Mhd.Juri & Idris, 2008). For the Indians, the cultural values seemed to be centred on the self. This is aligned with

the belief in reincarnation after death in Hinduism, which might be the reason individuals strive to bring the best of themselves in order to be re-born into a higher caste (Zawawi, 2008).

Additionally, Malaysians in general are seen as having less contact with outsiders. Based on a survey in 2003, Saravanamuttu (2005) commented that only 4.1 percent of Malaysians have daily contact with organisations or people from abroad, and 8.4 percent have travelled abroad at least three times in a year. Nonetheless, the main external influence on the Malaysians comes from the television as more than 70 percent of Malaysians watch foreign television programmes. He further commented that Malaysians are not very concerned with pollution. Less than 50 percent of them think that pollution is a problem and 70 percent of them are simply satisfied with the condition of the environment (Saravanamuttu, 2005). The survey also revealed that personal safety values, such as healthy living issues, are the most highly rated as important; whilst self-enhancement values (e.g. being famous and winning) stand as the least preferred things to Malaysians (Saravanamuttu, 2005).

Because each of the ethnic groups amongst Malaysian society has been practising a distinctive cultural way of perceiving and behaving, differences in values are expected to some extent to appear between them. In Malaysia, inter-ethnic relations and differences have always been central to nation-building, which has driven many researchers to continuously explore the ethnic differences in various topics (Mhd. Juri & Idris, 2008). For example, Lai, Chong, Sia and Ooi (2010) found differences in terms of value dimensions between the Malays and the Chinese amongst 237 university students using the Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions theory. The Malays scored higher than the Chinese in Power Distance, Individualism-Collectivism and Uncertainty Avoidance scales, but lower in the Masculinity scale. In a comparison study of Asian values, Simpson and Fam (2000) found that Malaysian students ranked communal values much higher than other students from Singapore and Hong Kong, probably because Malaysia is a less metropolitan country compared to Singapore and Hong Kong, and holds more

conservative values, including cultural and religious restrictions. Whilst Malaysian and Singaporean students were found to share more common values, such as self-discipline, harmony in life, and altruism, the Hong Kong students distinctively associated themselves with individual rights as their important values. Some years later, Malaki, Soriano and Valdez (2009) discovered that filial piety turned out to be a common predictor for valuing education amongst 563 students aged 16 to 23 years old in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines.

In conclusion, Malaysians in general are similar to one another in having values that are conservative in nature. However, because of the multi-cultural background of Malaysia, the unique cultural values practised in every ethnic group in Malaysia may contribute to the differences in the behaviour of Malaysians.

2.6 Related Studies on Subjective Well-being Amongst Malaysians

Studies on subjective well-being in Malaysian samples have also shown the connection of socio-economic status and well-being. For example, Siang and Talib (2011) found a negative relationship between materialism and well-being in a sample of 366 Malaysian undergraduate students. Students who were driven by possession-defined success and acquisition as the pursuit of happiness resulted in having lower life satisfaction. In the discussion, Siang and Talib (2011) associated the findings to participants being recruited from a metropolitan university in the centre of Kuala Lumpur, which is swamped by a wide selection of media devices that relentlessly pour materialistic messages onto the public. From the description analysis, the majority of the participants have moderate to low satisfaction, implying that they have still not achieved what they desire in life. In this study, the inappropriateness of pursuing extrinsic goals leads people to suffer psychological distress and lower their well-being.

Other factors have been found to be associated with individuals' well-being. For example, in an interview study, Al-Naggar, Al-Jashamy, Yun, Isa, Alsaror and Al-Naggar (2010) found that a good relationship with family and friends, apart from money, was identified as a source of happiness amongst 33 undergraduate students from a public university in Malaysia. In another study amongst 92 Malaysian Chinese and Indian participants who represent the minority group in Malaysia, Ganesan and Reyes (2011) found that the subjective well-being of the Malaysian Chinese was determined by their self-esteem, and for the Indians, the social support determined their subjective well-being.

Noor (2001) investigated the subjective well-being of employed women in Malaysia. She found that amongst 290 employed women from various government and private sectors, those who are perceived to have higher autonomy in their jobs are the most likely to have higher well-being, whilst for the married ones, spouse support was another factor that related to happiness.

In a much more recent study, using the World Value Survey data from 2005 to 2007, Howell, Chong, Howell and Schwabe (2012) found that the correlation between life satisfaction, happiness and affect in the Malaysian sample was much weaker than that of the United States. Howell et al. (2012) suggested that there were probably other specific predictors that might more strongly predict happiness relative to life satisfaction. In their further analysis they found that increased health was related to increased happiness, and increased financial satisfaction was associated with increased life satisfaction. Earlier on, in an article by Howell et al. (2012), it was mentioned that the diversity and uniqueness in the culture of each ethnic group in Malaysia may result in different ways of interpreting happiness. For example, the Malays have always been told to 'be moderate' in every undertaking as this is the ideal way of maintaining the well-being of a person, which may not align with the perception of others (Othman & Din, 1993). It is probable that this kind of self-concept may hold people back from

any extreme action, including in responding to a questionnaire. Given that situation, this may contribute to the weak relationship of well-being indicators in the Malaysian sample as mentioned by Howell et al. (2012).

In conclusion, based on the studies highlighted above, the subjective well-being of Malaysian people can be interpreted in various ways. However for the purpose of this research, a more general approach is taken whereby subjective well-being is assessed through life satisfaction, and positive and negative affect.

2.7. The impact of socio-economic development on Malaysians

After the introduction of National Economic Policy (NEP) in 1970, which aimed at eradicating poverty amongst Malaysians irrespective of race and re-structuring society to eliminate the identification of race with economic function, Malaysia has made significant progress in reaching its target especially in reducing poverty rates. However, in Sabah and Sarawak, i.e. two states of Malaysia located in Borneo, the development is much slower compared to other states in the Peninsular Malaysia (Johari, 1989).

As part of the PhD data were collected in Sabah, the knowledge on socio-economic development in Sabah is probably worthwhile in understanding the nature of Sabah people. Census data in 2015 shows that more than 50 percent of Sabah population dwell in rural areas and most of them are the indigenous people (Statistic Department Malaysia, 2015). Incidence of poverty was found to be highest in rural areas, especially amongst paddy cultivators who invariably were the indigenous people or locally known as the ‘Bumiputeras’; whilst the lowest incidence of poverty was recorded amongst the urban, business and Chinese communities (Johari, 1989). Apart from agriculture sector, majority of the poor were also found in forestry,

hunting, and fishing sectors which accounted 77.9 percent of total poor in Sabah compared to nearly 70 percent in Peninsular Malaysia (Johari, 1991).

Because of low accessibility of people from rural and interior areas to big cities and together with economic hardship that they are facing, the Bumiputeras in these areas are often disadvantaged from receiving basic education (Lian, Syawa, Liang & Khalid, 2000). Having lack of educational facilities, including teachers, hinders students to do well at school at par with their counterparts in urban schools. In order to ease people from rural and interior areas in getting access to education, drastic efforts were made by the government in building more schools in these areas, whereby the number of primary schools has reached more than 70 percent of total primary schools in Malaysia. The impact of the socio-economic development has indirectly taught and reinforced some values to the communities involved. Economic hardship encountered may help a person to develop hardiness in his or her personality and less vulnerable to any emotional attack, but many could still be affected by the feelings of being inferior to others that bring them to establish less contact with outsiders.

2.8 Personality – Is the Big Five theory applicable across cultures?

McCrae and Costa (1997) claimed that the five-factor model (FFM) of personality is present in all cultures. The Big Five personality inventory associated with the FFM has been an established tool in studying personality, especially in Western culture. However, most of the findings reported came from Western populations. This has left a gap in understanding this psychological phenomenon in non-Western cultures. As a result, an effort has been made to replicate research using the same measurement tool within non-Western populations. Researchers have examined the cultural relevance of these Western theories and the FFM tools,

which has resulted in adapted versions of principal Western instruments, and the development of indigenous personality instruments.

For example, Cheung, Cheung, Wada, and Zhang (2003) examined several multi-dimensional personality tools found in Asian countries, and their applications in clinical assessment. In India, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) has been adapted and standardised in the Indian population, which came out with a 4-factor solution: Psychopathology, Self-acceptance, Sociability and General Anxiety. In Korea likewise, though the unique indigenous concepts of its people have been introduced and studied; however, there is no major personality instrument indigenous to Korean culture. Western instruments are still being adapted to be used among the locals.

In the Philippines, the Panukat ng Pagkataong Pilipino (PPP) and Panukat ng Mga Katangian ng Personalidad (PKP) are two examples of indigenously developed psychology instruments. The PPP was developed through an inductive approach which consists of 19 personality dimensions, including Emotional Stability, Sociability, Risk Taking, Cheerfulness, and Respectfulness. The PKP, which was developed using a lexical approach, consists of nine dimensions: Conscientiousness, Concern for Others vs. Egotism, Religiosity, Temperamentalness, Self-Assurance, Intellect, Gregariousness, Negative Valence and Positive Valence. According to Cheung et al. (2003), there have been very few attempts among Japanese psychologists to assimilate indigenous and Western concepts of personality. Most of them use the adapted version of popular Western personality tests, such as the Yatabe-Guilford Personality Inventory (Y-G) which consists of 12 scales.

In spite of all this, the Big Five measurement tools are still favoured by researchers due to findings that demonstrate the universality of these tools. Mastor, Jin and Cooper (2000) ran a study in Malaysia to examine whether the personality factors of the Big Five Model could be

found in Malay culture. The revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) was completed by 451 Malaysian students aged between 18 and 20 years. Three analyses were conducted: item analysis, reliability and factor analysis. In this study, a few items were found to be ambiguous and subsequently modified so as to fit with the Malay language and culture. For reliability, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were Neuroticism = 0.87, Extroversion = 0.86, Openness = 0.69, Agreeableness = 0.82 and Conscientiousness = 0.91. Interestingly, Mastor, et al. (2000) had earlier run the same study on a sample of 112 Malay students in Sydney and Wollongong, Australia and they found a higher Cronbach's alpha score in Openness ($\alpha = 0.80$). The researchers explained that the difference was probably due to the different cultural landscape in Australia, compared with Malaysia. For example, the researchers mentioned "excitement-seeking facets which consisted of items originally derived from the American experiences with excitement, such as riding on a roller coaster or vacationing in a busy city" (p. 104), which were clearly understood by Malay students in Australia because they were accustomed to such entertainment. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were also reported to be somewhat lower (i.e. N = 0.89, E = 0.84, O = 0.60, A = 0.83, and C = 0.91) than the American normative data (N = 0.92, E = 0.89, O = 0.87, A = 0.86, and C = 0.90) and some other Asian populations (Mastor, et al., 2000).

A principal component factorial analysis with varimax rotation was run to determine whether the Malay version of NEO-PI-R was consistent with the Big Five dimensions. Using Procrustes varimax rotation and congruence coefficient, in general the findings replicated the dimensions in Costa and McCrae's (1992) study well. However, the congruence coefficient for Openness was slightly lower than expected, (N = 0.98, E = 0.94, O = 0.89, A = 0.95, and C = 0.96). Mastor, et al. (2000) concluded that the Big Five personality traits were embedded in the Malay personality.

Nevertheless, there are still some exceptions that suggest that some traits might not exist in the same way as they had been noted in prior studies. For example, McCrae et al. (2005) conducted a study among college-aged students in 50 countries using an observer rating measure of the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R). They found that the normative American self-report structure was clearly replicated in most cultures with factor congruence coefficients ranging from 0.96 to 0.98. They also found that all of the five traits were highly internally consistent (the alpha ranged from 0.80 to 0.98). However, the alpha level for each dimension was varied across countries. In the Moroccan sample there were comparatively low Cronbach's alpha in all traits (0.54 to 0.66). Across all countries, Openness to experience produced the lowest alpha score. For example, for Openness, the alpha for India was 0.59, Malaysia 0.59, Botswana 0.61, Nigeria 0.25, Ethiopia 0.60, Uganda 0.68, and Morocco 0.58. For Nigeria, low internal consistency was found in all dimensions: Neuroticism ($\alpha=0.61$), Agreeableness ($\alpha=0.63$), and especially Openness ($\alpha=0.25$).

Interestingly, McCrae et al. (2005) suggested that Openness probably was not a meaningful personality dimension in African cultures, particularly among Nigerians. The distinctive African personality may explain the result, which may also intertwine with a poor quality of translation. After considering that random error may cause weak results, the researchers ran a factorial analysis again on combined data from the five Black African cultures using Procrustes rotation. They found that the congruence coefficients with normative structure were 0.96, 0.91, 0.88, 0.95 and 0.96 for N, E, O, A, and C. Eventually, it was concluded that the common five-factor solution does exist in these cultures.

Though the validity and reliability of the standard five factor model of personality has been established, the fact that these factors are inter-correlated and the quest for developing the broadest possible personality description have led researchers to examine higher-order factors. Digman (1997) found two higher-order factors of the Big Five personality traits, which he

named Alpha and Beta. He ran an analysis based on factor correlations from 14 studies of personality. Each of these studies produced five primary factors of personality. An exploratory factorial analysis with varimax rotation was run on these 14 correlation coefficients and yielded two factors labelled as factors Alpha and Beta. Factor Alpha was denoted by Agreeableness, Emotional Stability and Conscientiousness, while Factor Beta was indicated by Extroversion and Openness/Intellect. Confirmatory analyses strongly supported the existence of these two-higher order factors.

This higher-order factor solution of the Five Factor Model study was replicated by DeYoung, Peterson and Higgins (2002) among 245 university students (Sample 1) and a community sample of 222 individuals (Sample 2) from Toronto, Canada. In this study, the Big Two personality was labelled as Stability and Plasticity, with a biological explanation underlying the concept. Stability here is associated with individual differences in serotonergic functioning, whereby the ascending rostral serotonergic system is important for behavioural and emotional constraints and controls that contribute to a person's stability. Plasticity deals with individual differences in dopaminergic functioning, in which the increase of the central dopaminergic (DA) neurotransmitter stimulates cognitive flexibility (as cited in DeYoung, et al., 2002). Using the same exploratory factor analysis used by Digman (1997), results showed that 61 to 63 % of the variance was extracted from the two higher-order factors. Two positively correlated factors emerged here, one of which was marked by Emotional Stability, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, the other by Extroversion and Openness. The structural equation model yielded identical results in both Samples 1 and 2. All indicator variables correlated significantly with the latent variables –Stability and Plasticity. The Big Five factors loaded consistently on Stability and Plasticity with those obtained from the exploratory analyses. Stability was found to be positively correlated and Plasticity negatively correlated to Conformity in both samples. Stability and Plasticity was positively correlated. Both explained

76% and 34% of the variance in Conformity in Sample 1 and Sample 2 respectively. The big difference of variances in both samples indicated that the type of population may influence the results.

In another study, Blackburn et al. (2004) ran a structural equation model to test the following hypotheses, i.e. whether; i) the 'Big Two' personality trait exists in the 60-item NEO-Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI); ii) associations exist between the two-factor personality trait with Impulsivity (I) and Withdrawal (W) dimension of the Antisocial Personality Questionnaire (APQ), and iii) APQ I and W provide markers for Digman's Alpha and Beta. One hundred and sixty-four mentally disordered male offenders in a psychiatric hospital in the UK took part in this study. Results showed negative correlations between N and E, A and C; C positively correlated with E and A, confirming that the NEO-FFI dimensions are dependent constructs. Four of the five dimensions are clearly represented in the APQ. An exploratory factor analysis of NEO-FFI scales revealed a single-factor model and did not support the existence of Alpha and Beta factors as found by Digman (1997). However, the model was supported in a separate analysis of APQ scales and all-joint scales. Confirmatory Factorial Analysis revealed that the NEO-FFI Alpha factor is equivalent to APQ Impulsivity, while NEO-FFI Beta is equivalent to APQ Withdrawal, marked by high correlation produced between these factors. Therefore this study confirmed that the Big Two personality traits existed in NEO-FFI, and related to I and W dimension of personality.

Erdle, Gosling and Potter (2009) ran a study on a sample of 628,640 American residents using an interactive website to test whether higher-order factors of the Big Five (e.g. DeYoung, et al., 2002; Digman, 1997) are artefacts of self-esteem. The 44-item Big Five Inventory (by John, et al., 2001) and the Single-Item Self-Esteem Scale (SISE) (by Robbins, Hendin and Trezasnewski, 2001), with a five-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree', were used in this study. A principal component factorial analysis of the BFI scale was

performed. Results showed that two factors emerged from the scree test and varimax rotation of these two factors showed that Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Emotional stability loaded highly on the first two factors (labelled as Stability), while Extroversion and Openness loaded on the second factor (labelled as Plasticity). There was a positive correlation found between Plasticity and Stability. Both dimensions also correlated positively with self-esteem. The higher order factor structure remained intact when self-esteem was statistically controlled, indicating the existence of the higher-order factors of the Big Five and also indicating that these were not simply an artefact of self-esteem.

Erdle, Irwing, Rushton, and Park (2010) ran a secondary analysis on their (Erdle, Gosling, & Potter, 2009) existing sample data to explore the relationship between the General Factor of Personality (GFP) and self-esteem. Confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.72 was used in testing three sets of Big Five inter-scale correlation models. Results showed that the GFP was found to be an excellent fit with data. On the contrary, the two-order factor model was found to fit very poorly to the data, which seemed to indicate that the GFP was probably a more useful way to explain personality in this population. This model explained 57% of variance in the dimension of Stability and Plasticity. Further analysis revealed that self-esteem had a strong loading on GFP ($r=0.82$). A revised model, with the addition of self-esteem as an indicator to the GFP, was found to fit with the data. GFP and self-esteem jointly explain 67% of common variance. Therefore, GFP existed in this sample and was very likely to reflect self-esteem; indicating a possibility that BFI is explained by a single-factor solution.

In conclusion, there is still uncertainty about the underlying structure of the personality of Malaysian people, whether it is explained by a five factor model or a much higher-order factor of personality.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter provides background information on Malaysia. The multicultural setting of the country has contributed to the diversity and uniqueness in the behaviour of Malaysian people, including how people value things and conceptualise their happiness. Nonetheless, values such as ‘filial piety’ and ‘respect for tradition’ are among the shared values found in most ethnic groups in Malaysia, which makes the groups similar to one another. The uncertainty of the personality structure of the Malaysian people will be further investigated and reported elsewhere in the thesis.

CHAPTER 3

International student adaptation

3.1 Introduction

Migration is often seen as allowing more opportunities for self-development, financial success and freedom to some people. But it also often results in the deprivation of specific relationships and significant objects, including family, friends and occupational status as well as a host of important physical variables ranging from food to weather patterns (van Tilburg & Vingerhoets, 2007). Amongst the immigrant groups, the international students have received the most attention by researchers in studies relating to cultural adaptation experience. This chapter provides a literature review on the international students' adaptation experiences, which will be the main focus of the chapter. The chapter will begin with an overview of related theories of adaptation. Measurements of adaptation in previous research will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

3.2 Related theories in adaptation research

The process in which individuals or groups experience cultural change when interacting with and adapting to another distinct culture is known as 'acculturation' (Berry & Kim, 1988). According to Berry (1980, 1990), acculturation research involves two underlying perspectives: the assimilationist view or the unidirectional model, and the bi-dimensional model. The assimilationist view conceptualises acculturation as a linear bipolar process in which individuals gradually lose their original cultural characteristics and identity while adopting the values and behaviour of the dominant host culture. On the other hand, the bi-dimensional

model, the one proposed by Berry (1980), is made up of two orthogonal dimensions. The first dimension refers to the degree to which immigrants adapt to the host culture, while the other is the degree to which they adhere to their original culture. A combination of these two dimensions resulted in four modes of acculturation; namely: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation. Assimilation is characterised by a high level of acceptance in the host culture and low level of attachment to the original culture. Integration or the bicultural mode is achieved when individuals equally gain a high level of host cultural features and remain at a high level of original cultural traits. Separation denotes the situation where individuals strongly attach to their original culture and acquire a low level of host cultural characteristics. Lastly, marginalisation refers to feelings of alienation from both the original culture and the host culture, in which individuals fail to make up for the conflicts and incompatibilities between the original and the host culture.

Nevertheless, ultimately Berry's acculturation theory supports integration as the most desirable and healthy outcome for immigrants, though in reality mutual change between the host nationals and the immigrants seems never to exist (Sakamoto, 2007). The existence of 'power differentials' between immigrants and the host society has often brought a biased judgement to the immigrants on how they should act based on the cultural standards held by the native people, as if it is the accepted developmental path of being a cultural person. Sakamoto (2007) further criticised the theory that it often ignores the immigrants' anxiety of being surrounded by unfamiliar culture, or experience of being discriminated against, which may lead them into being labelled as 'not acculturating enough'.

In the initial stage of the adaptation process, 'culture shock' may occur. According to Pedersen (1995), in a multi-cultural context, culture shock is "a more or less sudden immersion into a non-specific state of uncertainty where the individuals are not certain what is expected of them or what they can expect from the persons around them" (p. 1). According to Oberg

(1960, in Furnham, 2004), who introduced the term of culture shock, mentioned several aspects of culture shock, including: “(1) strain due to the effort required to make necessary psychological adaptations, (2) a sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession and possessions, (3) being rejected by, or rejecting, members of the new culture, (4) confusion in role, role expectations, values, (5) surprise, anxiety, even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences, and (6) feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment” (pp. 16-19).

The adjustment pattern of international students in a host culture has been popularly described in U-curve fashion by several researchers (Pedersen, 1995). For example, Oberg (in Pedersen, 1995) claimed that there are seven stages of adjustment: “(1) incubation stage, (2) crises resulting from normal daily activity, (3) understanding the host culture, (4) objective viewing of the host culture, (5) re-entry, (6) reverse culture shock, (7) readjustment to the home country” (p. 2). Oberg’s first stage of adjustment is also referred to as the ‘honeymoon stage’ or the tourist phase by other researchers, whereby the newly arrived individual experiences the curiosity and excitement of a tourist whilst the person’s basic identity is deeply-seated in his or her original culture (Pedersen, 1995).

3.3 Challenges in international student adaptation experiences

Research has addressed several common problems relating to international student adaptation, including academic challenges, inadequacy of English language, financial struggles, physical adjustment, such as to the weather, food, and finding the right accommodation, perceived discrimination, and others, such as political concerns (Edwards, Hartwell & Brown, 2010; O’Reilly, Ryan, & Hicky, 2010; Mahmud, Amat, Rahman, & Ishak, 2010; Shin & Abell, 1999; Pan, Wong, Chan, & Joubert, 2008; Yeh & Inose, 2003). However, quite a lot of research has indicated that perhaps language is a major obstacle to the adapting process, which may also

affect the academic performance of international students (e.g. Ramsay, Barker, & Jones, 1999; Andrade, 2006; Pan et al., 2008). Ramsay et al. (1999) reported that first year university students in Australia encountered difficulties following lectures as they did not have adequate vocabularies and the ability to catch up with lectures. In the United States, getting used to the American slang as well as to be understood by others when speaking, have been found to be the greatest hurdle to the international students in coping with academic demands (Shin & Abell, 1999).

In Yeh and Inose's (2003) study amongst 359 international students in an urban university in the North Eastern part of the United States, it was found that the Non-European samples, especially the Asian, scored higher in acculturative stress than the European samples. Those who were fluent in English, socially connected and satisfied with their social support network experienced less acculturative stress. Inability to make friends due to language inadequacy locks international students out of social interaction in the neighbourhood, as one respondent in the study by Chaban, Williams, Holland, Boyce, and Warner (2011) simply put it, "language is a key and if you don't have this key or your key doesn't really fit, you are a lesser human being. You are simply not taken seriously" (p. 9).

Thomson, Rosenthal and Russell's (2006) study displayed similar results among 979 international students in Australia. Students who come from non-English speaking countries and of non-European descent, such as Asians and Africans, and who do not speak English when off campus and speak other than the English language, were reported to have problems in adapting to the host culture. Further, the study showed that students who were perceived to have a balanced life style between academic and social activities tended to have lower cultural stress. In this study, Thomson et al. (2006) suggested that being highly connected to the people around could serve as a support system which might help to lessen the cultural stress

experienced by international students. The feelings of being disadvantaged by poor spoken English may result in high anxiety, shame and inferiority (Brown, 2008).

Jose, Ward, and Liu (2007) ran a longitudinal study on 211 undergraduate students in a university in Wellington, New Zealand to investigate the relationship between stress, psychological adaptation and social support. In this study, participants were categorised as European New Zealanders (ENZ), Asian students (I-Asian) and students from other Western countries (I-Western). The average length of staying in New Zealand for the international students was six months ($M = 184$ days, $SD = 390$ days). The findings produced mixed results. A repeated measure MANOVA showed that I-Asian students experienced higher stress than both the I-Western and ENZ students. The latter two groups did not differ much in stress. However, for the adjustment problems, the I-Western students reported a lower level of negative adjustment than the I-Asian and ENZ groups. In overall data, stress and negative adjustment did not significantly change over time. I-Asian students perceived less social support from local, university and home, but claimed to receive the most support from co-national and international students; whilst for I-Western students the greatest support came from home and local sources. Only the perception of receiving support from fellow international students increased over time. The only significant interaction was found for the perceptions of local support whereby both groups were significantly different in their perception in both times, with I-Western reported to receive more available support from local people.

However, a study by Fritz, Chin and DeMarinis (2008) showed that the international students (Asian and European) were no different than their counterparts from the United States in their levels of anxiety, irritability and stress of being away from family and friends, pressures from school, difficulties with language, as well as work and finances. Whilst every group of these students reported experiencing financial problems, the international students, however,

reported having more hardship getting to work, and socially related difficulties compared to their other counterparts. Further results showed that coping with the language continued to be harder for the Asian students, while homesickness was reported to be higher in European students.

In addition, differences in values between the host culture and immigrant's original culture may account for the misunderstandings, distress and difficulties experienced by immigrants (van Tilburg & Vingerhoets, 2007). For instance, immigrants from a collectivist society may try to substitute their usual way of connecting to others by having gatherings or small parties amongst themselves or those of similar cultural background, which may lead them to be labelled as 'closed-minded people' by the host society. As a consequence to the misunderstanding, these immigrants may encounter inner conflicts in negotiating how to express their own values without offending the norms and values of the host culture, as Rudmin (2009) argued, "*psychic conflict* can arise from incompatible cultural norms"(p. 107). This view has been supported by Suanet and Van de Vijver's (2009) findings that perceived cultural distance strongly positively correlated with homesickness and stress amongst 187 exchange students in Russia.

3.4. Personality and adaptation experience

Ward and Chang (1997) studied the effect of cultural fit on psychological and socio-cultural adjustment amongst 139 American residents in Singapore. Cultural fit was measured based on discrepancy scores on the absolute differences between the participants' extroversion scores and the host culture's scores. Results showed that Extroversion per se was unrelated to the psychological and socio-cultural adjustment of the American residents in Singapore; but the

discrepancies of the Americans' scores and the host culture norms played a more important role in the increasing of psychological distress amongst residents.

However, some years later, Ward, Leong and Low (2004) did not find any support for the 'cultural fit hypothesis' in two samples of sojourners and hosts in Australia (465 Singaporeans and 139 Australian students) and Singapore (244 Australian expatriates and 671 Chinese Singaporeans). However, they found that Neuroticism and Extroversion were related to psychological and socio-cultural adaptation in both samples, and Agreeableness and Conscientiousness were related only to psychological well-being in both samples.

Apart from Neuroticism being positively related to anxiety, Arnes and Ward's (1989) study showed a rather interesting finding in a sample of 69 English-speaking expatriates in Singapore that Extroversion was positively related to depression, poor health, boredom and frustration (r ranged from .27 to .39). They suggested that the culture-specific characteristics of the host country might have some impact on the expatriates' well-being.

3.5 The effect of time on adaptation experiences

Adaptation patterns may be different as time goes by. Hener, Weller and Shor (1997) discovered that students experienced mild levels of depression at the beginning of studying; but after 6 months, the level of depression had returned to normal. Liebkind and Jasriskaja-Lahti (2006), in a study amongst immigrant adolescents in Finland, found that those who lived in Finland for more than five years had better proficiency in Finnish, perceived less discrimination, accepted less parental authority and were more satisfied with their lives.

Yuniarti (2004) compared the personal adaptation experiences amongst 201 Indonesian students in five different durations (less than 2 months, 2 months to 1 year, 1 to 2 years, 2 to 5 years, and more than 5 years) in Germany, and 89 Indonesian students in their home country

as the control group. From an earlier interview, the Indonesian students in Germany indicated a high need for academic success, acknowledgement of their expertise, competition and perfection, as well as a lack of a sense of belonging. Competition and perfection were experienced as the highest during 2 months after arrival and the least after 2 to 5 years in Germany. The Indonesian students were reported to adhere to their Asian values and behaviour - for example, their keenness on getting together with their Indonesian friends - and reported as not favouring being “alone” while organising daily-life activities, regardless of the duration of stay in Germany, indicating a need for belongingness. Students seemed to adapt well after they had been in the country for at least one year. Yuniarti (2004) further suggested that mastering the educational setting, the local language and social anchorage were likely to reduce tension in adjusting to the new country.

Zhou and Todman (2009) studied the adaptation patterns of 257 Chinese postgraduate students in two universities in the UK over three different periods of study: pre-departure to the UK (Stage I), after arrival in the UK (Stage II), and about 6 month after (Stage III). Data was collected through a set of questionnaires and in-depth interviews at each stage of the study. In the study, adaptation was measured through a list of difficulties faced by the students which was constructed based on the literature. The list comprised of language problems, regional accents, different food, travel difficulties, financial problems, finding accommodation, reading academic books, understanding lectures and finding friends. In stage I they were also asked about aspects of differences between teaching and learning traditions and practices in China and in the UK. The same questionnaire was used in Stages II and III, but expressed in the past tense. Twenty-eight of the participants who completed the questionnaire in all of the three stages were interviewed.

The results showed that students who came individually (Group I) experienced less difficulty in academic reading and understanding lectures at Stage I, but later at Stage II, they

faced greater difficulties in both areas compared to students who came in a group (Group G). In Stage II, difficulties in regional accents and different food were experienced more by the Group G compared to the Group I. Zhou and Todman suggested that students who came in a group might be ‘sticking together’ most of the time, and that this limited independent interactions between them and the host societies, thus leaving them having difficulties in understanding English conversation. This might also prevent them from being adventurous enough in appreciating local delicacies. As for the academic difficulties, Zhou and Todman reckoned that these students were less motivated to study in the UK and might just ‘go with the flow’, compared to those who came individually who might have a higher motivation in preparing themselves for the overseas studying experience. Nevertheless, the familiarity of the academic expectation and studying environment might offer an explanation for the positive change in the academic difficulties later on. Students had a higher score at Stage I in their perception of the differences between UK and Chinese’s teaching and learning tradition and practices as compared to Stage II. The interview data revealed that the students in general had more negative perceptions in general, social and study life at the post arrival stage compared to the pre-departure stage. Nonetheless, positive perception was higher in the later stage with respect to study life.

Adaptation problems were also reported among Chinese student immigrants in Canada whereby they experienced greater language and communication, socialisation and adaptation problems compared to their counterparts, i.e. non-Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-Canadian (Zheng & Berry, 1991). Most of them also suffered from health and psychological problems and were therefore categorised as “non-adapted”. It was suggested that there was an inverted U-curve pattern of adaptation as more problems were experienced during the acculturating phase compared to the pre-departure phase, and they decreased after four months. The decrement in adapting problems was probably due to engagement of positive coping behaviour,

such as finding ways to reduce stress and searching for information that was useful in the adaptation process.

3.6 Malaysian students' adaptation

Recently, Swami (2009) conducted a study on Malaysian students' adaptation to Britain. He studied various aspects of socio-cultural adjustment among 81 Malay and 110 Chinese students and found that the Malay participants experienced poorer socio-cultural adjustment, making less contact with both other international and local students. They were more likely to perceive their life experiences in Britain as worse than they expected them to be, with greater cultural distance and discrimination than their Chinese counterparts. The Malays' strongest predictor towards socio-cultural adjustment was perceived discrimination, while English language proficiency was perceived more by the Chinese students. Swami further suggested that socio-cultural adaptation might be explained at least partially by socio-economic differences in the Malay and Chinese.

3.7 Measurement in acculturation research

Several scales have been developed to measure cultural adaptation or acculturation experiences (e.g. Anderson, 1994; Sam & Berry, 1995; Searle & Ward, 1990). In Sam and Berry's (1995) study, acculturation experience was conceptualised as acculturation stress which relied on scales of negative self-evaluation, depressive tendencies, and psychological and somatic symptoms. In comparison, Searle and Ward (1990) measured acculturation stress by looking at the internal (psychological) and external process (socio-cultural) of adjustment. Ward and colleagues strongly supported the idea that adjustment or adaptation during cross-cultural transitions can be broadly divided into two categories: psychological and socio-cultural adjustment (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Searle, 1991). Psychological adjustment deals with

feelings of well-being and satisfaction, and socio-cultural adjustment refers to ‘the ability to ‘fit-in’ or negotiate negative interactive aspects of the host culture’ (van Tilburg & Vingerhoets, 2007, p. 23).

According to Ward and Kennedy (1993), predictors in any psychological and socio-cultural adjustment study are unique in the studied samples. Diverse situations and culture-specific factors underlying the samples may produce a different magnitude in the relationship between psychological and socio-cultural adjustment. Ward and colleagues further suggested that measurement of adjustment variables can be distinguished into that of culture-specific (socio-cultural adaptation, e.g. culture distance, command of language and general knowledge about the host culture) and non-culture specific or culture-general (psychological adaptation, e.g. locus of control, life changes and social support).

People may often experience the loss of their traditional conventional pattern of support and resources whilst adapting in a new country (Safdar, Lay, & Struthers, 2003). For immigrants who originated from a collectivist culture, their collectivist values have been deeply-rooted within them, such as interdependency, which could serve as a support system for these people to adapt well in a new culture (Wong, 1999).

The adaptation of immigrants, however, is a multifaceted process that could as well be explained by the balance of perceived gains (positive outcome of migration) and losses (negative outcome of migration) (Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret & Ward, 2007). Maydell-Stevens et al. (2007) explored this perspective through a qualitative study among six Russian speaking immigrants in New Zealand. Participants indicated the positive outcomes of migration as being able to have a family reunion, increased feelings of safety and security, and having freedom. On the other hand, the losses indicated by the participants were categorised as the loss of self-fulfilment and the loss of a sense of belonging. Participants also reported feelings of loss related to their work achievements, social status, financial assets and life

satisfaction. The loss of a sense of belonging was indicated through the loss of contact with former friends, relatives and social networks, and a loss of continuity with their ancestries. Maydell-Stevens et al. (2007) concluded that the balance of these perceived positive and negative experiences implied the immigrants' evaluation of the success of their adaptation process, and reflected their attitude as a whole to immigration.

3.8 Conclusion

In adapting to a new culture, international students may have to go through some changes including physical and environmental (e.g. looking for the right house to live in), biological (e.g. experiencing new diseases), political (e.g. involving some loss of autonomy), economic (e.g. new forms of employment), cultural (e.g. involving linguistic alterations), social relationships and psychological changes, which also include changes in values, abilities and motives (Berry, 1990; Shin & Abell, 1999). Inadequacy in the host country's language may lock these students away from many social activities or interactions and sets the stage for homesickness (van Tilburg & Vingerhoets, 2007). The feeling of missing things in the home country and low satisfaction with life may gradually develop, which would diminish the ability to function successfully in the new culture (Liebkind & Jasriskaja-Lahti, 2000). However, positive outcomes of the adaptation process, such as increased language proficiency, self-esteem and confidence, positive feelings and social interaction and stress control, may occur after some time (Matsumoto, Hirayama and LeRoux, 2006). In addition, certain personality traits may contribute as a 'protective' factor to the individuals in undergoing the adaptation process.

As the adaptation experience involves two perspectives of 'gain' and 'loss', it is reasonable to examine future international students' adapting experiences according to two perspectives - the negative feelings a person may encounter, such as missing home or

experiencing homesickness, or losing their sense of authority, and the positive feelings in experiencing a new exciting life abroad. Integration of these two types of experience would explain the level of adaptation which may have some effects on the immigrants' well-being. This new perspective bears a resemblance to Berry's (1980) integration mode of acculturation mentioned earlier as it involves the influences of the host and original culture of the immigrants. Given that this perspective has not been fully explored in research, it offers a new insight into the future study of international student adaptation.

CHAPTER 4

Adaptation Experiences of Malaysian Students in the UK

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, it was highlighted that the adapting experiences of international students has consistently reported to be challenging and stressful. Findings have shown that international students experience more adjustment problems than home students because they have to face greater pressures from academic difficulties, language difficulties, financial problems, diminished social support, loneliness, and socio-cultural demands (Jose, Ward, & Liu, 2007; O'Reilly, et al., 2010). In other words, when important needs (e.g. being able to converse well in English and have enough financial resources) are found to be lacking in the life of overseas students, they are potential to have a low well-being (Chan & Joseph, 2000). According to Schwartz (2003), people who rate more importance to self-enhancement and conservation values, are more likely to experience low well-being. However, individuals and groups are still different from one another in value priorities and hierarchies (Schwartz, 2003).

Human need is a subjective and culturally relative concept (Doyal & Gough, 1991); thus, the adaptation experiences of overseas students may be different in one culture to another due to different needs. Therefore, the aim of the study was to explore the adaptation experiences of overseas Malaysian students through a series of semi-structured interviews. This interview is divided into two phases. Phase 1 is to explore the needs and goals of these students, and their well-being statuses, and phase 2 is to explore their adapting experiences in the UK, i.e. what they have missed and enjoyed while in the UK. In the end, the findings of this study will be used in developing a questionnaire on Malaysian students' adapting experiences in the UK.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Method

The qualitative semi-structured series of interviewing method was used in the study through an approach called the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The IPA is a suitable approach in finding out how individuals are perceiving the particular situations they are facing, how they are making sense of their personal and social world (Smith, 2003). IPA is particularly convenient when the area of study involves understanding a process, intricacy, or a unique experience (Smith, 2003). There were two phases of this study. In the first phase, participants were asked about their study experiences, their needs and related efforts in achieving them, and their well-being states. The second interview was conducted in order to explore more about participants' feelings on their adapting experiences in the UK, i.e. things they might miss about home, and the enjoyment they felt whilst being in the country. The interviews were audio-recorded.

4.2.2 Sampling.

Samples were taken from a convenient sampling method. According to Smith (2007), IPA studies are normally conducted on small sample sizes for several reasons: the commitment and constraints one needs to consider in analysing and reporting into detail of each case, and the richness of the data. However, five or six has sometimes been recommended as a reasonable sample size, as the aim of any IPA study is to have an in-depth understanding about this particular group of people and their perceptions, rather than hastily making general claims (Smith, 2007).

Seven postgraduate Malaysian students took part in the study. All of them were PhD students from various faculties at the University of Plymouth. All of them received the scholarship of Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, and held a lecturer post or academic

position before coming to study for their PhD. Their ages ranged from 28 to 32 years old. Four of them had been in the UK doing their PhD for at least 16 months, two were between three to six months, and one was less than three months. All of them were Malays, which is the biggest ethnic group in Malaysia. At the time of the study, four of the participants were already married with one child, and three were still single.

4.2.3 Materials

Participants were given the Research Information Sheet to read and were asked to sign the consent form. A set of semi-structured interview questions was printed out to guide the researcher along the interview (See Figure 4.1). The interview was recorded using a digital recorder that lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. The interview schedule consisted of three sections. The first section involved questions about the participants' demographic information. The second section included questions about the participants' needs and goals, as well as their psychological well-being statuses. Lastly, participants were asked about things they might miss about home, and enjoy while in the UK.

Phase 1 Interview

Identifying needs/ external and internal forces

1. What do you understand about needs?
2. What are the things that important to you in life?
3. Is there any reason why you pursue a higher degree study?
4. What are the things matter most to you in your life as a postgraduate student?
5. Could you describe your career aspiration(s)?

Efforts

1. What have you done so far in fulfilling your needs?
2. Is there any specific strategy to achieve something in your life?
3. Do you think you have strived to the fullest potential as a person? If so, why?

Feelings/ Psychological wellbeing

1. What do you understand about satisfaction in life?
2. To what extend you believe one have actually reached satisfaction in life?
3. How important meeting those needs to you?
4. How would you describe your feelings now?

Identity/ Demographic information

1. Could you describe briefly about yourself and your background of study?
2. How would you describe yourself as a person?

Phase 2 Interview

Missing home experiences

1. How would you describe your experience in this country?
2. Could you please tell me about your feelings of being abroad?
3. Could you please describe things that you miss when you are here (abroad)?
4. Do you feel like missing things at home when you are here? If yes, how do you handle it?
5. Could you explain your usual activity in Malaysia?

Enjoyment being abroad

1. Could you please describe enjoyment felt or experienced whilst being overseas?
2. How would you describe the experience of learning new things whilst abroad?
3. Do you enjoy being in the country? If so, why?
4. What are the activities you normally do in the UK?

Figure 4.1: Sample questions of the semi-structured interview

4.2.4 Procedure.

After gaining the ethic approval from the university, participants were approached individually and asked to take part in the study. An interview appointment was set up after verbal agreement was sought. At the appointed date and time before the interview took place, participants were briefed by the researcher about the objectives of the research and they were given time to read the Research Information Sheet. They were also told about their rights as participants in this study before signing the consent form for taking part in the interview. Each participant was interviewed for about forty-five to sixty minutes. They were given the option to have the interview conducted in English or Malay. Two participants had their interviews in English, and the rests were done in Malay. Participants were allowed to ask questions at the end of the interview. All interviews took place in a psychology laboratory at Level 1, Link Building, University of Plymouth.

4.2.5 Method of analysis

The interviews were transcribed in full which included the use of self-invented codes to indicate non-verbal features of speech such as pauses, laughter, and unfinished sentences that appeared in the conversations (see Appendix B1). For IPA, the level of transcription is generally at the semantic level, which means that all the words spoken including false starts, significant pauses, laughs and other features are important to be recorded (Smith & Osborn, 2008). However, for IPA, the transcription does not have to be too detailed to involve prosodic features of conversation, and whilst transcribing, any interesting or important points that appeared in the interview should be noted (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

The interview transcripts were then analysed using the IPA as suggested by Smith and Osborn (2008). The transcripts were read a number of times, and during the process, the left hand was used to annotate what was significant or interesting about what the respondent had said. These initial comments were then moved to the right-hand margin and transformed into a list of themes or phrases that described what had been said by the participant. Next, the themes were clustered together with other related themes, and from there a superordinate theme, which covered all of the themes, would then be identified. These themes were put into a table with the illustrative quotes for each of the themes, and when this had been completed for every transcript, a master table of themes was created (see Table 4.1 and 4.2). The function of the table was to highlight themes that were highly significant or saliently stood in the initial tables, with all the relevant quotes throughout the interviews and these were discussed in the write-up of the analysis. For interviews that were done in Malay language, the transcriptions were translated into English first before analysing it (see Appendix B2 for the transcriptions). As English is not the researcher's first language, it is important to note that the quality of the translation may not sound like how a native speaker should be.

4.3 Analysis and discussion

In the first phase of the interview, five themes were found on the goals and needs of the Malaysian students, as well as the effects on well-being (see Table 4.1 for summary). Interview data at this stage provided an important groundwork for understanding the nature of adapting experiences that the Malaysian students were going through. The second phase of the interview was conducted to explore further the adapting experiences of these students from a perspective of what they had missed about home and enjoyed about UK since pursuing their studies. In the second phase, nine themes were found (See Table 4.2 and 4.3 for summary). Discussions are organised based on the sequel of themes presented in the tables.

4.3.1 Interview Part I

The interviews were initially conducted in order to explore the participants' perception of their current needs and goals that matter most to them, as well as their psychological well-being. Based on Table 4.1, the following five themes are identified: *external reward, self-development, sense of contentment/inner peace, need for economic security, and effects on well-being.*

Table 4.1

Interview results of exploring participants' perception on current needs and goals, and their psychological well-being.

Theme	Sub-theme	Evidence
External reward	Career incentives	<p><i>"...I want to be successful, for example, in terms of career, we want to achieve as high as possible in academia". P#2M, page2, lines 49-51.</i></p> <p><i>"After completing the PhD, one of the greatest things is the networking..." P#1M, page 3, lines 100-101.</i></p> <p><i>"When I became a lecturer, I was required to do the PhD". P#1M, page 3, lines 82-83.</i></p> <p><i>"...I was attached with Universiti Putra Malaysia, and basically, I am forced to do the PhD". P#3F, page 2, lines 71-72.</i></p> <p><i>"...you can't confirm your position as an academician without a PhD". P#4F, page 2, lines 70-71.</i></p>
Self-development	Quest of knowledge	<p><i>"...there is a chance for self-development". P#1M, page 4, line 112.</i></p> <p><i>"One more thing, knowledge is very important. I love learning". P#2M, page4, lines128-129.</i></p> <p><i>"But there's also part of me that wants to do the PhD". P#3F, page 3, lines 72-73.</i></p> <p><i>"When I was teaching my students I felt like I didn't have enough knowledge or skills to become a good teacher to my students. I don't get easily satisfied with my current knowledge. That's why I took the opportunity to continue study and improve myself from time to time". P#4F, page 2, 60-65.</i></p>

Dream		<p><i>"...I have always dreamed to further my study to the highest level". P#2M, page 4, line 115-116.</i></p> <p><i>"It has always been my dream since small to go studying abroad. I said that to myself, and I still remember it". P#2M, page 4, line 122-124.</i></p>
Sense of contentment/Inner peace	External and internal happiness	<p><i>"From the outside of the career life, I would like to achieve the "external and internal" happiness. It means, I want to have a peaceful life. It's good to be peaceful and wealthy, but not to be rich and unpeaceful". P#2M, page 2, line 52-57.</i></p>
	Moderate life-style	<p><i>"I just want to have an easy life-style, at least I have a car to ride on, a house, and some money to spend". P#1M, page 2,45-46.</i></p>
	Affiliation to the God	<p><i>"I am a Muslim. I try to do what a Muslim is supposed to do, like pray five times a day, fasting during the month of Ramadhan, and all that. I try to live my life in a way which will please the God". P#3F, page 2, lines 61-64.</i></p>
	Helping Family	<p><i>"I am satisfied because I can help my family ...". P#6M, page 3, line 142.</i></p> <p><i>"First and foremost is to help my family. Secondly, is to maintain the dignity of my family" P#5M, page 1, lines 46-48.</i></p> <p><i>"For me family always comes first. I don't care if people call me Mommy's boy, family man or whatever. I will always contact them at least once a week. It's my responsibility as a child". P#7M, page 6, lines 278-282.</i></p>
Need for economic security	Meagre scholarship	<p><i>"... I do a part time job 10 hours a week. I need to focus and my wife works as well". P#2M, page 5, lines 155-156.</i></p> <p><i>"I had to work, my wife too, because of financial [constrain]. It was hard as the living cost here was high, but the scholarship was just meagre". P#1M, page 1, lines 28-31.</i></p>
	Role switching	<p><i>"We take turns to look after him (the baby)". P#2M, page 5, line 157.</i></p>
Effects on well-being	Financial stress	<p><i>"My problem here depends on the scholarship. It will be problematic if the scholarship does not continue. In a few months time, it will be hard for me". P#2M, page 4, lines 148-151.</i></p> <p><i>I am the only son and the eldest from a poor family background, ...a bit poor. For the time being my family depends on me. Moreover, my old folks are not employed anymore, they only stay at home". P#1M, page 2, lines 60-63.</i></p>

Academic stress	<i>“PhD is the most stressful experience because there are no deadlines. Although there are deadlines, they look like they will never end”</i> . P#1M, page 5, lines 173-175.
Self-discrepancy	<i>“I’m grateful with what I have, for being here, and with what I’m doing now. Satisfied? I’m not satisfied with my current knowledge. That’s it. Because usually, in my area of study, people know how to do programming, and I don’t know. I’m not good at programming. So I guess I need to learn more of it”</i> . P#4F, page 5, lines 210-216

a. Analysis and discussion for the goals and needs, and psychological well-being of Malaysian students

i. External reward

The first theme has been named ‘external reward’ as the sub-theme is related to career incentives. To academicians, having a PhD is essential, which to some it may be an entry point for more opportunities and successes in academic career. The fact that the participants were formerly lecturers or hold a position as academic staff at the universities of the home country, has probably motivated them to obtain the degree as to put them a step further in their academic career. More importantly, some of them revealed that a PhD is a criterion one needs to fulfil in securing his or her position in the university where they are working. This is evidenced by **P#1M** when he mentioned;

“When I became a lecturer, I was required to do the PhD”. **P#1M, page 3, lines 82-83.**

P#3F described the same thing;

“...I was attached with Universiti Putra Malaysia, and basically, I am forced to do the PhD”. **P#3F, page 2, lines 71-72.**

P#4F explained how important a PhD is in securing her position as an academician at the university as she said;

*“...you can’t confirm your position as an academician without a PhD”.***P#4F, page 2, lines 70-71.**

From the cases discussed, obtaining a PhD is indeed an ultimate goal for these students. In Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, obtaining such rewarding experiences falls on the fourth need, which explains that a person will gain self-respect and recognition by achieving certain things in life. Being rewarded a doctoral degree is something that can be proud of and may boost the self-esteem of these students; thus, increase their life satisfaction’s level. Moreover, the PhD is often a platform for more career progression, such as collaborative research with experts all over the world. **P#1M**, mentioned about potential career development awaits them after completing the PhD;

*“After completing the PhD, one of the greatest things is the networking...”***P#1M, page 3, lines 100-101.**

ii. Self-development

The second theme is self-development. The quest of knowledge and awareness of becoming a better person were issues raised by the participants when they were asked about their goals. In the conversation, **P#1M** pointed out;

“...there is a chance of self-development”. **P#1M, page 4, line 112.**

P#3F also expressed the desire of pursuing PhD came partly from her;

“But there’s also part of me that wants to do the PhD”. **P#3F, page 3, lines 72-73.**

Other participants mentioned about learning and experiencing new things as part of what they looked for in life;

“After arriving here, I have learned a lot of things. The third one is experience.

These two things are important to me”. **P#2M, page 3, lines76-78.**

“One more thing, knowledge is very important. I love learning”. **P#2M, page4,**

lines128-129.

Interestingly, the need to overcome feelings of inadequacy due to the lack of knowledge and skills, marked another indicator for self-development; as **P#4F** explained the reason of her continuing her study was to improve herself;

“When I was teaching my students I felt like I didn’t have enough knowledge or skills to become a good teacher to my students. I don’t get easily satisfied with my current knowledge. That’s why I took the opportunity to continue study and improve myself from time to time”. **P#4F, page 2, 60-65.**

Another indicator for the theme was the mention of ‘dream’ in pursuing studies. **P#2M** described that his decision in furthering study was somewhat motivated by his childhood dream of going to study abroad, and his wish to pursue studies at the highest level;

“It has always been my dream since small to go studying abroad. I said that to myself, and I still remember it”. **P#2M, page 4, line 122-124.**

“...I have always dreamed to further my study to the highest level”. **P#2M, page 4, line 115-116.**

iii. Sense of contentment/inner peace

The third theme found in the interview was ‘sense of contentment’ or ‘inner peace’. The four sub-themes that emerged within this theme are actually linked to one another. Being raised in a culture that promotes a strong adherence to religion practices and beliefs, and high respect for the elderly, authorities and tradition has brought the participants to an awareness of what really matters to them – a tranquil life. Tranquil life brings inner peace. A balance between craving for wealth and the need for tranquillity of inner self had been referred to “external and internal happiness” by **P#2M**;

“From the outside of the career life, I would like to achieve the “external and internal” happiness. It means, I want to have a peaceful life. It’s good to be peaceful and wealthy, but not to be rich and unpeaceful”. **P#2M, page 2, line 52-57.**

P#1M mentioned about having a ‘moderate life-style’;

“I just want to have an easy life-style, at least I have a car to ride on, a house, and some money to spend”. **P#1M, page 2,45-46.**

This seemed to be inter-related to what **P#2M** had already mentioned “...not to be rich and unpeaceful” (p.2, line 57).

Another indicator for ‘sense of contentment’ was ‘affiliation to God’, which is witnessed in the way **P#2M** perceived life as a gift from Allah (the God) as he said;

“...what we get is a gift from Allah, the Almighty. We strive, it is up to Him. We have to have faith”. **P#2M, page 2, lines 67-69.**

Living by one’s own values normally makes one happy. For **P#3F**, to live by the Islamic values in order to show affiliation towards God defines her happiness;

“I am a Muslim. I try to do what a Muslim is supposed to do, like pray five times a day, fasting during the month of Ramadhan, and all that. I try to live my life in a way which will please God”. **P#3F, page 2, lines 61-64.**

A sense of self-contentment is also felt when satisfaction is received after being good to family. Family is a strong social institution in any Asian culture, whereby it always gets credits for an individual's success or often becomes a motivator to its members in life achievement. In the interview, most of the participants expressed their concerns about maintaining responsibilities towards their families, especially to their parents. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

“For me family always comes first. I don't care if people call me Mommy's boy, family man or whatever. I will always contact them at least once a week. It's my responsibility as a child”. **P#7M, page 6, lines 278-282**

In this Eastern society, the responsibility of a child is bigger if the person is the eldest, and even more if being a son or both. The child needs to shoulder the task as a big brother or sister in paving the way to success, so that the younger siblings would easily follow their footsteps. In that sense, the dignity of the family is maintained or upgraded. A feeling of contentment will appear when they have fulfilled their responsibility towards their family. This is found in the following excerpts;

“First and foremost is to help my family. Secondly, is to maintain the dignity of my family. This is because, I come from the village, and being the firstborn. I bring hope to my family...” **P#5M, page 1, lines 46-50.**

“I am satisfied because I can help my family ...” **P#6M, page 3, line 142.**

iv. Need for economic security

The fourth theme is about the need for economic security. Participants mentioned about how they have to struggle making ends meet in order to support their life while living in the UK due to the meagre scholarship. **P#1M** explained that in the early year of his study, he and his wife had to take up a job to earn some money as the scholarship was insufficient. He said;

“I had to work, my wife too, because of financial constraint. It was hard as the living cost here was high, but the scholarship was just meagre”. **P#1M, page 1, lines 28-31.**

For **P#1M**, he has to finance not only his immediate family in the UK, but also lend monetary support to his parents back home in Malaysia. It is a common value among Asians to carry on such obligations toward their parents and other closest family members. In a Malay society, adherence to such customary practice is embedded in Islamic norms and values (Jaafar et.al, 2004).

“I am the only son and the eldest from a poor family background,...a bit poor. For the time being my family depends on me. Moreover, my old folks are not employed anymore, they only stay at home”. **P#1M, page 2, lines 60-63.**

Role switching between spouses happened as wives were also expected to help their husbands in end-making activities, which resulted in their children being left under the husbands' care. **P#2M** mentioned that;

“... I do a part time job 10 hours a week. I need to focus and my wife works as well”. **P#2M, page 5, lines 154-155.**

“We take turn to look after him (the baby)”. **P#2M, page 5, line 157.**

The concept of ‘house-husband’ which involves role-switching is not a common practice to Malaysians in general, and the Malays in particular. Therefore role switching here also indicated serious compromises of both spouses in order to maintain or increase the economic security of the family.

v. Effects on well-being

The last theme revealed is effects on well-being. Three sub-themes were discovered under this theme - financial stress, academic stress, and psychological conflict. Earlier discussion on the need of economic security indicated how money is vital to the continuity of life among these Malaysian students. It was indicated that the participants experienced some level of stress due to the incapability to cope up with financial problems that they are encountering at the moment or perceived future. **P#2M** mentioned about his worries if the scholarship comes to an end, as he said;

“My problem here depends on the scholarship. It will be problematic if the scholarship does not continue. In a few months time, it will be hard for me”. **P#2M, page 4, lines 148-151.**

Financial stress was also sensed in **P#1M’s** conversation about his economic striving, that he had to support his family in Malaysia beside his immediate family in the UK.

“For the time being my family depends on me. Moreover, my old folks are not employed anymore, they only stay at home”. **P#1M, page 2, lines 60-63.**

Participants also indicated that they experience academic stress. For international students whose first language is not English, it is often reported that they have more difficulties in their academic endeavours due to the lack of ability to converse well in the language compared to

local students or of whom English is the mother tongue (e.g. Brown, 2008). The nature of the studying programme itself may as well be a source of stress to students, as **P#1M** claimed that the studying experience at PhD level was more demanding compared to the undergraduate and Masters' level.

“PhD is the most stressful experience because there are no deadlines. Although there are deadlines, they look like they will never end”. **P#1M**, page 5, lines 173-175.

Another sub-theme of effects on well-being is ‘self-discrepancy’. Ironical statements made by the participants indicated some extent of self-discrepancy. When asked about whether they were satisfied with life, they generally claimed that they were, but other part of their narratives told a different story. For example, **P#4F** defined ‘satisfaction’ as achieving a goal (“...you will get what you have [that] is what you want, [then] you will feel satisfied”, pg. 5, lines 230-231). For her, the important goal at the moment was to finish the PhD, and yet she still had to overcome her studying problem, leaving her being unsatisfied with her life. However, her mentioning of ‘being grateful with what she has’ indicates a way of toning down the pressures she obtained from the study. As a Muslim is always taught and reminded of being grateful to the God for bestowing happiness upon them; thus, it is believed that reciting words of gratitude to God, whether in prayers or in whatever situation, would help bring tranquillity to the person.

For **P#4F**, this was a point where conflict appeared, and this showed that some ‘emotional struggles’ or ‘cognitive negotiations’ had taken place within the self.

“I’m grateful with what I have, for being here, and with what I’m doing now. Satisfied? I’m not satisfied with my current knowledge. That’s it. Because usually, in my area of study, people know how to do programming, and I don’t know. I’m

not good at programming. So I guess I need to learn more of it". P#4F, page 5, lines 210-216.

Another example of self-discrepancy was found in this excerpt;

"To some extent, I am satisfied, but there are still other things I need to achieve".

P#7M, page2, lines93-94

The contradictory or ironic statements traced in the interviews is further explained in the self-discrepancy theory by Higgins (1987). According to the theory, the degree of discrepancy between cognitive domains possessed by an individual (which is referred to as self-state representations) represents particular emotional situations (Higgins, 1987). The self-state representations are comprised of the actual self-state representation, which is the knowledge structure, and both the ideal and ought-self-state representations, which are the belief structures. The ideal-self represents the hopes, aspirations and wishes for the self, whereas the ought-self represents beliefs about the duties, obligations and responsibilities of the self. Discrepancies between the self-concept and self-guides are believed to elicit a variety of affects. The participants' struggle of emotions or 'negotiating conflicts' in everyday situations, indicates a form of personal striving or recurring goals that a person tries to accomplish (Emmons, 1992). Emmons further explained that personal striving construct serves as a predictor of psychological and psychological well-being, especially in its two properties; ambivalence and conflict, which have been related to a broad range of aversive physical and psychological states (Emmons, 1992). According to Little (in Emmons, 1992), there appears to be two groups of people based on how they frame their goals according to the level of generality, which are referred to as the 'high-level strivers' and the 'low-level strivers'. The first group reflects individuals who describe their goals in primarily broad, abstract, and

expansive ways, while the second group frame their goals in concrete, specific, and more superficial terms.

Emmons explains this further by taking an example of within the domain of religion; a high-level striver may express to “get closer to God” or “explore my religious beliefs”, whereas a low-level-striver may describe what is essentially the same goal as “go to church every Sunday” or “say 10 Hail Marys” (p.292). However, the level of goal’s abstraction has greater impacts on psychological and physical well-being of a person than the low-level projects, whereby it is more difficult, challenging, time constrained, and less likely to be successful compared to low-level projects (Emmons, 1992). As a result, high-level strivers are more likely to experience low psychological well-being than the low-level strivers (Emmons, 1992)

In conclusion, most of the goals addressed by these Malaysian students are placed at abstract levels (e.g. self-development, sense of contentment or inner peace), requiring one to be more vigilant in his or her efforts of achieving the goals. Being “high-level strivers” as mentioned earlier by Emmons, and coupled with insecurity feelings due to financial tightness, may have put the Malaysian students generally under stress. They may have gone through a difficult life when they are left with limited resources and are far away from supports that they used to have in home country. Although these struggles lower down the well-being of individuals who are adapting to the culture, the advantages of being in a new culture are notable. The second interview with these Malaysian students was conducted in order to explore deeper about the students’ negative and positive experiences of adaptation.

4.3.2 Interview Part II

In the second interview the students were asked to describe their normal activities in their home country, and how much they have missed this and other things whilst in the UK, as well as explaining things that they enjoy most about being in the UK. The missing elements emerged in the following identified themes; *the significance of food, maintaining relationships, ease in own culture, and sense of belongingness*. Whilst for the enjoyment, five themes emerged, i.e. *supportive academic environment, nature, travelling and cultural knowledge, technology, values of goods and services*. The findings are presented in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3.

Table 4.2

Results of the emerging themes for Missing experiences

Theme	Sub-theme	Evidence
Significance of food	Getting halal food	<i>“What I don’t like in Plymouth is that, it is hard to get halal food products. There are very few shops that sell halal stuff”. P#7M, page 6, lines 300-303.</i>
		<i>“Before this, we can just buy food at any stall after being satisfied that the cook is a Malay [who is normally associated as a Muslim], but here, I really need to scrutinise what the ingredients are. That makes us more conscious [with food]”. P#3F, page 4, lines 170-174.</i>
	Eating out activities	<i>“I really miss our usual eating out”. P#1M, page 5, lines 207-208.</i>
	Traditional food	<i>“The thing I miss the most is the food, as well as the eating out activities. I miss soto, mee rebus, laksa Johor (some of local delicacies)...”. P#2M, page 2, lines 81-83.</i>
Maintaining relationships	Responsibilities towards family	<i>“I miss doing this too that is monitoring the education of my younger siblings...”. P#2M, page 3, 146-147.</i>
	Maintaining friendship	<i>“I would try to spend time with friends and visit my relatives”. P#6M, page 3, lines 153-154.</i>
		<i>“Before this, most of the time, I would go for movies and played bowling with my friends”. P#6M, page 4, lines 158-160.</i>

Ease in own culture	Available supports	<i>"...in the morning I would send my daughter to my mum, we are very close and my mum's place is not far from my workplace. Here, I feel it is difficult as we have to do things on our own". P#3F, page1, Lines 10-14.</i>
	Recreation	<i>"I imagine that if we were in Malaysia, I would go out for movies with my husband and leave our daughter in my mum's care for a few hours, but here, there's nobody who could take care of my baby". P#3F, page 1, lines 17-21.</i>
	Financial security	<i>"Before this we used to earn a double-income, but now, my husband is on a full-unpaid leave. We need to pay the house and the car back home in Malaysia, and now we only depend on one person's salary". P#3F, page 1, lines 43-47.</i>
	Practising of religion	<i>"Besides, that is the inner part of religious enrichment. Although we can search most of the things in the Internet, I think it is different...Here, there are not many religious activities...I don't feel contented". P#5M, page 5, lines 207-215.</i>
	Safety concern	<i>"I miss praying anywhere I want. I don't have to think hard of where to pray. The prayer place is always available everywhere". P#4F, page 3, lines 115-117.</i>
		<i>"I don't have to be afraid to go out at night, not like here. It is not advisable to go out after 9pm". P#4F, page 3, lines 117-119.</i>
Sense of belongingness	Ownership	<i>"We already have a house at home. I always dreaming of settling down properly in that house. It's hard for me". P#3F, page 1, lines 26-28.</i>
		<i>"I don't even have a car here. I lead a very humble and simple life". P#3F, page1, lines 37-38.</i>
	Feelings of belongingness	<i>"I have more freedom in my own country. I am nobody here...I feel isolated". P#4F, page 3, lines 123-126.</i>

Table 4.3

Results of the emerging themes for Enjoyment experiences

Theme	Sub-theme	Evidence
Supportive academic environment	Face-to-face with experts	<i>"In terms of academic, I meet the experts". P#7M, page 6, line 288.</i>

Nature	Experience the four-seasons	<i>"In terms of non-academic, I can experience the environment, for example, the opportunity to experience the four seasons which I have been dreaming since young". P#7M, page 6, 289-292.</i>
Travelling and cultural knowledge	Opportunity of sight-seeing	<i>If I have free time, I would like to tour Europe". P#7M, page 6, 292-293.</i>
	Opportunity to know other culture	<i>"I enjoy doing the sight-seeing. It's beautiful here, in Plymouth, especially the Hoe". P#2M, page 2, 87-88.</i> <i>"...we could travel and get to know other countries". P#5M, page 5, lines 224-225.</i> <i>"It's good to be here because there are no cultural constraints, and you can experience a lot of things here". P#5M, page 5, lines 256-258.</i>
Technology	Technology advancement	<i>"The internet connection is brilliant and fast. The technology here is undoubtedly excellent". P#2M, page 2, 92-94</i> <i>"In terms of gadgets, I could possibly be charmed by them since my background is in Information Technology". P#5M, page 7, line 355-357.</i>
Values of goods and services	Appreciated as customer	<i>"One more thing is shopping. I think I am being appreciated more [as a customer] here. The customer service is good. So I guess it is more enjoyable when dealing with people. They appreciate us as clients". P#2M, page 2, 88-92.</i>
	Condition of goods	<i>"Also, the second hand items here which are still in a good condition". P#7M, page 6, 293-294.</i>
	Alternative shopping outlets with bargained price	<i>"As usual, I love going to the car-boot sales". P#5M, page 7, line 319.</i>

b. Analysis and Discussion for Missing experiences

i. Significance of food

The first theme has been named ‘significance of food’ as the sub-themes are related to the importance of having *halal* food and eating out to the participants. *Halal* in Arabic means ‘permitted’ or ‘lawful’. *Halal* foods are foods that are allowed under Islamic dietary guidelines.

Food serves as an essential part in the survival of human beings. Strong cultural and religiosity backgrounds differentiate the interpretation of what types of food one may have. For the Muslims, it is mandatory for them to have ‘*halal*’ food. For the small community of Malaysian postgraduates in Plymouth, getting *halal* food is quite a rigorous effort because one needs to go to certain shops only, of which very few are to be found in Plymouth.

“What I don’t like in Plymouth is that, it is hard to get halal food products. There are very few shops that sell halal stuff”. P#7M, page 6, lines 300-303.

Although only one participant make a special remark of getting *halal* food is the disadvantage about being in Plymouth, the rest of them agreed that food is what they have been missing since they came to the UK especially in Plymouth.

Back in Malaysia, they can easily get *halal* food at almost any stall or premise without much hassle. One may not need to question the *halal* status of the food, or the sources of the food, simply by looking at who the workers are and the owner is. Normally when the owner of a premise is a Malay, or a Muslim, people will undoubtedly relate to the food served at the stall or restaurant being from *halal* sources. Furthermore, *halal* canned or bottled food products can also be found anywhere. This easy life of having not to bother much about the *halal* status of food is somewhat missed by the participants. The scarcity of *halal* food resources and abundance of non-*halal* ones turned them into being extra conscious each time they need to

purchase food. They need to scrutinise the ingredients into detail. Even if there is no sign of ingredients related to pork or any animal product, one still need to be careful of the non-*halal* liquid ingredients, such as wine, rum, sherry, or any kinds of liquors that may exist in the food.

P#3F expressed that;

“Before this, we can just buy food at any stall after being satisfied that the cook is a Malay (who is normally associated as a Muslim), but here, I really need to scrutinise what the ingredients are. That makes us more conscious [with food]”. P#3F, page 4, lines 170-174.

Because of the limited availability of *halal* food products in the market, including the ones served in restaurants or any other eating outlets, the usual and enjoyable eating out activities has been switched to mostly ‘at-home eating’ and very seldom of ‘outside eating’. Some participants expressed their feelings of missing this in the following excerpts;

“I really miss the usual eating out. We have to cook by ourselves here. We always need to bring food from home. We have to, and it will be the same kind of food. I have no choice. My wife is getting fed-up with cooking. I just eat whatever she cooks. One more thing, it’s expensive to eat outside”. P#1M, page 5, lines 207-212.

“The thing I miss the most is the food, as well as the eating out activities...”. P#2M, page 2, lines 81-83.

“We rarely eat out. Once a month, I will go to the Pizza Hut in Barbican and order the vegetarian pizza. There are four types of pizza there that are being kept rotated each time when we are there. We seldom go to other places. Normally, I will buy the takeaway, or ask for home-delivery”. P#2M, page 1, Lines 44-50.

A participant also expressed of missing traditional food;

“The thing I miss the most is the food, as well as the eating out activities. I miss soto, mee rebus, laksa Johor (some of local delicacies)...”. **P#2M, page 2, lines 81-83.**

Brown, Edwards, and Hartwell (2010) mentioned that eating home country food may offer emotional and physical sustenance to international students. It would make students felt comforted by familiar taste, and that their physical health could be more stabilised by the consumption of healthier food than what was available locally.

Although at-home eating gives an advantage for the participants to have a healthier, hygienic, balanced, guaranteed cheaper meals, and as well as the opportunity to become creative in preparing the meals, the other important element that comes alongside, the social values, is however diminishing.

ii. Maintaining relationships

The next theme is maintaining relationships. Conversation issues were found to be revolved around maintaining responsibilities toward family and maintaining friendships. In the interview conversations, it is not merely the food that these participants were missing, but also the usual hang-outs with families and friends, which indirectly serves as a means to establishing or maintaining relationships amongst the in-groups.

P#5M admitted that;

“I went out eating mostly with my family, sometimes with my closest friends. During weekends, I went visiting my parents-in-law in Kuala Lumpur”. **Page 4, lines 199-202.**

P#5M further stressed that underlying values of get-together activities are actually *“away of learning how to socialise in the right manner”* and *“establishing a network”* (page 6, lines 287-289), and *“maintaining the relationship”* (page 6, lines 305-306).

In an earlier analysis, participants expressed their concerns and responsibilities toward their families. Physical presence of self in running family errands in a familiar setting is highly valued and the fact that being far away at the time of need is something that is greatly missed by the participants. One participant went on expressing directly that he had been missing monitoring his younger siblings' education since being away in the UK.

“I miss doing this too, that is monitoring the education of my younger siblings...”. **P#2M, page 3, 146-147.**

Apart from missing their families, most of the participants agreed that they have been missing their circles of friends. Normal hanging-out activities with friends can no longer be the same as the old days. In the current situation, time spent for those activities is minimal, with limited places to hangout and skewed down to certain topics of discussion. Before this, they would normally have the chance to meet their friends during leisure. **P#6M** put;

“My everyday routine in Malaysia and here are almost the same, except on Saturdays and Sundays. I would try to spend time with my friends and visit my relatives”. Page 3, lines 151-154.

“Before this, most of the time I would go for movies and play bowling with my friends”. **P#6M, page 4, lines 158-160.**

iii. Ease in home country

The third theme identified as things missed in the UK is the ease in home country. Six sub-themes were identified under this theme. One of the sub-themes – availability of supports - was discovered in one of the interviews whereby a participant expressed missing supports from her family at any time. This complacent life that she and her family used to have is no longer available when she arrived in the UK, and she had to make do with whatever resources available. This can be seen in the following lengthy excerpt.

“Sometimes, I miss what I probably miss the most, that is my routine schedule. For instance, in the morning, I would send my daughter to my mum, we are very close and my mum’s place is not far from my workplace. Here, I feel it is difficult as we have to do things on our own. It’s tedious. At home(in Malaysia), if I am too tired, I can just get things (food) from the stalls, or eat outside. Here, there’s no other way than to cook on your own. Sometimes, my daughter keeps whining. I imagine that if we were in Malaysia, I would go out for movies with my husband and leave our daughter in my mum’s care for a few hours, but here, there’s nobody who could take care of our baby. Whatever it is, I have to. Sometimes, it comes to my mind and I would wonder how life is in Malaysia. I have many friends who are doing their PhD in Malaysia. When I read their blogs, I notice their lifestyles and imagine that if I were still in Malaysia, I would have the same kind of life too”. P#3F, Page 1, lines 9-26.

The second sub-theme is recreation. Being in a foreign country may lock a person away from some recreational activities that he or she used to do before. One participants expressed that how she missed going to the cinema with her husband as there was no one to look after their child.

“I imagine that if we were in Malaysia, I would go out for movies with my husband and leave our daughter in my mum’s care for a few hours, but here, there’s nobody who could take care of my baby”. P#3F, page 1, lines 17-21.

The next sub-theme is financial security. Participants with families may experience more difficulties in fitting in the new country. This is because their spouses are expected to give up their jobs in the home country in order to be together as a family. In the time of adjustment, they may be jobless, or unable to find suitable job that could help support their family. As discussed before, some of the participants in the study are also suffering from some financial tightness that lowers their well-being. Thus, financial security is an element that has been missing in the participants’ life. An example of this can be seen in the interview with P#3F.

“Before this, we used to earn a double income, but now, my husband is on a full unpaid leave. We need to pay the house and the car back home in Malaysia, and now we only depend on one person’s salary. We can’t save anything from my salary. The scholarship is always just barely enough for our monthly expenditure. We can’t save anything from it. My husband has not started working yet. Every month, whenever I pay for the online bills, I am stressed. When I look at my friends in Malaysia, they are not affected. Both husband and wife receive their normal pay, and at the same time, they still receive the scholarship. It seems that they really enjoy themselves there because they can afford to buy toys and branded clothes for their children. So, I’m missing all these”. Page 1-2, lines 43-57.

Safety concern is another element of easy life-style in home country that is missed by the participants. P#4F perceived the night life in Plymouth was not as safe as in Malaysia.

“I don’t have to be afraid to go out at night, not like here. It is not advisable to go out after 9pm”. P#4F, page 3, lines 117-119.

The fourth sub-theme is practising of religion. One of the participants explained that the essence of the religion was missing, which he referred to as few religious activities held in Plymouth, and less face-to-face contact of getting access to religious resources.

“Besides, that is the inner part of religious enrichment. Although we can search most of the things in the Internet, I think it is different...Here, there are not many religious activities...I don’t feel contented”. **P#5M, page 5, lines 207-215.**

P#4F expressed how she missed the easiness of finding a place to conduct the prayers (*solah*) in Malaysia.

“I miss praying anywhere I want. I don’t have to think hard of where to pray. The prayer place is always available everywhere”. **P#4F, page 3, lines 115-117.**

iv. Belongingness

The next theme is belongingness. Two sub-themes were identified under this theme –ownership and lack of belongingness. The missing of ownership can be seen when a participant expressed how dearly she missed the house that she and her husband bought and her imagination of settling down in the house.

“We already have a house at home. I always dreaming of settling down properly in that house. It’s hard for me”. **P#3F, page 1, lines 26-28.**

She also indicated that how she led her life without owning a car as compared to her previous life in Malaysia.

“I don’t even have a car here. I lead a very humble and simple life”. **P#3F, page1, lines 37-38.**

Feelings of belongingness is another thing that has been missing in the participants' life. It is a common feeling for a migrant to feel lonely, isolated, or even discriminated in a new country. The lack of sense of belonging is also indicated in **P#4F's** excerpt:

"I have more freedom in my own country. I am nobody here...I feel isolated". P#4F,
page 3, lines 123-126.

c. Analysis and discussion for Enjoyment experiences in the UK

i. Supportive academic environment

For PhD students, meeting academic experts in a particular field may be a rewarding experience of being in the UK. Being close to these experts would help to build up a network which may help in the studies and for collaborative research in the future. Boey, Smith, and Cuthbert's (2009) finding that academic study has become a great concern for those opting for overseas studies in a survey amongst 440 Malaysians who were the alumni of Monash University, Australia. Almost 40% of them revealed that the good education system and well-known academic standing of the university attracted them to study at the university. **P#7M** put it: *"In terms of academic, I meet the experts". P#7M, page 6, line 288.*

ii. Nature

Experiencing a four-season climate is often found to be the source of the excitement of people from different geographical backgrounds, such as from Malaysia whose climate is far different than in the UK, and who are novel to such experience. This is evidenced from the following excerpt:

“In terms of non-academic, I can experience the environment, for example, the opportunity to experience the four seasons which I have been dreaming since young”. **P#7M, page 6, 289-29.**

iii. Travelling and cultural knowledge

The participants also indicated that part of the excitement being in the UK is having the opportunity for touring the country or neighbouring countries.

“If I have free time, I would like to tour Europe”. **P#7M, page 6, 292-293**

“I enjoy doing the sight-seeing. It’s beautiful here, in Plymouth, especially the Hoe”. **P#2M, page 2, 87-88.**

“...we could travel and get to know other countries”. **P#5M, page 5, lines 224-225**

Chaban, et al. (2011) reported a similar finding that enjoyment of being in European countries for the migrants who came from New Zealand, was initially about having the opportunity to explore the history and culture and to travel around Europe.

Apart from the opportunity for sight-seeing, being in the UK may bring international students closer to understand the culture of Britain, and appreciate the positive aspects of its culture. Those who have been brought up in a culture where respect to tradition and customs is amongst the core values, are likely to face greater constraints in their adaptation in a new country that holds different values. For example, being too dependent on the authority figure in any decision-making, may contribute to one being less self-confidence and close-minded. **P#5M** mentioned that:

“It’s good to be here because there are no cultural constraints, and you can experience a lot of things here”. **P#5M, page 5, lines 256-258**

Gilbert and Terrata (2001) discovered that the attraction of the countryside in the UK, tradition, history, and culture of Britain have been the pull factors of choosing the UK as a holiday destination amongst 88 Japanese tourists in the UK. Gilbert and Terrata (2001) stressed that the UK is culturally distant to the Japanese, and has thus turned them into novelty seekers – putting more concern on the physical aspects, such as the countryside, and the tradition, history, and culture in order to get to know the country better. Eder, Smith, and Pitts (2010) reported similar findings amongst Asian students in the United States that the country's attractiveness and the opportunity to experience a new style of living are the pull factors of coming to the country for study.

iv. Technology

Another attraction of being in the UK is its advanced technology, especially the telecommunications. This has been mentioned by **P#2M** and **P#5M** whose background was science and technology-based.

“The internet connection is brilliant and fast. The technology here is undoubtedly excellent”. **P#2M, page 2, 92-94**

“In terms of gadgets, I could possibly be charmed by them since my background is in Information Technology”. **P#5M, page 7, line355-357.**

v. Values of goods and services

The last theme emerged for enjoyment in the UK is the values of good and services. The values here refer to the appreciation a customer may get in purchasing goods and being attended during the process. Feelings of being appreciated as a customer has made the life in the UK

enjoyable. **P#2M** admitted that he did not only feel happy by the quality of the goods he bought, but also by the appreciation he gets whenever dealing with sellers.

“One more thing is shopping. I think I am being appreciated more [as a customer] here. The customer service is good. So I guess it is more enjoyable when dealing with people. They appreciate us as clients”. **P#2M, page 2, 88-92.**

Another enjoyment experience mentioned by participants is the condition of the goods which are still fine although they are second-hand items.

“Also, the second hand items here which are still in a good condition”. **P#7M, page 6, 293-294.**

In the UK there are a few options of outlets that sell things at bargained or cheap prices, and one of them is the “car-boot sales”. Car-boot sale is popular amongst Malaysian students in general because it is the place where one can get varieties of things on sale and can be bought at a bargained price. **P#5M** mentioned that;

“As usual, I love going to the car-boot sales”. **P#5M, page 7, line 319.**

4.4 Conclusion

The participants in this study are struggling to meet the demands of their studies and the needs in their daily life. All of the participants seem to believe that they are happy or satisfied with their life, though some indicate that they will reach a certain level of happiness only if they manage to get their PhD later on. However, their explanation about what they have been missing in their life since residing in the UK, and adapting to the new life-style, reveals more about their current status of well-being. Their statement of happiness or ‘feeling of satisfaction

with life' seems to be contradictory to the other parts of their narratives. It seems that they ought to feel or stay happy, as disclosing the negative sides of an individual is not encouraged by the culture of home country in which the participants were raised.

In Asian culture, generally such self-disclosure would affect one in maintaining face, which is an important element in any collective cultures. Being modest is part of the culture, whereby individuals are not encouraged to say their actual feelings in public or to others to whom they are not close enough, or to someone with some level of authorities for fear being mocked around or might hurt other people who are connected to the individuals. People might be talking behind their backs, and change bits of the story that later on produce a more 'juicier' one which would eventually hurt the persons involved. Therefore, to be on the 'safe side', one would just say that he or she is currently happy. This belief is also intertwined with what is being practised in the religion. One of the pillars of *iman* (faith) in Islam is the belief of the existence of Allah the God, which requires one to put all of his or her faith into the God's hands. The God possesses all of the super mighty powers that override the best a human being can do. The God never ceases in showering his love to all human beings, either in the good times or the bad times. Hence, the case of these postgraduate students not revealing the true feeling of unhappiness, is a way to show gratitude to what God has generously given them throughout the times. Also, they always relate this to *hikmah* or a blessing in disguise when encountering difficult times.

This study has captured some important points in the study of adapting experiences in the UK. Four major perceived goals or needs, four major perceived things missed and five types of enjoyment experienced in the UK. The themes in goals or needs to some extent are redundant with some themes in things missed in the UK. These redundancies highlight the issue of how having the chance to fulfil perceived important goals or needs, may increase well-

being. Adapting experiences may as well contribute to this relationship. Therefore a quantitative study is warranted here in order to establish these findings. The next aim of the research is to develop a scale of adaptation experiences of Malaysian students overseas by focusing on the aspect of 'missing' and 'enjoyment' in the UK, based on the themes and the sub-themes identified throughout the interview as well as from literature reviews.

CHAPTER 5

Development of Adaptation to Life Index

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a report of a pilot study on developing an “adaptation to life” index. There are three aims. The first aim is to generate items on the basis of information found from the previous interview studies and literature reviews. The second aim is to reduce items on the basis of clarity, by asking participants to indicate the clarity of the item. Finally, the third aim is to reduce items on the basis of psychometric properties. The following questions are examined: to what extent are the items developed clear to the participants? What are the underlying constructs of the two sub-scales? To what extent are the sub-scales reliable? What is the relation between these constructs?

5.2 Methodology

5.2.1. Development of items

This index was developed to measure adaptation experiences among international students in the UK. In this study, adaptation is perceived as a blend of “missing things at home” and “enjoyment experienced of being abroad”. The interviews held earlier on seven PhD students from Malaysian studying in the UK explored these two types of adapting experiences. Items for the adaptation measurement were mostly generated from the themes that emerged from the interviews. From the interview, four themes indicating “missing experiences whilst in the UK”

and five themes indicating “enjoyment experience whilst in the UK” were found. The themes are displayed as in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Themes found from the interviews based on Missing and Enjoyment experiences in the UK

Missing experiences	Enjoyment experiences
Significant of food	Supportive academic environment
Ease in own culture	Nature
Maintaining relationships	Travelling and cultural knowledge
Sense of belongingness	Technology
	Values of goods and services

The first step in developing items for the index was to look at the emerging themes which describe both types of adapting experiences. The next step was to examine previous measurement on adaptation amongst immigrants or foreigners whether or not it matches with the emerging themes. To begin with, the Social Cultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) by Ward and Kennedy (1999) was used. This scale which touches on the difficulties experienced by migrants is probably the closest to measuring “missing home” experiences in the context of this study. According to Ward and Kennedy (1999), SCAS is a flexible instrument and can be simply adapted to meet the characteristics of the “sojourning samples”. In SCAS, participants are requested to indicate the amount of difficulties they are facing in a number of areas by using a five-point scale. Some of the items in SCAS were found to match with the themes found in the interviews, whilst some did not fit with any items (see Table 5.2 and 5.3.)

Table 5.2

Items for SCAS that matched with the themes in Missing experiences

Themes	Sub-themes	Sample items from SCAS
Ease in own culture	Practice of religion	Worshipping in your usual way
	Recreational	Going shopping
Significant of food	Getting halal food	Getting used to the local food/finding food you enjoy
	Eating out activities	Going to coffee shops/food stalls/restaurant outside
Sense of belongingness	Feeling of belongingness	Making yourself understood
	Maintaining family-ties	
Maintaining relationships	Maintaining social contacts	Leaving away from family members overseas
		Making friends

Table 5.3

Items for SCAS that matched with the themes in Enjoyment experiences

Themes	Sub-themes	Sample items from SCAS
Supportive academic environment	Face-to-face with experts	Expressive your ideas in class
Nature	Experience the four-seasons	Coping with academic work
Travelling and cultural knowledge	Opportunity to know other culture	N/A
Values of goods and services	Alternative shopping outlets with bargained price	Adapting to local etiquette
	Appreciated as customer	Understanding cultural differences
Technology	Technology advancement	Going shopping
		Dealing with unsatisfactory services
		N/A

Some items in SCAS were more or less concerned with the themes found in the interview, except for “technology” and “nature” (see Table 5.3), which are additional elements for positive experiences of being overseas. As the interviews provided a more detailed picture of international students’ adaptation experiences, items were created the basis of the interviews as this would describe international students’ life adaptation experiences better compared to existing questionnaires, such as SCAS.

Initially, 62 items were developed for this index, with 34 items measuring “missing things in the UK” and the other 28 items measuring “enjoying things in the UK”. An ordinal

scale was used as the answering scale that ranged between ‘0’ to ‘7’. The number ‘0’ indicated “I don’t miss this at all”/ “I don’t enjoy this at all” and ‘7’ indicated “I miss this a lot”/ “I enjoy this a lot”. Most of these items were developed based on themes found in the interview, whilst others were developed based on previous measurement on adaptation which were thought to be relevant to cross-cultural adapting experiences (e.g. ‘climate’). Table 5.4 shows original items developed for the index.

Table 5.4

Original items developed for the Missing scale in Adaptation to Life Index

Themes	Items for Missing scale
Significant of food	ease of getting the right food, traditional food, eating out activities,
Ease in own culture	staying in your own house, speaking in the mother tongue, a peaceful life, not having to bother about being trendy, confidence with appearance, a safe place to live and work, satisfaction of salary received every month, easier money making activities, varieties of food choice, understood by people when talking performing prayers, practice of your religion, attending religious talks do hobbies, recreational activities during weekend, shopping during leisure visiting different places
Maintaining relationships	hanging out with friends, making friends, support from friendship hanging out with family members, involvement in decision-making within the family, having a face-to-face conversation with family, spending quality time with family, helping family, physical and mental supports by the family)
Sense of belonging	a sense of belongingness, preserving customs and cultural values, not being isolated by others)
*Climate (*not an emerging theme from the interview)	nice weather back home, not to be bothered by having to dress appropriately to the weather back home.

While the items in Enjoyment subscale were grouped under the following domains:

Table 5.5

Original items developed for the Enjoyment scale in Adaptation to Life Index

Themes	Items for Enjoyment scale
Supportive academic environment	Having a face-to-face conversation with experts A supportive studying environment
Travelling and cultural knowledge	Opportunity about the UK's culture and norms An opportunity to travel to neighbouring countries Get to know British people Experience of four season weather Western food An opportunity to get to know people from other cultures Opportunity to practice English Transparent communication Flexible working hours
Values of goods and services	Lots of choice of goods and services Cheap goodies High quality of goods and services
Technology	Being exposed to the latest technology in telecommunication Easy access to the internet resources
*Self-development	Being respected for your uniqueness Opportunity for personal development Opportunity for career progression Having more freedom to express yourself Becoming more independent Busy and fulfilling life
*Recreational activities	Learn new type of activities and hobbies Sight-seeing activities Voluntary activities
*Establishing social contacts (*not an emerging theme from the interview)	Developing meaningful relationship Being with a close group of friends Helping others

5.2.2 Clarity of items

In the questionnaire, there is a section of “clarity of items” whereby participants are asked to select a number that indicates the extent to which participants think the item is clearly stated by circling a number in an ordinal scale between ‘1’ (unclear) to ‘4’ (clear).

The index was then face validated by two female and one male academic experts in psychology from the UK and Malaysia. After that, it was showed to five Malaysian PhD

students (three females and two males) of whom majoring in psychology, business studies, and computer studies from different universities in the UK. They were asked to answer a questionnaire comprised of both subscales, and reported the suitability of items asked in each of the subscale, whether or not they understand the instructions and the questions (items) asked, as well as feasibility of timing in answering the questionnaire.

5.2.3 Participants and procedure

In total 100 international students from all over UK universities took part in the study. They were recruited through a number of approaches. In the first approach, an email was sent out to the Plymouth's International Student Advisory Board asking for the help of inviting all the international students at the university to take part in the study in their weekly electronic mail. All of international students of the university should be able to receive the email once they have registered their university's email account. The announcement of the study provided some information of the study, i.e. the aim of the study, types of participant, and contact details of the researcher.

Another approach was by sending out emails to several students' mailing lists from all over UK explaining about the study with a questionnaire attached. In this email participants were asked if they could forward the email to anyone who was eligible to be recruited as a participant for the study. In this snowball technique, potential participants would be contacted through emails provided by their referees. Lastly, the participants were recruited among the researcher's colleagues and acquaintances who were studying at the same university.

Participants who were interested would contact the researcher via email. A reply email was then send together with two attachment files containing the questionnaire and a cover letter explaining about the study. Participants were asked to bold or underline the numbers that best described their answers, then save the document and send it back to the researcher via email.

Another way of collecting data was through pencil-and-paper form. Most of the participants who involved in this procedure were the researcher's colleagues and acquaintances. They were approached individually face-to-face by the researcher, and asked if they would be willing to take part in the study. They were given an option whether to answer it through a questionnaire prepared in MS Word format forwarded through email, or to answer it on paper. For the participants who favoured the paper-based questionnaire, they were given a set of questionnaire with an envelope that had already been written down with the researcher's name and address. Once completed, participants were asked to put the questionnaire in the envelope and seal it, before sending it back to the researcher through the internal post service. Some participants handed in the questionnaire themselves.

Another method of data collection was to have an online questionnaire. With the help of a technician staff, an online version of the questionnaire was developed. Emails were sent out to possible numbers of individuals and several mailing lists of Malaysian students all over the UK which contained a link to the online study. The online data could be retrieved by typing in a special password created for the study. The data displayed on the computer page would be converted into Microsoft Excel before copying it down to the SPSS. By doing this, the number of participants has increased from the initial number of 68 to 100.

5.3 Data analysis.

Data were entered and analysed through the SPSS version 17. Four types of analysis were carried out. Frequency analysis was run to see the participants' responses on clarity of items. Principal component analysis was performed to identify the underlying structure of the index. Cronbach's Alpha test was performed to identify the internal consistency of the items. Pearson

product moment correlation analysis was performed to examine the relation between the constructs.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Clarity of items

In relation to the second aim, which is to shorten the questionnaire on the basis of clarity, a criterion has been selected that was; if the items received 10% or more responses on '1' and '2' in the clarity of item section, they were perceived as unclear and need to be removed from the sub-scales. Based on the initial sample (N=68), results showed that 8 items in the Missing sub-scale and one item in the Enjoyment sub-scale were 'unclear' to the participants, and therefore had been excluded in the next analyses, leaving 26 items for the Missing and 27 items for Enjoyment subscale. Table 5.5 and 5.6 show the distribution of samples on items found to be unclear in both sub-scales.

Table 5.6

Responses on items found to be 'unclear' (response '1' and '2') of missing experiences in the UK (N= 68)

Missing experiences in the UK		N	%
Item 2	"Eating out activities"	7	10.3
Item3	Ease of getting the right food	5	7.4
Item4	Varieties of food choice	6	8.8
Item5	Hanging out with friends	2	2.9
Item6	Making friends	3	4.5
Item7	Support from friendship	4	5.9
Item9	Involvement in decision making within the family	3	4.4
Item10	Having a face-to-face conversation with family	1	1.5
Item11	Spending quality time with family	2	2.9
Item12	Helping family	6	8.8
Item13	Physical and mental supports from the family	4	5.9
Item14	Staying in your own house	5	7.4
Item15	"Satisfaction with salary received every month"	15	22.4
Item16	"Easier money-making activities"	10	14.7
Item18	"Performing prayers"	7	10.3
Item19	Practising of your religion	3	4.4
Item20	Attending religious talks	3	4.5

Item21	Nice weather	6	8.8
Item 22	“Not having to bother about being trendy”	20	29.4
Item23	Recreational activities during weekends	2	2.9
Item24	Shopping during leisure	1	1.5
Item26	A peaceful life	6	8.8
Item27	Do hobbies	2	2.9
Item 28	“Confidence with appearance”	9	13.2
Item29	Preserving customs and cultural values	5	7.4
Item31	Understood by people when talking	2	2.9
Item 32	“Not being isolated from others”	10	14.7
Item33	A sense of belongingness	5	7.4
Item 34	“Having to dress appropriately to the weather”	15	22.1

Note : Items in bold were removed in the next analyses

Table 5.7

Responses on items found to be ‘unclear’ (response ‘1’ and ‘2’) of enjoyment experiences in the UK (N=68)

Enjoyment experiences in the UK		N	%
Item1	Having a face-to-face conversation with experts	1	1.5
Item2	Sight-seeing activities	4	5.9
Item3	A high quality of goods and services	1	1.5
Item5	Western food	1	1.5
Item6	An opportunity to travel to neighbouring countries	1	1.5
Item8	Experience of a four season weather	2	2.9
Item9	Lots of choice of goods and services	1	1.5
Item10	Cheap goodies	5	7.4
Item12	Being respected for your uniqueness	5	7.4
Item13	Being exposed to the latest technology in telecommunication	3	4.4
Item15	Get to know British people	1	1.5
Item16	Opportunity for personal development	2	2.9
Item17	Opportunity for career progression	2	2.9
Item18	Learn new types of activities or hobbies	1	1.5
Item19	Being with a close group of friends	2	2.9
Item 20	Developing a meaningful friendship	3	4.4
Item 21	A busy and fulfilling life	5	7.4
Item 22	Helping others	2	2.9
Item 23	Voluntary activities	1	1.5
Item 24	Having more freedom to express yourself	4	5.9
Item 25	Transparent communication	1	1.5
Item 27		13	19.1

Note : Items in bold were removed in the next analyses

5.4.2. Psychometric analyses

To shorten the items based on psychometric properties, the underlying structure of those items had to be identified. Because of both Enjoyment and Missing subscales offer a unique

adaptation experience, I therefore ran a separate principal component analysis on the two sub-scales based on 100 participants.

a. Missing-subscale

Based on 26 items, six components were extracted from the sub-scale with the Eigenvalues > 1. The loading values were plotted in a graph called Scree Plot. A Scree plot is a graphical display of the variance of each component in the dataset which is used to determine how many components or factors should be retained in order to explain a high percentage of the variation in the data. The Scree plots in Figure 5.1 shows the components extracted from the Missing sub-scale indicating the underlying structure of the items. In the missing sub-scale, the results showed that all of the items gained the highest factor loadings in the first factor (explained by 37.23% of total variance), indicating that there was a single construct underlying the sub-scale, with 0.40 as the cut-off point. Table 5.7 summarises the results of factor loadings.

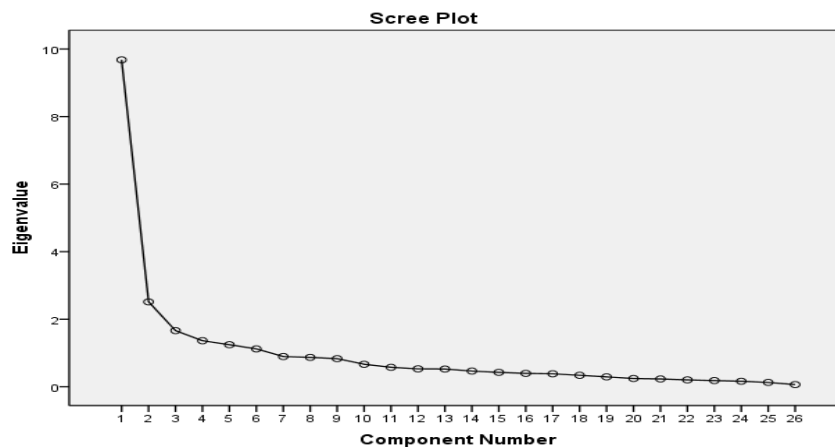


Figure 5.1 : Scree plot of components extracted from the missing sub-scale

Table 5.8

Factor loadings of items in Missing and Enjoyment sub-scale on the first extracted factor

Missing sub-scale			Enjoyment sub-scale		
Item		Factor loadings	Item		Factor loadings
Item1	Traditional food	.58	Item1	Face-to-face conversation with experts	.44
Item3	Ease of getting food	.57	Item2	Sight-seeing activities	.44
Item4	Varieties of food choice	.63	Item3	High-quality of goods and services	.51
Item5	Hanging out with friends	.53	Item4	Supportive studying environment	.52
Item6	Making friends	.60	Item5	Western food	.50
Item7	Support from friendship	.59	Item6	Opportunity to travel to neighbouring countries	.46
Item8	Hanging out with families	.65	Item7	Opportunity to get to know people from other culture	.59
Item9	Involvement in decision making with family	.60	Item8	Experience of a four-season weather	.48
Item10	A face-to-face conversation with family	.73	Item9	Lots of choice of goods and services	.65
Item11	Quality time with family	.73	Item10	Cheap goodies	.59
Item12	Helping family	.55	Item11	Opportunity to learn about UK's culture and norms	.59
Item13	Supports from family	.72	Item12	Being respected to your uniqueness	.58
Item14	Staying in your own house	.55	Item13	Exposure to latest telecommunication technology	.46
Item17	A safe place to live and work	.64	Item14	Opportunity to practice English	.47
Item19	Practicing of your religion	.58	Item15	To know the British people	.66
Item20	Attending religious talk	.53	Item16	Opportunity for personal development	.59
Item21	Nice weather	.49	Item17	Opportunity for career progression	.58
Item23	Recreational activities during weekends	.65	Item18	Learn new types of activities or hobbies	.48
Item24	Shopping during leisure	.54	Item19	Being with a close group of friends	.64
Item25	Visiting different places	.53	Item20	Developing a meaningful relationship	.65
Item26	A peaceful life	.71	Item21	A busy or fulfilling life	.60
Item27	Do hobbies	.67	Item22	Helping others	.48
Item29	Preserving customs and cultural values	.71	Item23	Voluntary activities	.54
Item30	Speaking in the mother tongue	.57	Item24	Having more freedom to express yourself	.71
Item31	Understood by people when talking	.51	Item25	Flexible working hours	.39

Item33	A sense of belonging	.66	Item26	Becoming more independent	.30
			Item28	Easy access to the internet resources	.32

Note : Items in bold were removed in the next analyses

b. Enjoyment sub-scale

Based on 27 items, seven components were extracted from the sub-scale with the Eigenvalues > 1 . The loading values were plotted in the Scree Plot graph. The Scree plots in Figure 5.2 shows the components extracted from the Enjoyment sub-scale indicating the underlying structure of the items. In the Enjoyment sub-scale, a single construct emerged (explained by 28.65% of total variance), whereby all of the items gained the highest factor loadings in the first factor.

Three items (i.e. Item 25, 26, and 28) received factor loadings lower than 0.40 (i.e. 0.39, 0.30, and 0.32 respectively) (see Table 5.7 for reference). These three items were excluded from next analyses. In summary, 26 items from the Missing subscale and 24 items from the Enjoyment subscale were retained for next analyses.

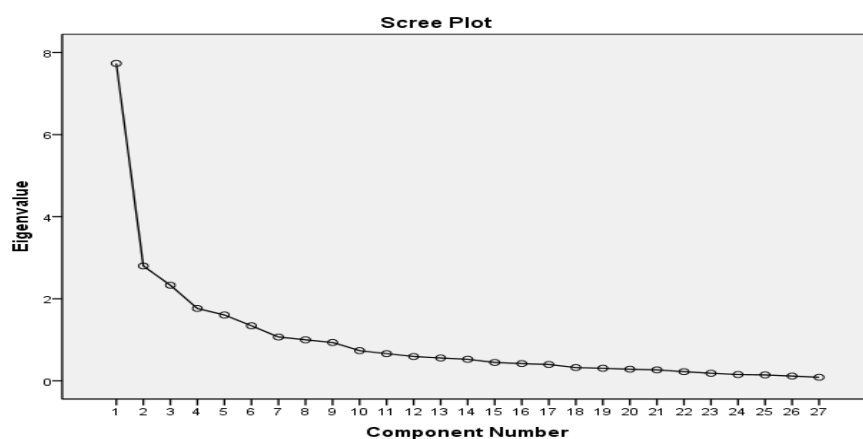


Figure 5.2 : Scree plot of components extracted from the enjoyment sub-scale

In order to examine the reliability of the sub-scales, Cronbach's Alphas were calculated. Results showed that the Cronbach's Alpha for the Missing sub-scale was 0.94 (26 items), and 0.90 for the Enjoyment sub-scale (24 items), suggesting that items in both measurements were high in terms of internal consistency. High internal consistency indicates that both sub-scales were reliable. To determine the relation between the Missing and Enjoyment sub-scale, Pearson product moment correlation was used. Result showed that Missing and Enjoyment sub-scale did not correlate with one another ($r = -.21$, $p = .09$), which could be due to the small sample size. However, these data suggest that both sub-scales were comparatively independent.

5.5 Modifications of scale

As part of the studies requires an examination on overseas Malaysian students' adapting experiences, some wordings related to experience in the UK were amended so that the items became more general and suitable to all overseas participants. For example, Item 11 in the Enjoyment scale; "*Opportunity to learn about the UK's culture and norms*" was changed to "*Opportunity to learn about the host country's culture and norms*" and Item 15 from the same scale, "*Get to know British people*" became "*Get to know local people*".

The adaptation measurement was modified again as to suit the home country participants. In this questionnaire, participants were asked to refer the adaptation experiences based on their life at the university that they were attending. Original items were sustained as much as possible and amended wherever possible so that the items would relate to the home-country students. With the help of colleagues in Malaysia, 100 set of questionnaires were randomly administered to undergraduate students from Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia. All of them completed the questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alphas for the enjoyment and missing sub-scales of this index were calculated again. For this group, the internal consistency

for Missing and Enjoyment scale was 0.95 and 0.94 respectively. Table 5.8 shows modifications of the items in both scales.

Table 5.9

Changes of some items in the overseas students' version of the Adaptation to Life Index to suit the home-country students.

Missing Scale-		
Item	Overseas students' version of questionnaire	Home-country students' version of questionnaire
Item 1	<i>Traditional food.</i>	<i>Home-cooked food.</i>
Item 17	<i>Nice weather.</i>	<i>Peaceful environment.</i>
Item 25	<i>Understood by people when talking.</i>	<i>Being with people that I have known for a long time.</i>
Enjoyment Scale		
Item 5	<i>Western food.</i>	<i>Different types of food.</i>
Item 7	<i>An opportunity to get to know people from other cultures.</i>	<i>An opportunity to get to know people from other ethnic groups.</i>
Item 8	<i>Experience of the four-season weather.</i>	<i>Opportunity to engage in various outdoor activities at any time.</i>
Item 11	<i>Opportunity to learn about the host country's culture and norms</i>	<i>Opportunity to learn about the different culture and norms.</i>
Item 14	<i>Opportunity to practise English.</i>	<i>Opportunity to learn different languages.</i>
Item 15	<i>Get to know British people.</i>	<i>Get to know people from different countries.</i>

5.5. Conclusion

The Adaptation to Life Index was finally made up by 50 items derived from the following sub-scales; Missing experience and Enjoyment experience. Both sub-scales were uncorrelated with one another. The reliability for each sub-scale was found to be strong and consistent in different versions of the index. This index will be further used in the research to examine the Malaysian students' adaptation experience in the second phase of a longitudinal survey involving Malaysian students in their home country and abroad.

CHAPTER 6

Overview on the Relationships between Variables

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is a report of a preliminary study on the structure of the big five personality and the first phase of a longitudinal study involving college students in Malaysia. The aim of this study was to examine the relationships between personality, value, perceived success, and well-being indicators. This chapter includes an introduction, overview of previous studies, the aims, research questions and hypotheses, method, results, and summary of the study.

6.2 Overview of previous studies

From the literature reviewed in Chapter 1, value importance has been shown to be associated with personality dimensions, and subjective well-being. Based on Schwartz and his colleagues' studies (see Schwartz, 1990, 1992), the structure of values has been found to be similar across many nations. People tend to achieve higher well-being when engaging more with values promoting self-development and other internal rewards. However, the hierarchy of values may not be the same between people due to distinct cultural expectations and situational factors.

In Chapter 2, cultural values of Malaysia have been highlighted as contributing to the uniqueness of the Malaysian societies as compared to people in the West. Being a multi-ethnic and religion society, adds further to the differences in the Malaysians' thinking and behavioural

patterns as reported in several studies. Chapter 2 also questions the extent to which values and personality are conceptualised amongst the Malaysian society. The chapter emphasises on some debates on personality structure of the *five factor model of personality versus higher order personality*. In this chapter, the lack of studies which examining the values of Malaysian people and the relationship between personality and values are also being noted.

In Chapter 3, cross-cultural adaptation studies have consistently showed that the frequency and the international students' quality of interaction with host nationals predicts better adjustment and life satisfaction, language competence, less academic problems and social difficulties. Perceived fluency of English language was found to be a predictor toward better adaptation among international students in the United States (Surdam & Collins, 1984). In another study, it was found that English proficiency was negatively correlated with age, and positively correlated with social support among international students (Sumer, Poyrazli & Grahame, 2008). Being exposed to a lot of chances and attractions to interact with local students, as well as with other co-nationals may sharpen the English language skills of the international students.

Based on the literature reviews, I proposed a study framework that demonstrates the relationship between importance and satisfaction of values, personality dimensions, subjective well-being, and perceived success amongst two populations of Malaysian students- overseas or at home country. In this study, I examined two perspectives of values: (i) the importance of each value as a guiding principle of life, and (ii) satisfaction of values through fulfilment of goals of each value. According to Fornerino, Jolibert, Sánchez, and Zhang (2011), satisfaction derives from fulfilment of goals from a specific situation which indicates that they are more concrete than values, such that they enables a person to articulate needs in a concrete way by focusing on specific stimuli such as money, prestige, power, curiosity or achievement. Fornerino, et al (2011) confirmed this through a study on 720 participants from three countries;

United States, China and France. They found that explanatory power of goals was greater than explanatory power of values in terms of intention to stay abroad amongst the French and Chinese samples. They concluded that because of values represent a higher level of abstraction than goals are, they are less capable of explaining people's behaviour. Therefore, in this study, values satisfaction is measured through fulfilment of goals of related values. To my knowledge, value satisfaction has never been studied in any related research so far, and no researcher has ever addressed this gap in literature. In the proposed study framework, I included as well studying the relationship between students' perceived success and subjective well-being, which extends the previous study by Haslam et al (2008), who looks at the associations between value importance (as measured from Schwartz Value Scale), the big five personality, and subjective well-being (measured by two indicators of well-being, i.e. Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)). The arrow lines in the framework's diagram as depicted in Figure 6.1, shows relation between variables.

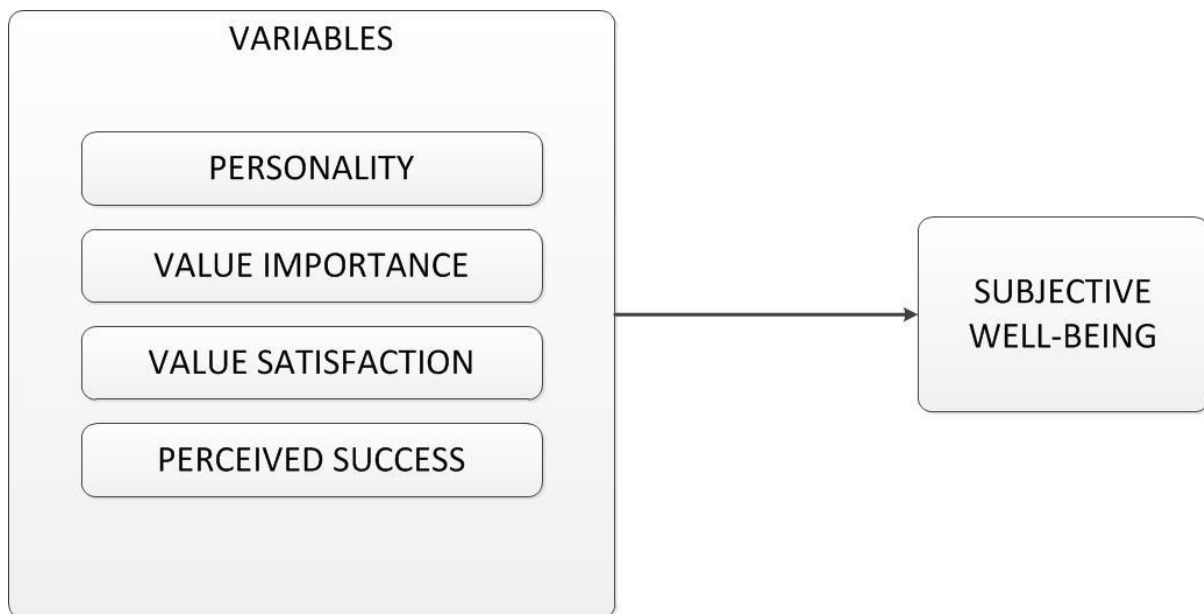


Figure 6.1: Diagram for the longitudinal study at Time 1

6.3 Aims of study

There were two aims of this study. The first aim was to identify the underlying structure of the Big Five Personality Inventory. The second aim was to explore the inter-correlations between personality dimensions, value variables, perceived success, and subjective well-being indicators.

6.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

6.4.1 Personality Structure of Malaysian Students

“Which factor model of personality is the best at explaining the personality of the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ1).

In Chapter 2, Mastor, et al’s (2000) found that a five factor model of personality existed in a population of Malaysian students in Australia and Malaysia, but they only studied the Malay group. As Malaysia is made up by a multi-cultural society, the finding by Mastor, et al (2000) was not generalizable to the Malaysian students’ population at large. In other study, McCrae, et al (2005) also reported the existence of the five factor structure across many countries including Malaysia, which however, the information about the Malaysian sample had not been much revealed. Studies have also found that higher-order personality structure which formed new personality theories, such as the Big Two (DeYoung, 2006; Digman, 1997) and the General Factor of Personality theory (Erdle et al., 2010). Because of inconsistency findings of the personality structure, and the limitations of previous findings of the Big Five studies on Malaysian people, in the end of Chapter 2, I concluded that the factor structure of Malaysian students’ personality is uncertain. As literature has continually reported the existence of the big five personality traits (e.g. Cobb-Clark & Schurer, 2011), it suggests that the five factor

model of personality is more stable in explaining the personality structure compared to the higher order factors. Therefore, I hypothesised that:

H1: The five-factor model of personality explains better the personality structure of the Malaysian students in this study compared to the two-factor and single- factor structure of personality.

6.4.2 Inter-correlations of Well-being Indicators, Personality Traits, Importance and Satisfaction of Values, and Perceived Success.

“Do correlations exist between the personality traits, and between the personality traits and the well-being indicators amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ2).

Based on the theory and earlier findings, personality traits with ‘pleasant’ attributes (i.e. Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness) positively correlate with one another, and the negatively relate to Neuroticism (e.g. Joshanloo & Afshari, 2011; Haslam, Whelan & Bastian, 2009). Also, the greater ‘pleasant’ type of personality is expressed, the more likely an individual has higher well-being (e.g. Schimmack, Oishi, Furr & Funder, 2004).

Based on the research question, the following hypotheses are developed:

H2a: Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness positively correlate with one another.

H2b: Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness negatively correlate with Neuroticism.

H2c: Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness, positively correlate with both life satisfaction and positive affect.

H2d: Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness, negatively correlate with Negative Affect.

H2e: Neuroticism correlates positively with negative affect.

H2f: Neuroticism correlates negatively with both life satisfaction and positive affect.

H2g: Life satisfaction correlates positively with positive affect.

H2h: Life satisfaction and positive affect both negatively correlate with negative affect

“Are there any relationships between personality traits and the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ3)

Previous studies have showed that personality traits are related to values (e.g. Haslam, et al, 2009). In Haslam, et al. (2009), personality traits Extraversion and Openness were positively related to openness to change dimension of values; whilst Agreeableness and Openness both were related to self-transcendence values. Both Conscientiousness and Neuroticism yielded positive correlations to embeddedness values. Fischer and Boer’s (2015) study showed a similar trend of correlations, except that negative correlations existed between Extraversion and self-transcendence values. Although Neuroticism was found to be weakly correlated to both dimensions of values, the correlations were in still expected directions. Therefore, it is proposed that:

H3a: Conscientiousness and Neuroticism positively correlate with importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values.

H3b: Openness, Extraversion and Agreeableness negatively correlate with importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values.

H3c: Agreeableness, Openness, and Extraversion positively correlate with importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values.

H3d: Neuroticism and Conscientiousness negatively correlate with importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values.

“Are there any relationships between the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ4).

Research has shown that people who live by values that promote self and community development, and less focus on extrinsic rewards tend to have higher well-being (Hofer, et al., 2006, Kasser & Ryan, 1993). In some culture, it is important to live by predominant values of a society of which an individual belongs to (Cohen & Samai, 2010; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000). Collectivistic society, for example stresses on values that favour social or group goals over individual goals, which helps to keep the harmony in the society. Embeddedness values, characterised by respecting traditions and customs, as well as conform to the norms of the society are very much reflected in a collectivistic society. Self-transcendence-driven values, such as benevolence or preserving and maintaining the welfare of others of mutual groups is often echoed in a collectivistic society; thus, bringing embeddedness and self-transcendence values closer to one another. In light of this argument, it is therefore hypothesised that:

H4: Importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values positively correlate with one another.

“Do importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values, correlate positively with life satisfaction, positive affect, and negatively with negative affect amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ5)

From the discussion above, embeddedness and self-transcendence values are two prominent values in a collectivistic society. Prioritising and being satisfied by these two types of values may bring greater wellbeing to members of the collectivistic society. Hence, I hypothesised that:

H5a: Importance of embeddedness values positively correlate with both life satisfaction and positive affect, and negatively with negative affect.

H5b: Satisfaction of embeddedness values positively correlate with both life satisfaction and positive affect, and negatively with negative affect.

H5c: Importance of self-transcendence values positively correlate with both life satisfaction and positive affect, and negatively with negative affect.

H5d: Satisfaction of self-transcendence values positively correlate with both life satisfaction and positive affect, and negatively with negative affect.

“Do academic achievement and English language fluency correlate positively with life satisfaction and positive affect, and negatively with negative affect amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ6).

Previous studies have shown that being competent at language spoken by most people in a foreign country will be a great help for a person to integrate well in society (Sumer, Poyrazli & Grahame, 2008; Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Those who have inadequate language competency would have a tough experience at the beginning of their life in a foreign country, which has the potential of slowing down the adaptation process. Besides that, academic

achievement has been found as an important factor that affects high wellbeing of a student. Cheng and Furnham (2002) reported that students' perceived capability in dealing with various situations effectively, may predict high well-being. In a study amongst 90 adolescents around the age of 17 years in the UK, it was the self-evaluated academic performance - one of the measurements of self-confidence-, but not the actual grade points measured by the GCSE results; that directly predicted happiness and loneliness (Cheng & Furnham, 2002). In a similar study amongst a sample of Malaysian students, academic achievement has been found to predict successful overseas life adaptation (Swami, et al, 2010). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H6: Academic achievement and English language fluency both positively correlate with life satisfaction and positive affect, and negatively with negative affect.

“Do personality traits relate to academic achievement and English language fluency amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ7).

Past research has also found associations between personality dimensions and the capability of using English among international students. Among the Big Five personality traits, Extraversion has been commonly examined by researchers in the attempt of predicting cross-cultural adaptation (Mak & Tran, 2001). Individuals with personality traits that closely resemble the social norms of the host culture would adapt more easily to the new culture. In a Western country, extrovert and open-minded people often found to integrate well in new society.

The relationship between personality and adaptation has been established by Mak and Tran (2001) when they found that Openness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness correlated positively with English language fluency amongst 124 Vietnamese migrant students in Australia. The positive correlation between Openness and English language competency was

also discovered amongst 229 Turkish international students in the United States (Duru & Poyrazli, 2007). Result also showed that negative correlation between Neuroticism and English language competency. Given that in mind, it is hypothesised that:

H7a: Personality trait Agreeableness, Openness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion positively correlate with academic achievement and English language fluency.

H7b: Personality trait Neuroticism negatively correlates with academic achievement and English language fluency.

6.5 Methodology

6.5.1 Sampling

Participants were all Malaysian by nationality, which were divided into two groups; overseas and home country groups. The overseas group was referred to the students who were studying at various government and semi-government overseas preparatory study programmes throughout Malaysia (later termed as ‘overseas students’), and the home country group was among first year students of a public university in the state of Sabah, Malaysia (later termed as ‘home country students’). One thousand and two hundred set of questionnaires were administered to potential samples in each group. However, 2091 students responded to the questionnaires. One participant was found not eligible for the study as he was under the French studying programme. Since this study focussed only on students who were going to the countries with English as the main medium of communication, therefore, the fellow student was dismissed from this study and the total number of participants was reduced to 2090. Out of the total, 972 samples were the home-country students, and 1118 of the rest were the overseas students.

The idea of recruiting a large sample size was driven by a proactive effort in getting an adequate sample size in the follow-up study, as previous research has shown that the drop-out rates of participants in a longitudinal research is between 53-72% (Hagedoorn, et.al 2006; Ward, et.al, 1998). All of the students had been recruited from various faculties. They included 781 (37.4%) males and 1308 (62.6%) females, with one person did not indicate gender, and their mean age was 19.78 (SD = 1.19). One thousand two hundred and thirty (61.1%) of them were Malays, 331 (16.5%) Chinese, 74 (3.7%) Indians, 289 (14.4%) *Bumiputera Sabah* (the indigenous people of Sabah¹), 73 (3.6%) *Bumiputera Sarawak* (indigenous people of Sarawak²), and 15 (0.7%) others. Seventy-eight participants did not state their ethnicity. One thousand and five participants (72.2%) had never been overseas before. More than 70% of those who had travelled overseas were the overseas students, and a small number of them had been to the country they were going for study (6.4%). More than 90% of the overseas students were the recipients of the government scholarship, whilst only 5.4% of home country students claimed to be the scholarship holder. Of total population, 53.7% reported to be awarded with the scholarship. Participants were approached at various learning institutions in Malaysia from April until July 2010.

6.5.2 Measurement

Participants were asked to complete a set of questionnaire, containing a socio-demographic section, a measure of perceived success, value importance and satisfaction, personality dimensions, life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect (see Appendix A for the questionnaire sample).

^{1,2} Sabah and Sarawak are two states of Malaysia located in the Borneo.

The questionnaire was prepared in the Malay language, as it is the national language of Malaysia and therefore is widely spoken and understood by most people. As the scales used in the questionnaire was originally in English, translation was required. In the translation process, the questionnaire was first translated by the researcher into target language (i.e. the Malay language).

The translated and the original version of the questionnaires were given to three Malay-English bilinguals who sat together to discuss about the quality of the translation. Upon agreement of all of the translators, very little amendments were made to the translation as to suit with the English version without changing the meaning of the words. The questionnaire used in the rest of the research had been based on this version of translated scales.

a. Subjective well-being measures

Two measurement tools were used to measure subjective well-being explained as follows:

i. Positive and negative affect scales (PANAS)

These 10-item scales (Watson, et al, 1988) measure the extent to which positive affect (PA) and negative affective (NA) states are generally experienced, rated from 1 (*'very slightly or not at all'*) to 5 (*'extremely'*). Positive affect score are made up by summing up responses to items 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, and 19. The sum of scores from items 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, and 20 made up for negative affect score. Higher scores indicate greater positive and negative affect respectively. Cronbach's alpha for the positive and negative affect scale was 0.83 and 0.87, respectively, indicating high internal consistency of items in both scales.

ii. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

This 5-item scale (Diener, et al., 1985) assessed life satisfaction, with items rated from 1 (*'strongly disagree'*) to 7 (*'strongly agree'*). Higher scores indicate greater life satisfaction.

SWLS has been widely used in previous studies and has a very high internal consistency exceeding 0.79, good convergent validity, and consistently found to be defined by a single factor solution in different studies using the principal component analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (Swami & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2009).

Swami and Chamorro-Premuzic (2009) confirmed the unidimensional factor structure of the Malay-translated version of SWLS among Malaysian community was confirmed by the confirmatory factor analysis. It was also proven that the Malay SWLS had a good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$). In another study amongst Malaysian Chinese, Ng, Loy, Gudmunson, & Cheong (2009) reported Alpha measures of for this instrument were 0.79 for men and 0.84 for women. In this study, the Cronbach's α calculated was 0.81, suggesting the scale was highly reliable to be used in the context of Malaysian students.

b. Schwartz's Short Value Schedule (SSVS)

There were two sections of this inventory. The first one was the short version of Schwartz Value Scale (SSVS) (from Schwartz, 1992, 1996) which was adapted by Lindeman and Verkasalo, 2005). The SSVS contains a single item that measures each of the following 10 values; power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and safety, as a guiding principle in life. For example, the participants were asked to rate the importance as a life-guiding principle of "*Power that is, social power, authority, wealth*" and "*Achievement, that is, success, capability, ambition, and influence on people and events.*" A similar phrasing was used for all 10 values. Hence, the SSVS included 10 items, each of which indicated one original value and the related original value items as descriptors. The 10 value items were rated on a 9-point scale ranging from 0 (*opposed to values*), 1 (*not important*), 4 (*important*), to 8 (*of supreme importance*). Higher scores on this scale indicate greater importance of values.

According to Schwartz's value theory (Schwartz, 1992), the value structure can be seen in a circumplex model, characterised by two theoretical underpinnings, i.e. "embeddedness vs. openness to change" and "self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement". The first dimension relates to "the conflict between the motivation to preserve the status quo and the certainty that conformity to norms provides (high embeddedness), on one hand, and the motivation to follow one's own intellectual and emotional interests (low embeddedness) on the other hand" (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005, p.171). The second dimension relates to "the conflict between concern for the welfare of other people (high self-transcendence) and concern for individual outcomes and personal interests (low self-transcendence) (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005, p.171).

Lindeman and Verkasalo (2005) ran a multidimensional scaling analysis to examine whether a two-dimensional structure of values could also be found within the SSVS. In this analysis, the distances between the points are calculated which show any observed relations among the values. The smaller the distances are, the more similar two values are conceptually, and the higher the inter-correlations between their importance ratings. Also, the more similar their pattern of correlations with all other values, and the closer they lie in the multidimensional space. Dissimilar values have opposing patterns of correlations and will thus be located at a substantial distance from one another. Results showed that the value structure of SSVS was similar to the circumplex model proposed by Schwartz's (1992, 1994). High positive correlations were also shown between the SSVS and the SVS (r ranged between 0.45 and .70), indicating both of scales are mutual. As SSVS is as credible as the original SVS, this short version is obviously beneficial in research as less time consuming for participants to answer it. Lindeman and Verkasalo (2005) developed two different equation formulas, measuring the degree of importance for the two value dimensions, for a 7 and 9-point scales, which the latter

had been adopted to be used in this research. The followings are the equation formulas used in this research:

Self-transcendence importance/ satisfaction =

$$-.60 - (.19 \times \text{Power}) - (.14 \times \text{Achievement}) - (.09 \times \text{Hedonism}) - (.11 \times \text{Stimulation}) + (.01 \times \text{Self-direction}) + (.10 \times \text{Universalism}) + (.13 \times \text{Benevolence}) + (.07 \times \text{Tradition}) + (.06 \times \text{Conformity}) + (.02 \times \text{Security})$$

Embeddedness importance/satisfaction =

$$.82 + (.05 \times \text{Power}) + (.06 \times \text{Achievement}) - (.04 \times \text{Hedonism}) - (.09 \times \text{Stimulation}) - (.18 \times \text{Self-direction}) - (.16 \times \text{Universalism}) + (.03 \times \text{Benevolence}) + (.16 \times \text{Tradition}) + (.18 \times \text{Conformity}) + (.11 \times \text{Security})$$

Based on the original SSVS, following the same sequence of items and structure, another value scale was adapted in order to measure satisfaction felt when goals related to each of the values are achieved. Answers were scaled on a 9-point scale, ranging from 0 (*‘not relevant to my values’*) to 8 (*‘completely satisfied’*). Higher scores on this scale indicate greater satisfaction of values.

c. Big Five Inventory (BFI)

This 44-item inventory (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991) assessed the Big Five personality factors i.e. Extraversion (E) 8 items, Conscientiousness (C) 9 items, Openness (O) 9 items, Agreeableness (A) 8 items, and Neuroticism (N) 10 items. Sixteen items were identified as negative items, which were then reverse-coded, which means that a score 1 becomes 5, 2 becomes 4, 3 remains 3, 4 becomes 2, and 5 becomes 1. Distribution of items is portrayed in Table 3.1 below, whereby negative items are shown in bold. Cronbach’s alpha for this inventory ranged from 0.55 to 0.76, indicating that the scale was adequately reliable to be used. An exploratory factorial analysis was run on the data to determine the structure of the inventory

as previous studies had shown different results of the underlying personality factors or traits. A full report on this is presented elsewhere in this chapter.

Table 6.1

Distribution of items in each personality dimension

Dimensions of personality	Items
Openness to change (O)	5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 , 40, 41 , 44
Conscientiousness (C)	3, 8 , 13, 18 , 23 , 28, 33, 38, 43
Extraversion (E)	1, 6 , 11, 16, 21 , 26, 31 , 36
Agreeableness (A)	2 , 7, 12 , 17, 22, 27 , 32, 37 , 42
Neuroticism (N)	4, 9 , 14, 19, 24 , 29, 34 , 39

Note: Figures in bold are reversed-coded items

d. Perceived success

There are two measures of perceived success - perceived English language fluency and academic achievement. In the earlier survey of the longitudinal research, participants were asked to rate their perceived level of English Language fluency from '1' ('extremely bad') to '10' ('perfect'), and to provide the number of subjects participants scored for each grade in their previous Malaysia Certificate of Examination (locally known as Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia or 'SPM'). In Malaysia, passing the SPM with certain grades has normally been set as a basic criterion for entering tertiary education or job seeking. For this study, an arbitrary scoring system had been developed whereby each grade was given a value (e.g. grade A is equal to 5, B= 4, C= 3, D= 2, E= 1). Scores from each subject were totalled up to produce the final score which was used further in this study. The SPM is equivalent to the GCSE in the United Kingdom. For clarity, I will use the term GCSE in the rest of the studies.

e. Demographic background

Participants were asked to fill in basic information about themselves (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, the institution they are enrolling at, travelling experience, and status of scholarship

holding). Since this study was a part of a longitudinal research, participants were asked to create and write their own unique identification code in order to match up their responses to future requests for data. In order to do that, they were asked to provide the first letter of their father's name, followed by the first letter of the father's surname and the participants' own day of birth (e.g. if the father's name is Adam Mohamamad, and the participant's day of birth is 10th April, the code is AM10). They were also asked to provide their email address for future contact. It could also act as another option in tracing down participants in the follow up study if the code does not match, or the same code is shared by more than one person.

6.5.3 Ethics

Before commencing the study, an application for ethics approval was sent to the Faculty of Science's Board of Ethics Committee, which also covered for the follow up study. This longitudinal research did not involve any deception. All participants were told about their right to withdraw from the study at any time or stage. Ethics approval was sought two weeks after the application was put forward.

6.5.4 Procedure

Before commencing into the study, a special permission for the study to be done amongst students in Malaysia involving researchers from overseas, need to be gained first from the Malaysian government. After the permission sought, each of the institution that handles overseas preparatory programmes including twinning programmes between teacher training colleges in Malaysia and overseas institutions, around Kuala Lumpur and its surrounding areas was contacted. It was preceded by several phone calls, and subsequently by formal letters. Later, an appointment was made with the staffs of students' affairs department of each institution to explain and discuss further about the study. As students came from various studying programmes, their time table were different from one another. Thus, administration

of the questionnaires was foreseen as problematic. At the time of the study was conducted the students were preparing for their final examination, which added to the difficulties of the study to run smoothly. Assistance in administering and collecting back the questionnaires was requested from the institutions to smooth down the process. An announcement about the study was made by the staffs to a group of prospective participants during classes, and they were told that participation to the study is voluntary. Questionnaires were administered during classes, which however, were not collected right away. Instead, the students were asked to fill in the questionnaire at their convenient time, and to return it to the personnel in-charge within two weeks. Every student who was willing to take part in the study was given a research information sheet for reference and a consent form to be completed and signed. Two weeks later, the questionnaires, together with the consent forms were collected back by the researcher.

In other cases, I was given the opportunity by the institution to handle the administration of the questionnaires to the participants by myself. Every participant was asked to fill in the consent form and was given the research information sheet for reference. Before distributing the questionnaires, a brief explanation was given about the study. The participants were told they were free to ask questions if there was anything unclear to them. The questionnaires were completed in about 20 minutes. Participants were asked whether they have any questions in the end of the session, and asked to contact the researcher via email (the researcher's contact details were provided in the research information sheet) if they need further explanation about the study or if they wish to withdraw from the study.

6.5.5 Data analysis

Data were entered and analysed through the SPSS version 18. Before performing any inferential analysis, normality tests were run on the data to ensure that the data was normally distributed.

In order to examine the structure of the Big Five personality inventory, a series of factorial analysis was run on the data. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was performed to examine relationships between variables.

6.6 Results

6.6.1 Assumptions of normality

Before performing any parametric test, data is assumed to be normally distributed. To check for the normal distribution of the data, it is recommended to look at the visual presentation of the data, and also to the values that quantify aspects of a distribution (for example the Skew and Kurtosis), and compare those values to the normal distribution (Field, 2009). For the visual assessment, the P-P plot can be used. This graph plots the cumulative probability of a variable against the cumulative probability of a particular distribution through the z-scores. If values of a z-scores fall on the diagonal of the plot, then the data is suggested to be normally distributed, but deviation from the line shows deviation from normality (Field, 2009).

Another visual way of looking for normality of the data is by checking through the histogram, which comes along with the P-P plot. Histogram shows a rough idea of data distribution in terms of its symmetry - Skew and Kurtosis. It is recommended that in a large sample (200 and above) to look at the shape of the distribution visually, and also at the values of Skew and Kurtosis statistic rather than calculate their significance (Field, 2009). Field (2009)

also suggests that all values of Kurtosis should be below upper threshold of 3.29, for the data to be normal; though the perfect score for a normal data is 0. In this study, all Skews and most of Kurtosis values fall within the range of ± 1 , indicating a normal distribution of data. Although some other Kurtosis values appear to be higher than the range, they are still below the upper threshold of 3.29 as suggested by Field (2009). Therefore, it is concluded that the data in this study are normally distributed. Table 6.2 demonstrates the results.

Table 6.2

Statistics results for normality for Time 1 Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Life satiasfaction at Time 1	22.12	5.55	-.26	-.13
Positive affect at Time 1	36.91	5.80	-.51	.87
Negative affect at Time 1	28.24	7.87	.11	.06
English Language fluency at Time 1	6.04	1.88	.15	-.33
GSCE (SPM) result	44.85	10.01	-.40	.67
Extraversion	27.58	4.99	.01	-.29
Agreeableness	35.23	5.03	-.27	-.07
Conscientiousness	31.23	4.89	.02	-.06
Neuroticism	22.49	5.05	.05	.05
Openness	33.63	4.33	.11	.19
Conservation satisfaction at Time 1	1.71	.64	-.25	2.24
Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 1	-.75	.70	.18	.72
Self-transcendence importance at Time 1	-.77	.73	.05	.53

6.6.2 Factorial analysis

“Which factor model of personality is the best at explaining the Malaysian students’ personality in this study?” (RQ1)

a.Aim

Because of the uncertainty in the measurement of personality in a Malaysian population and various results obtained from factorial analysis studies of Big Five personality measurements,

the aim of this study was to examine whether the personality of the Malaysian undergraduate students in this study is best explained by a five, two, or a single factor model of personality.

b. Method

In order to determine the numbers of factors of the BFI, a series of factorial analysis through Maximum likelihood extraction method was run. Firstly, I ran the factorial analysis using a rotated five-factor solution based on eigenvalues greater than 1. Secondly, I restricted my analysis to a two-factor solution using the varimax and direct oblimin method, which were run separately. Finally, I ran the single factor solution analysis on the data without any rotation.

c. Results

i. Five-factor solution

In order to investigate the five factor model, I ran another two separate analyses of the five-factor solution using varimax and direct oblimin rotation methods. Rotation involves re-alignment of the components by having changes in the loadings of each observed variable on the components (Dunbar, 1998). This process helps in seeing a coherent relationship between the observed variables and the components, therefore make the components more interpretable (Dunbar, 1998).

Oblique rotation allows more freedom in selecting the position of factors in factor space than orthogonal rotation (Kline, 1994), and is preferably used when the underlying factors are assumed to be interrelated with one another (represented by the direct oblimin method); whilst the orthogonal approach is more appropriate when factors are assumed to be independent of each other (represented by the varimax method) (Child, 1990).

Table 6.3 shows the results of the analysis using varimax rotation. The highest factor loadings on each item are identified in bold. Based on the analysis, 16 items were found to be

loaded in Factor 1, 11 items in Factor 2, 9 items in Factor 3, 6 items in Factor 4, and 2 items in Factor 5. Factors were named based on the dimension of which items were frequently loaded.. Factor 1 seemed to be explained more by Openness (C=4 items; O=7 items; A=1 item; N=1 item; E=3 items), Factor 2 by Neuroticism (C=2 items; A=2 items; N=7 items), Factor 3 by Agreeableness (C=1 item; O=2 items; A=5 items; E=1 item), Factor 4 by Extraversion (O=1 item; A=1 item; E=4 items), and Factor 5 by Conscientiousness (C=2 items). Two items were identified to receive loadings lower than 0.30 (*Item P03: Does a thorough job; Item P35: Prefers work that is routine*).

Table 6.3

Rotated matrix of five- factor solution using the varimax method

Items	Factor loadings				
	1	2	3	4	5
(E) P01 Is talkative	.20	-.04	.30	-.49	-.03
(A) P02 Tend to find fault with others (R)	.01	.33	-.31	.03	.23
(C) P03 Does a thorough job	.27	.05	.16	.02	-.25
(N) P04 Is depressed, blue	.05	.39	-.09	.17	.02
(O) P05 Is original, comes up with new ideas	.58	-.11	.06	-.00	-.05
(E) P06 Is reserved (R)	-.05	.16	.02	.74	-.02
(A) P07 Is helpful and unselfish with others	.21	-.03	.52	-.11	-.13
(C) P08 Can be somewhat careless (R)	-.03	.40	-.08	.00	.38
(N) P09 Is relaxed, handle stress well (R)	.25	-.44	.39	.05	.11
(O) P10 Is curious about many different things	.38	-.03	.23	-.10	-.05
(E) P11 Is full of energy	.42	-.18	.24	-.28	-.06
(P12) Starts quarrels with others (R)	.10	.19	-.39	.04	.25
(C) P13 Is a reliable worker	.35	-.05	.37	-.13	-.26
(N) P14 Can be tense	-.03	.69	-.14	.06	.03
(O) P15 Is ingenious, a deep thinker	.58	-.14	.18	-.07	-.07
(E) P16 Generates a lot of enthusiasm	.57	-.05	.19	-.09	-.06
(A) P17 Has a forgiving nature	.08	-.12	.54	-.09	-.01
(C) P18 Tends to be disorganised (R)	.05	.15	-.20	.08	.53
(N) P19 Worries a lot	.01	.56	.03	.09	.12
(O) P20 Has an active imagination	.60	-.00	.04	-.07	.08
(E) P21 Tends to be quiet (R)	-.02	.26	.03	.67	.14
(A) P22 Is generally trusting	.24	-.04	.44	.02	-.14
(C) P23 Tends to be lazy (R)	-.05	.27	-.20	.19	.56
(N) P24 Is emotionally stable, not easily upset (R)	.25	-.50	.26	-.04	.13
(O) P25 Is inventive	.61	-.19	.02	-.04	-.02
(E) P26 Has an assertive personality	.49	-.17	.18	-.30	-.09
(A) P27 Can be cold and aloof (R)	.07	.27	-.21	.37	.24
(C) P28 Perseveres until the task is finished	.39	-.10	.33	-.05	-.24
(N) P29 Can be moody	.06	.44	.02	.09	.14
(O) P30 Values artistic, aesthetic experiences	.50	.10	.11	.02	-.03
(E) P31 Is sometimes shy, inhibited (R)	.03	.27	.30	.36	.10
(A) P32 Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	.24	.02	.57	-.09	-.10
(C) P33 Does things differently	.43	.06	.08	.05	.07
(N) P34 Remains calm in tense situations (R)	.30	-.40	.30	.03	.08
(O) P35 Prefers work that is routine (R)	.08	-.01	.26	.02	-.16
(E) P36 Is outgoing, sociable	.06	.24	-.35	.04	.35
(A) P37 Is sometimes rude to others (R)	.38	-.06	.23	-.07	-.31
(C) P38 Make plans and follows through with them	-.05	.47	.11	.17	.10

(N) P39 Gets nervous easily	.60	-.02	.07	-.07	.01
(O) P40 Likes to reflect, play with ideas	.40	.11	.00	-.00	.05
(O) P41 Has few artistic interests (R)	.19	-.03	.46	-.31	-.15
(A) P42 Likes to cooperate with others	-.01	.60	-.08	.11	.18
(C) P43 Is easily distracted (R)	.45	.07	-.04	-.02	.01
(O) P44 Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	.20	-.04	.30	-.49	-.03

Results of the direct oblimin rotation analysis showed that 7 items were highly loaded in Factor 1, 9 items in Factor 2, 6 items in Factor 3, 16 items in Factor 4, and 6 items in Factor 5 (See Table 6.4). Factors were named based on the dimension of which items were frequently loaded. Factor 1 was identified as Agreeableness (A=5 items; C=1 item; O=1 item), Factor 2 by Neuroticism (N=8 items; C=1 item), Factor 3 by Extraversion (E=5 items; A=1 item), Factor 4 by Openness (O=9 items; E=3 items; C=4 items), and Factor 5 by a combination of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness (C=3 items; A=3 items). In this analysis, the two items in the earlier analysis were again found to have loadings less than 0.30 (i.e. Item P03 and P035).

Table 6.4

Structure Matrix of five factor solution using the direct oblimin method

Items	Factor loadings				
	1	2	3	4	5
(E) P01 Is talkative	.30	-.13	.55	-.25	-.17
(A) P02 Tend to find fault with others (R)	-.29	.37	-.16	.04	.38
(C) P03 Does a thorough job	.21	.00	.05	-.29	-.27
(N) P04 Is depressed, blue	-.05	.41	-.25	-.04	.15
(O) P05 Is original, comes up with new ideas	.17	-.19	.11	-.58	-.10
(E) P06 Is reserved (R)	.06	.22	-.74	.08	.07
(A) P07 Is helpful and unselfish with others	.54	-.13	.23	-.29	-.30
(C) P08 Can be somewhat careless (R)	-.06	.41	-.14	.04	.46
(N) P09 Is relaxed, handle stress well (R)	.42	-.50	.13	-.30	-.13
(O) P10 Is curious about many different things	.29	-.09	.19	-.41	-.14
(E) P11 Is full of energy	.30	-.26	.40	-.46	-.20
(P12) Starts quarrels with others (R)	-.36	.25	-.15	-.04	.40
(C) P13 Is a reliable worker	.42	-.14	.26	-.41	-.38
(N) P14 Can be tense	-.11	.71	-.23	.04	.24
(O) P15 Is ingenious, a deep thinker	.28	-.20	.20	-.60	-.17
(E) P16 Generates a lot of enthusiasm	.29	-.12	.20	-.59	-.14
(B) P17 Has a forgiving nature	.53	-.20	.20	-.15	-.21
(C) P18 Tends to be disorganised (R)	-.18	.19	-.18	-.01	.59
(N) P19 Worries a lot	.06	.56	-.21	-.02	.24
(O) P20 Has an active imagination	.15	-.04	.13	-.60	.04
(E) P21 Tends to be quiet (R)	.07	.31	-.70	.04	.24
(B) P22 Is generally trusting	.47	-.12	.10	-.30	-.28
(C) P23 Tends to be lazy (R)	-.18	.33	-.33	.09	.66
(N) P24 Is emotionally stable, not easily upset (R)	.28	-.55	.20	-.28	-.09
(O) P25 Is inventive	.13	-.22	.15	-.60	-.08
(E) P26 Has an assertive personality	.24	-.25	.41	-.52	-.21
(A) P27 Can be cold and aloof (R)	-.16	.33	-.46	-.02	.38
(C) P28 Perseveres until the task is finished	.39	-.18	.19	-.44	-.35
(N) P29 Can be moody	.06	.44	-.18	-.07	.23
(O) P30 Values artistic, aesthetic experiences	.21	.06	.04	-.51	-.04
(E) P31 Is sometimes shy, inhibited (R)	.33	.26	-.36	-.06	.09
(B) P32 Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	.60	-.09	.21	-.32	-.28
(C) P33 Does things differently	.17	.03	-.00	-.44	.05
(N) P34 Remains calm in tense situations (R)	.34	-.44	.13	-.33	-.12
(O) P35 Prefers work that is routine (R)	.27	-.06	.05	-.12	-.23
(E) P36 Is outgoing, sociable	.29	-.14	.64	-.30	-.14
(A) P37 Is sometimes rude to others (R)	-.32	.30	-.17	-.00	.49
(C) P38 Make plans and follows through with them	.29	-.13	.19	-.42	-.38

(N) P39 Gets nervous easily	.13	.47	-.26	.04	.18
(O) P40 Likes to reflect, play with ideas	.18	-.07	.15	-.61	-.03
(O) P41 Has few artistic interests (R)	.08	.08	.02	-.40	.07
(B) P42 Likes to cooperate with others	.47	-.13	.41	-.27	-.31
(C) P43 Is easily distracted (R)	-.05	.61	-.26	.02	.34
(O) P44 Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	.05	.05	.05	-.44	.03

The factor correlation matrix in Table 6.5 shows that Agreeableness (Factor 1) correlated negatively with Neuroticism (Factor 2), Openness (Factor 4) and a combination of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness (Factor 5), and positively with Extraversion (Factor 3). Neuroticism correlated negatively with Extraversion, but positively with the combination factors of C-A, as well as with Openness. However, the correlation between Neuroticism and Openness was rather weak ($r=.071$). Another positively weak correlation was also found between Openness and the combination of C-A. Extroversion was then found to be negatively correlated with both Openness and the combination of C-A. Nonetheless, the two analyses showed that the underlying structure of the inventory seemed to be described by the five-factor model of personality.

Table 6.5

Factor correlation matrix for oblimin rotation result

Factor	Factor correlation matrix				
	Factor 1 Agreeableness	Factor 2 Neuroticism	Factor 3 Extraversion	Factor 4 Openness	Factor 5 (Conscientiousness + Agreeableness)
1	1.00	-.11	.12	-.33	-.28
2	-.11	1.00	-.32	.07	.31
3	.12	-.32	1.00	-.18	-.26
4	-.33	.07	-.18	1.00	.07
5	-.28	.31	-.26	.07	1.00

ii. Two-factor solution

Next, I ran a two-factor solution analysis using the direct oblimin and varimax rotation method. Table 6.6 shows the results of both varimax and direct oblimin rotation analyses. Items were found to load in a similar pattern in both analyses. Positive items (e.g. *Item P01: Is talkative; P011: Is full of energy*) were found to load in Factor 1, and vice-versa for negative items (e.g. *Item P04: Is depressed, blue; P12: Starts quarrels with others*) which were loaded in Factor 2. In this analysis, three items were found to have loadings less than 0.30 with the varimax method (i.e. *Item P17 Has a forgiving nature, P31 Is sometimes shy, inhibited; P35 Prefers work that is routine*), and also with the direct oblimin method, except for item P17 that received loading of 0.32.

These results were inconsistent with the Big Two theory as proposed by previous researchers (DeYoung et al., 2002; Digman, 1997; Erdle et al, 2010). The items in this analysis were seemed to reflect ‘positive versus negative’ items rather than distinctive personality traits. All of the dimensions seemed to load on each factor. Since there is no consistency with the data, the two-factor solution is not going to be used in further analyses.

Table 6.6

Two-factor solution results using varimax and direct oblimin methods

	Factor (Varimax)		Factor (Direct Oblimin)	
	1	2	1	2
(E) P01 Is talkative	.35	-.29	.38	-.32
(A) P02 Tend to find fault with others (R)	-.12	.44	-.18	.45
(C) P03 Does a thorough job	.31	-.05	.32	-.09
(N) P04 Is depressed, blue	-.00	.41	-.06	.40
(O) P05 Is original, comes up with new ideas	.55	-.01	.55	-.07
(E) P06 Is reserved (R)	-.13	.35	-.17	.36
(A) P07 Is helpful and unselfish with others	.41	-.24	.44	-.28
(C) P08 Can be somewhat careless (R)	-.07	.46	-.12	.47
(N) P09 Is relaxed, handle stress well (R)	.36	-.35	.40	-.38
(O) P10 Is curious about many different things	.45	-.08	.46	-.13
(E) P11 Is full of energy	.51	-.27	.54	-.32
(P12) Starts quarrels with others (R)	-.08	.39	-.13	.40
(C) P13 Is a reliable worker	.49	-.24	.52	-.29
(N) P14 Can be tense	-.08	.58	-.15	.58
(O) P15 Is ingenious, a deep thinker	.60	-.11	.61	-.17
(E) P16 Generates a lot of enthusiasm	.61	-.05	.61	-.11
(C) P17 Has a forgiving nature	.29	-.28	.32	-.31
(C) P18 Tends to be disorganised (R)	-.07	.41	-.12	.41
(N) P19 Worries a lot	.02	.49	-.05	.49
(O) P20 Has an active imagination	.56	.10	.54	.05
(E) P21 Tends to be quiet (R)	-.10	.46	-.15	.47
(C) P22 Is generally trusting	.39	-.17	.41	-.21
(C) P23 Tends to be lazy (R)	-.17	.53	-.24	.55
(N) P24 Is emotionally stable, not easily upset (R)	.31	-.38	.36	-.41
(O) P25 Is inventive	.55	-.06	.56	-.11
(E) P26 Has an assertive personality	.55	-.24	.57	-.30
(A) P27 Can be cold and aloof (R)	-.07	.52	-.14	.52
(C) P28 Perseveres until the task is finished	.50	-.22	.52	-.27
(N) P29 Can be moody	.06	.43	.01	.42
(O) P30 Values artistic, aesthetic experiences	.50	.14	.48	.09
(E) P31 Is sometimes shy, inhibited (R)	.10	.29	.06	.28
(C) P32 Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	.45	-.20	.47	-.24
(C) P33 Does things differently	.42	.15	.39	.11
(N) P34 Remains calm in tense situations (R)	.37	-.29	.40	-.33
(O) P35 Prefers work that is routine (R)	.17	-.14	.19	-.15
(E) P36 Is outgoing, sociable	.39	-.29	.43	-.33
(A) P37 Is sometimes rude to others (R)	-.11	.46	-.16	.46
(C) P38 Make plans and follows through with them	.45	-.19	.47	-.24
(N) P39 Gets nervous easily	-.02	.41	-.07	.41
(O) P40 Likes to reflect, play with ideas	.58	.06	.57	-.00
(O) P41 Has few artistic interests (R)	.37	.18	.34	.14
(C) P42 Likes to cooperate with others	.39	-.31	.43	-.34
(C) P43 Is easily distracted (R)	-.05	.59	-.12	.59
(O) P44 Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	.40	.15	.38	.11

iii. Unrotated one-factor solution

Eight factors emerged which accounted for 48.68 percent of the variance from the unrotated factorial analysis of the BFI (see Table 6.7 and the scree plot in Figure 6.2). In Table 6.8, the highest factor loadings of each item with a cut-off point of 0.30 are shown in shaded figures. Thirty items were loaded in Factor 1 (18.0% of variance), 10 items in Factor 2 (9.0% of variance), 3 items in Factor 3 (5.45% of variance), and 1 item in Factor 7 (2.56% of variance). No items with the highest factor loading were found in Factor 4, 5, 6 and 8. These results suggest that a one factor solution is a possible interpretation of the data. One item was found to receive loading less than 0.30 (i.e. *Item P03: Does a thorough job*).

Table 6.7

Total Variance Explained Based on Unrotated Factor Solution with Eigenvalues Greater Than 1

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.93	18.03	18.03	7.31	16.61	16.61
2	3.96	9.00	27.03	3.33	7.57	24.18
3	2.40	5.46	32.50	1.75	3.97	28.14
4	2.08	4.73	37.23	1.61	3.66	31.80
5	1.48	3.37	40.59	0.86	1.95	33.75
6	1.42	3.23	43.82	0.79	1.80	35.55
7	1.13	2.56	46.38	0.47	1.07	36.63
8	1.02	2.32	48.70	0.38	0.87	37.49

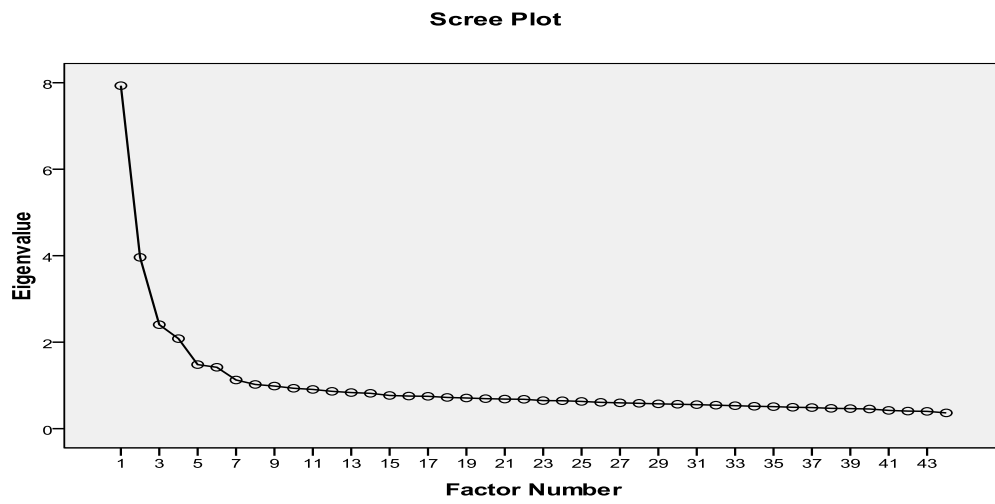


Figure 6.2: The Scree plot for unrotated factor solution of the BFI

Table 6.8

Factor matrix of the unrotated factor solution analysis

	Factor							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
P01 Is talkative	.48	-.04	-.27	.23	.14	.06	.03	.05
P02 Tend to find fault with others (R)	-.36	.25	-.25	-.03	.03	.16	.07	.00
P03 Does a thorough job	.27	.17	.11	.11	-.15	.22	-.03	-.00
P04 Is depressed, blue	-.25	.32	.00	.14	-.09	.06	.12	.17
P05 Is original, comes up with new ideas	.43	.33	-.02	-.20	-.11	.00	-.10	.11
P06 Is reserved (R)	-.37	.30	.59	-.08	-.06	.07	.06	.12
P07 Is helpful and unselfish with others	.47	.08	.16	.26	.12	.01	-.08	.05
P08 Can be somewhat careless (R)	-.33	.30	-.20	.10	.22	-.11	-.07	.02
P09 Is relaxed, handle stress well (R)	.50	-.02	.25	-.22	.30	.06	.09	-.08
P10 Is curious about many different things	.40	.21	-.01	.03	.02	.05	-.13	.003
P11 Is full of energy	.57	.09	-.12	-.02	.05	.14	-.10	.05
P12 Starts quarrels with others (R)	-.31	.24	-.29	-.22	.02	.29	.12	.10
P13 Is a reliable worker	.54	.13	.10	.19	-.06	.20	-.10	-.19
P14 Can be tense	-.42	.40	-.16	.36	-.11	.10	.01	.12
P15 Is ingenious, a deep thinker	.54	.29	-.01	-.13	-.04	.14	-.13	-.08
P16 Generates a lot of enthusiasm	.50	.33	-.04	-.07	-.06	-.08	-.10	.05
P17 Has a forgiving nature	.40	-.02	.20	.21	.25	-.17	-.08	.08
P18 Tends to be disorganised (R)	-.31	.26	-.20	-.22	.30	-.05	-.05	.11
P19 Worries a lot	-.28	.39	-.06	.31	.04	.01	-.03	.02
P20 Has an active imagination	.38	.42	-.14	-.17	-.05	-.10	-.11	-.01
P21 Tends to be quiet (R)	-.40	.39	.46	-.06	.06	.03	.03	.01
P22 Is generally trusting	.41	.14	.23	.17	.06	.04	-.14	-.13
P23 Tends to be lazy (R)	-.47	.32	-.13	-.15	.32	-.07	-.13	-.02
P24 Is emotionally stable, not easily upset (R)	.48	-.09	.12	-.30	.25	.04	.03	.01
P25 Is inventive	.47	.30	-.06	-.29	-.13	-.08	-.04	.18
P26 Has an assertive personality	.58	.13	-.17	-.05	-.02	.12	-.06	.11
P27 Can be cold and aloof (R)	-.39	.39	.08	-.16	.06	.16	-.05	-.19
P28 Perseveres until the task is finished	.52	.16	.14	.08	-.07	.18	-.01	-.08
P29 Can be moody	-.21	.37	-.05	.20	.08	.06	-.01	-.11
P30 Values artistic, aesthetic experiences	.31	.43	-.02	-.03	-.12	-.17	.15	-.17
P31 Is sometimes shy, inhibited (R)	-.11	.34	.35	.18	.15	-.13	.07	-.06
P32 Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	.48	.15	.18	.30	.14	-.10	.01	.05
P33 Does things differently	.23	.37	-.02	-.10	.01	-.02	.04	.11
P34 Remains calm in tense situations (R)	.47	.03	.19	-.24	.23	.08	.21	.06
P35 Prefers work that is routine (R)	.22	.02	.17	.16	.01	.16	.27	.03
P36 Is outgoing, sociable	.54	-.03	-.39	.23	.18	.04	.20	.01
P37 Is sometimes rude to others (R)	-.36	.27	-.30	-.18	.12	.21	.07	-.16
P38 Make plans and follows through with them	.47	.14	.09	.09	-.18	.21	.12	.01
P39 Gets nervous easily	-.27	.32	.08	.30	.07	-.09	.01	.01
P40 Likes to reflect, play with ideas	.42	.39	-.11	-.15	-.09	-.10	-.02	.04
P41 Has few artistic interests (R)	.18	.38	-.10	-.08	-.11	-.33	.13	-.16
P42 Likes to cooperate with others	.51	.00	-.02	.30	.08	-.09	.04	.03

P43 Is easily distracted (R)	-.39	.42	-.11	.25	.05	.02	-.03	-.00
P44 Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	.23	.37	-.13	-.13	-.17	-.26	.22	-.08

Note: R indicates reversed item of originally proposed factor. All items are in their original score

In order to know level of internal consistency of the personality measurement, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to each of personality dimension. In the current study, Alpha values ranged from 0.55 to 0.76, which is adequate for the scales to be reliable. Table 6.9 shows comparisons of Cronbach's Alpha of the current study and other Malaysian populations (see Mastor, Jin & Cooper, 2000), and with those of six non-western countries as reported in McCrae, et.al (2005). Throughout the analyses, the Cronbach's Alpha for Openness to experience seems to be consistently lower than any dimension.

Table 6.9

Comparison of Cronbach Alpha of Malaysian populations and those of other non-western countries

Country	Internal consistency				
	N	E	O	A	C
Malaysia (current study)	0.73	0.76	0.55	0.75	0.69
Malaysia ¹	0.80	0.78	0.59	0.85	0.91
Malaysia ² (Study 1a)	0.92	0.87	0.80	0.81	0.88
Malaysia ² (Study 2)	0.87	0.86	0.69	0.82	0.91
Non-western countries²					
India	0.77	0.80	0.59	0.83	0.88
Botswana	0.75	0.82	0.61	0.89	0.92
Nigeria	0.61	0.73	0.25	0.63	0.78
Ethiopia	0.71	0.70	0.60	0.76	0.87
Uganda	0.73	0.77	0.68	0.81	0.89
Morocco	0.54	0.57	0.58	0.66	0.82

Note: ¹ Data are taken from McCrae, et.al (2005), ² Data are taken from Mastor, Jin & Cooper (2000); N = Neuroticism, E= Extraversion, O= Openness to experience, A= Agreeableness, C= Conscientiousness.

Summary

Higher order analysis of the data showed that a two-factor solution was inconsistent with the data. Results indicated that there was a possibility that data is explained by one or five-factor

solution. Although some of the items were loaded in unexpected places, the five-factor solution is nevertheless more suitable to be further used in this study compared to the one factor model, because its distinctive personality dimensions could be more informative in explaining Malaysian students' adapting experience and well-being. Therefore, H1 is accepted. Although the Cronbach's Alpha counted for each dimension was not high, it was adequate enough to be a reliable measurement. As expected, Openness to experience obtained the lowest value of Alpha. There is also probability that a distinctive cultural element may have shaped the behaviour of Malaysians, which brings much impact on their personality. For this reason, Openness to experience might not be an important personality trait to the Malaysians in this study. The original version of the BFI (as proposed by John et al., 2008) will continue to be used in future analyses.

6.6.3 Correlation results

The effect size of a correlation is actually shown by the strength of the correlation. The coefficient r value of 0.10 has been considered as small 0.30 as medium, and 0.50 as large effect size (Field, 2007). A summary of correlation results is displayed in Table 6.10.

“Do correlations exist between the personality traits, and between the personality traits and the well-being indicators amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ2).

It was found that all inter-scale correlations within the Big five traits were significant. Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness positively correlated with one another (r ranged from 0.38 to 0.42, $p < 0.01$), and negatively correlated with Neuroticism ($r = -.39$, $p < 0.01$). Positive correlation was the highest between Agreeableness and Conscientiousness ($r = .55$, $p < 0.01$).

Results showed that all of the big 5 traits of personality correlated significantly with the outcome variables, i.e. positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction. The personality traits correlated the most on positive affect ($p < 0.001$), with Extroversion showed to the strongest correlation to positive affect ($r = .50$), followed by Conscientiousness ($r = .46$), Openness ($r = .42$), Agreeableness ($r = .41$), and Neuroticism ($r = -.34$). Neuroticism had the strongest and positive correlation with negative affect ($r = .53$, $p < 0.01$), while others showed significant negative correlations with negative affect (r ranged from $-.34$ to $-.07$, $p < 0.01$). All traits showed positive associations with life satisfaction (r ranged from 0.27 to 0.15), except Neuroticism ($r = -.24$). The findings indicate the tendency of positive personality traits in yielding positive feelings and emotions, and emotional instability in a person may bring him or her easily towards uncontrolled emotional expressions.

Results, showed that positive affect positively correlated with life satisfaction ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$). Whilst, a negative correlation occurred between life satisfaction and negative affect ($r = -.18$, $p < 0.01$). Whilst, positive and negative affect negatively correlated with one another, but displayed low correlation ($r = -.05$, $p < 0.05$). All correlations were in expected directions. The negative correlation between positive and negative affect may explain that the students in this study may have experienced an intense negative feeling over something at some point of life that may result them to be less happy with their ordinary achievement.

“Are there any relationships between personality traits and the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ3)

Personality trait Agreeableness showed positive correlations with importance and satisfaction both self-transcendence and embeddedness values (r ranged from $.25$ to $.33$, $p < .01$). Conscientiousness also positively correlated with importance and satisfaction of values (r

ranged 14 to .33, $p < .01$). As predicted, a negative correlation was found between Openness and embeddedness importance and satisfaction ($r = -.14$, $r = -.10$, respectively, $p < .01$). Openness also correlated negatively with self-transcendence importance, which however, was very small ($r = .05$, $p < .05$). Neuroticism was found to be negatively correlated with self-transcendence importance ($r = -.05$, $p < .05$); whilst no significant correlations were found between the remaining value variables and Neuroticism. Extraversion also did not correlate with any of the value variables. These results suggest that personality traits that are more cognitively based (i.e. Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness) are more likely to be associated with values, compared to emotionally based traits (i.e. Neuroticism and Extraversion).

“Are there any relationships between the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ4).

Results showed that the importance of both embeddedness and self-transcendence values positively correlated with satisfaction of the both values (r ranged from .49 to .54, $p < .01$). These findings support the idea that the two values actually complement each other in a community that uphold a strong conservative mind. Conforming to customs and traditions that have long been practised in the community and giving supports to the community, such as establishing fund raising activities, are all important aspects in maintaining the harmony within collectivist community, such as Malaysia.

“Do importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values, correlate positively with life satisfaction, positive affect, and negatively with negative affect amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ5)

Embeddedness importance positively correlated with life satisfaction and positive affect ($r = .13$, $p < .01$; $r = .05$, $p < .05$, respectively), and no significant association was found with

negative affect. Embeddedness satisfaction showed positive correlations with life satisfaction ($r = .09, p < .01$) and positive affect ($r = .15, p < .01$), and negative correlation with negative affect ($r = -.05, p < .05$). Self-transcendence importance correlated positively with life satisfaction and positive affect ($r = .15, p < .01$; $r = .05, p < .05$ respectively), and negatively with negative affect ($r = -.06, p < .05$). No significant correlations were found between self-transcendence satisfaction and all of the well-being indicators. The results indicate that both embeddedness and self-transcendence values are important to the Malaysians, but embeddedness values are more central to the Malaysians' life, compared to self-transcendence, whereby prioritising and getting satisfied by those values may increase a person's well-being.

“Do GCSE result and English language fluency correlate positively with life satisfaction and positive affect, and negatively with negative affect amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ6).

English language fluency correlated positively with positive affect ($r = .07, p < .01$) and negatively with negative affect ($r = -.05, p < .05$). Unexpectedly, the GCSE result appeared to be negatively correlated with life satisfaction and positive affect ($r = -.06, p < .01$; $r = -.10, p < .01$, respectively). The rest of the correlations were not significant.

A pass in the GCSE (equivalent to the Malaysia Certificate of Education) has become a basic requirement for a Malaysian citizen to enter workforce or higher education. For those who wish to further their studies with scholarships, they have to compete with others as scholarships are normally limited. Therefore, a constant academic-related stress may decrease the well-being levels of Malaysian students, especially amongst those of high academic-achievers.

“Do personality traits relate to the GCSE result and English language fluency amongst the Malaysian students in this study?” (RQ7).

Findings revealed that the English language fluency correlated positively only with Openness, and Extraversion ($r = .21$; $r = .09$, $p < .01$, respectively). Both Agreeableness and Conscientiousness correlated negatively with the English language fluency ($r = -.16$; $r = -.08$, $p < .01$, respectively). Besides that, the GCSE result was found to be negatively correlated with Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness ($r = -.11$; $r = -.28$; $r = -.22$, $p < .01$, respectively), and positively correlated with dimension Openness ($r = .07$, $p < .01$). There were no significant correlations between Neuroticism and the GCSE result and English language fluency.

Table 6.10

Inter-correlation results between the Big 5 personality traits, value variables, well-being indicators, perceived success indicators, and socio-demographic factors

	E	A	C	N	O	LS	PA	NA	STI	EI	STS	ES	ELF	GCSER
E	-													
A	.40**	-												
C	.42**	.55**	-											
N	-.39**	-.40**	-.45**	-										
O	.38**	.21**	.32**	-.19**	-									
LS	.27**	.29**	.28**	-.24**	.15**	-								
PA	.50**	.41**	.46**	-.34**	.42**	.38**	-							
NA	-.34**	-.28**	-.30**	.53**	-.07**	-.18**	-.05*	-						
STI	-.01	.33**	.17**	-.05*	-.05*	.15**	.05*	-.06*	-					
EI	.01	.23**	.17**	.01	-.14**	.13**	.05*	.02	.29**	-				
STS	-.03	.25**	.14**	-.02	-.03	.02	.02	-.03	.54**	.21**	-			
ES	.03	.25**	.19**	-.03	-.09**	.09**	.15**	-.05*	.18**	.49**	.28**	-		
ELF	.09**	-.16**	-.08**	-.03	.21**	.04	.07**	-.05*	-.08*	.05*	-.14**	-.13**	-	
GCSER	-.11**	-.28**	-.22**	.04	.07**	-.06**	-.10**	.03	-.15**	-.17**	-.15**	-.16**	.50**	-
Mean	27.55	35.34	31.33	22.46	33.61	22.12	36.89	28.19	-90	1.53	-.75	1.71	5.98	44.49
S.D.	4.92	5.00	4.89	5.02	4.31	5.53	5.82	7.81	.38	.33	.70	.64	1.89	10.16

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed), S.D. = Standard Deviation, E= Extraversion, A= Agreeableness, C= Conscientiousness, N= Neuroticism, O = Openness, LS = Life Satisfaction, PA= Positive Affect, NA = Negative Affect, STI = Self-Transcendence Importance, EI= Embeddedness Importance, STS = Self-Transcendence Satisfaction, ES = Embeddedness Satisfaction, ELF = English Language Fluency, GCSE = General Certificate of Secondary Education Result (indicator for academic achievement)

6.7 Interpretation of results

The results established a few findings. First of all, the five traits of personality exist in the mixed background of Malaysian student population. Secondly, the relationships between the personality dimensions, the values, and wellbeing indicators, as suggested by theory and previous findings were also found. It seems that being attached to embeddedness values are more important than to the self-transcendence values, as it increases subjective well-being of these students. The Malaysian culture which respects norms and traditions could be very much contributes to the result. This study also showed that people with positive attributes, such as being conscientious and agreeable, tended to report being satisfied by certain things in their life. However, for people with high degree of Openness, they may not feel that the embeddedness values are important to them as they oppose to their nature; therefore do not feel satisfied by the values.

6.8 Conclusion

The research will be continued with the next study that will examine the extent to which the Time 1 predictors affect the subjective well-being, importance and satisfaction of values, and adaptation experiences of the Malaysian students at Time 2. The analysis will be run separately between the overseas group and the home country group as they received different exposure in their learning experience which may have different impact on their subjective well-being, values, and adaptation experiences.

Also, the next study will show whether or not there will be changes in subjective well-being and values over time as a function of the overseas studying intention, and inter-correlations between adaptation experiences and Time 2 variables.

CHAPTER 7

Longitudinal Study Time 2 (Follow-Up Study)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is a report of the second phase or the follow-up to the cross-sectional study reported in Chapter 6. The first aim of the study was to examine whether there were any changes in the Malaysian students' well-being, as well as importance and satisfaction of values over time. The second aim of the study was to investigate the relationships between adapting experiences (i.e. missing experience of being away from home and enjoyment experience of being at a new place) and the well-being indicators at Time 2 in both the overseas and home country student populations. The third aim of the study was to investigate which of the Time 1 variables (i.e. well-being indicators, personality, importance and satisfaction of values, and perceived success) and parents' level of education that predict the well-being, adaptation experiences, as well as the value importance and satisfaction of these students after a few months attending the university. As overseas and home country studies offer two different types of learning experiences, the analyses will be carried out separately for each group of students. This chapter includes an introduction that highlights on the aims of the study, overview of previous findings, research questions and hypotheses, method, results and summaries, as well as a conclusion.

7.2 Overview of Research Findings at Time 1

At the baseline level, most of the correlations were found to be significant. In this follow-up study, the Time 2 variables (i.e. well-being indicators, adaptation experiences, and importance

and satisfaction) were regressed on the Time 1 variables (well-being indicators, personality traits, value importance and satisfaction, and perceived success) and parents' level of education. As adaptation experience variables were first introduced at the follow-up study and being a newly-developed measurement for adaptation experiences, it was necessary to explore first the relationship patterns between the adaptation experiences and well-being indicators at Time 2. Figure 7.1 displays the framework for the study at Time 2.

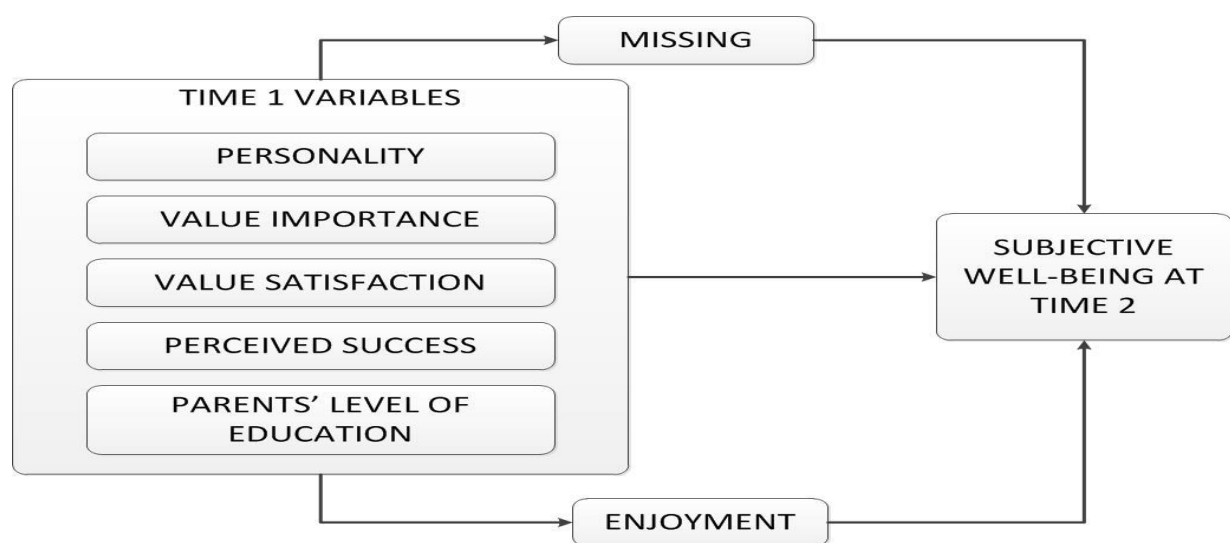


Figure 7.1: Framework for the follow-up study at Time 2

7.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

7.3.1 Changes of well-being

“Does well-being change over time between Time 1 and Time 2 as a function of home country/overseas experiences?” (RQ8)

In the case of immigrants or people moving to a new place, whether permanently or temporarily, absorbing information of the new culture and adjusting to the new life could be a

stressful experience. Therefore, the immigrants who were once happy at the pre-departure stage may not as happy as before at the post-arrival stage as they may encounter acculturative stress (Rogers-Sirin, Ryce, & Sirin, 2014). High expectations from the immigrants themselves of progressing well with their new lives, as well as from their significant others, could potentially lead them to greater stress (Aydin, 2013). International students who are not proficient enough in the host language, may need to put extra effort in overcoming the language problems as it is crucial for achieving their academic goals and to be able to adapt to the new culture. A constant struggle against these language hurdles may put international students and any students at tertiary education under pressure. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H8a: The life satisfaction and positive affect of overseas students decrease and their negative affect increases over time between Time 1 and Time 2.

H8b: The life satisfaction and positive affect of home country students decrease and their negative affect increases over time between Time 1 and Time 2.

7.3.2 Changes of Values

“Do importance and satisfaction of values change over time as a function of overseas/home country experiences?” (RQ9)

Values may not easily change over time, but under certain circumstances, people may look at things in different perspectives than before (Bardi & Goodwin, 2011). In an acculturation process, new values may be adopted or original values may diminish as immigrants engage in acculturation strategies that are suitable to the foreign society they are settling in (Berry, 1997). By distancing themselves from their original culture, these immigrants may adopt most of the host’s cultural values, or may probably choose to acquire a balance between the two cultures by maintaining their original culture, and at the same time, accommodating the host’s cultural

values in their existing values. For Malaysian students who have been studying overseas, the exposure which they have obtained from overseas experience could change their perception on certain things to some degree in life. Therefore, it is probable that the overseas Malaysian students in this study have experienced some degree of value changes after being a couple of months abroad. However, as conservation values are strongly upheld in the Malaysian society, it is suspected that these values will not be easily dismissed even if being abroad. For the home country students in Malaysia, the transitional experience to the university life may not affect much of their values as they still live under the same cultural rules and expectations. Hence, it is hypothesised that:

H9a: The importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values for overseas students remain the same over time between Time 1 and Time 2.

H9b: The importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values for overseas students increase over time between Time 1 and Time 2.

H9c: The importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values for home country students remain the same over time between Time 1 and Time 2.

H9d: The importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values for home country remain the same over time between Time 1 and Time 2.

7.3.3 Relationships between Adaptation Experiences and Time 2 Well-being Indicators, Importance and Satisfaction of Values, Perceived Success, and Parents' Level of Education, and Personality Traits.

“Do adaptation experiences at Time 2 correlate with Time 2 well-being indicators, importance and satisfaction of values, perceived success, and parents' education level as well as personality traits in overall student population?(RQ10)

It is a common phenomenon that a person who has just arrived at a new place would experience some degree of homesickness (Thurber & Walton, 2012). For immigrants, being in a foreign country heightens the awareness of how different the current life is as compared to the conditions in their home country. Immigrants who encounter major cultural contrasts to the host's nationals, may encounter a sense of loss and eventually lead them to miss home (Bhugra, 2004). In comparison to the home country students, the life of overseas students is assumed to be tougher (Fritz, et al, 2008; Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Despite of those difficulties, being at a new place may also mean a new discovery of joyful life, which may override the pain of missing home that some may experience. For the new university students, there could be a lot of opportunities for growth and self-development offered by the university and its supporting communities, which may also be another type of enjoyment they could treasure. Undergoing a non-ordinary life far away from home may be a rewarding experience for one who looks at it as a challenge and the enjoyment gained may increase the person's well-being (Maydell-Stevens, Masgoret, & Ward, 2007). A blended experience of enjoying the new country and missing home may produce a unique effect on the level of well-being. It is hypothesised that:

H10a: Missing experience correlates positively with negative affect, and negatively with life satisfaction and positive affect at Time 2 in overall student population

H10b: Enjoyment experience correlates positively with life satisfaction and positive affect, and negatively with negative affect at Time 2 in overall student population.

Besides, personality traits may also correlate with enjoyment and missing experiences. People who are highly extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, and opened are more likely to enjoy life than those who have lower degree of these traits. Neurotic individuals may as well less likely to enjoy life being away from the significant others. They are prone to be panic-stricken if things are not going their ways. Therefore, they are more likely to have higher negative affect, which brings them into missing things back home more than others. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H10c: Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness positively correlate with enjoyment and negatively with missing experiences in overall student population.

H10d: Neuroticism positively correlates with missing and negatively with enjoyment and positively with missing experiences in overall student population.

Individuals who tightly cling to their values that are opposed to the values of the immediate environment or culture, for example, in the case of immigrants, may not easily get on well with life. High cultural discrepancy may put people into longing for things that they used to have which are hard to fulfil in their current lives (Ward & Searle, 1991; Joshanloo, 2010). These people may encounter missing home more than others, and may not put themselves easily in treasuring the excitement of the new experience in life. However, being at a new place may bring problems in life adaptation. Hence, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H10e: Importance of embeddedness values positively correlates with missing experience and negatively correlated with enjoyment in overall student population.

H10f: Satisfaction of embeddedness values negatively correlates with missing experience and positively with enjoyment experience in overall student population.

H10g: Importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values negatively correlate with missing experience and positively with enjoyment experience in overall student population.

Proficiency in widely-spoken language such as the English language and high performance in academic could increase a person's well-being to a higher level. Quinn and Duckworth (2007) in a study amongst 257 fifth-grader students from a city in the north-eastern part of USA found that high CGPA predicted high wellbeing in students. For an international student, fluency of English is a must in order to survive in the international context. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H10h: Current academic achievement and perceived English language fluency at Time 2 positively correlate with enjoyment and negatively with missing experiences at Time 2 in the overall student population.

Past studies have indicated that there is a relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and well-being. Those who come from a well-off family will have a better opportunity for self-growth and development than those who have lower SES. In the case of immigrants, higher SES individuals are believed to adjust better than those with lower SES (Van Geel & Vedder, 2010). An analysis by Castriota (2006) which was based on the World Banks' World Value Survey on more than 118,000 individuals from 81 countries revealed that education level has become more relevant for life satisfaction compared to the income level. For this study, the indicator for socio-economic status of the participants had been observed through their parents' level of education. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H10i: Both father's and mother's level of education negatively correlate with missing experience and positively with enjoyment experience at Time 2 in overall student population.

7.3.4 Predicting the overseas students' level of well-being at Time 2

“Does the level of each well-being indicator at Time 1 predict the students' well-being at Time 2?” (RQ11)

Research has shown that a person's average level of happiness and life satisfaction is relatively stable (Costa & McCrae, 1988; Diener, 1984). This has been supported by some long-term studies on well-being. Diener and Lucas (1999) found that the correlation between self-ratings of life satisfaction and happiness was quite stable up to six years in two times of data collection. Harker and Keltner (2001) discovered associations between positive emotions measured through the smiling faces of female students' high school yearbook and their level of well-being 30 years later. Stability of subjective well-being is probably a consequence of stability in the environment in which a person dwells in, or the result of biologically based personality predisposition (Diener & Lucas, 1999).

Longitudinal studies on international students have shown that the students' level of subjective well-being at the time before migrating or at the beginning of their studies in the new country can serve as a predictor of their well-being a few months later (e.g. Jose, et al., 2007; Ying & Liese, 1990, 1991). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H11a: High life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect at Time 1 predict high life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect at Time 2 in overseas students.

H11b: High life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect at Time 1 predict high life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect at Time 2 in home country students.

“Do the importance and satisfaction of values at Time 1 predict the well-being indicators at Time 2 in the overseas and home country students?” (RQ12)

Holding on to values that are incongruent with the mainstream culture may result a person to have low well-being. Integration to the mainstream or host’s culture has widely been accepted as an important element in acculturating process. For a person who is able to see what is expected from him/her in order to adjust well in the host’s society, this will guide a person in holding his/her values at a certain hierarchy of importance. If these important values are satisfied, this person will gain the most in the adjusting process, which will increase his or her well-being.

On the other hand, for a person who is unable to understand the norms or cultural expectations of the host’s society, or tolerate the difference between his/her own values with the host’s cultural values, and place his/her values on the highest degree of importance, he/she will receive the least satisfaction out of the values, which may put him/her into lower well-being. However, there is possibility that values, as mentioned earlier, may not change much across situations. People who are satisfied by values that have long been nurtured in them could be happier than others.

Amongst the Western societies, holding on to spiritual or ‘growth’ types of values, such as self-transcendence value, is found to lead people to higher well-being than holding on to any conservation values (Bilsky & Schwartz, 1994). In contrast, the Eastern societies tend to perceive conservation values, such as preserving traditions and customs as important elements in maintaining group harmony (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). A person who conforms to this norm is viewed as being well-adapted in the society, which connects the person to a high well-being. Culturally accepted values may cause less detrimental effects to individuals in the

society compared to those of values that are not culturally desired. Therefore, I hypothesised that:

H12a: High importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values and self-transcendence at Time 1 predict high life satisfaction, and positive affect, and low negative affect at Time 2 in the overseas students.

H12b: High importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 1 predict high life satisfaction, and positive affect, and low negative affect at Time 2 in the home country students.

“Does personality trait at Time 1 predict the well-being at Time 2 in the overseas and home country students?” (RQ13)

Research has shown how personality could be an important predictor on how well individuals interact with one another. It is possible that being happy could be a stable personality trait for most people, which could predict their well-being sometime later (e.g. Haslam, et al., 2009) Therefore, I hypothesised that:

H13a: High scores in personality trait Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Extraversion predict high life satisfaction and positive affect at Time 2 in both overseas and home-country students.

H13b: High scores in personality trait Neuroticism predict low life satisfaction and positive affect at Time 2 in both overseas and home-country students.

H13c: High scores in personality trait Neuroticism predict high negative affect at Time 2 in both overseas and home-country students.

“Do the achievement in the GSCE and perceived English language fluency at Time 1 predict the well-being at Time 2 in the overseas and home country students?” (RQ14)

Obtaining good results in the Malaysian Certificate of Examination (MCE), which is equivalent to the GSCE in the UK, is one of the requirements for securing a place at the university or a job. Because of that, most people are keen on to pass this public examination in Malaysia. For those who want to further their studies to the tertiary level, it is therefore, crucial for them to obtain good grades in the examination. Those who are excellent in academic would have higher self-esteem than those who are not, which has been reported to be one of the strong predictors of psychological well-being (Shrauger & Schohn, 1995). The confident feeling for being academically competent or skilful predicts a substantive level of happiness (Cheng & Furnham, 2002), which is particularly important for the overseas students as it contributes to the adaptation process in the foreign place (Yusof & Chelliah, 2010).

In addition, language fluency has also been associated with the success of international students. It has also been widely researched and frequently reported as an important predictor for acculturative stress (e.g. Lueck & Wilson, 2010; Mori, 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003). In a similar study, Swami, Arteche, Chamorro-Premuzic, and Furnham (2010) reported that Malaysian students who are fluent in English are better adapted in Britain. In light of the studies above, it is hypothesised that:

H14a: High achievement in the GSCE at Time 1 predicts high life satisfaction and positive affect, and low negative affect at Time 2 in the overseas and home country students.

H14b: High English language fluency at Time 1 predicts high life satisfaction and positive affect, and low negative affect at Time 2 in the overseas and home country students.

“Does parents’ level of education predict the well-being at Time 2 in the overseas and home country students?” (RQ15)

Previous findings have showed that there is a relationship between education level and well-being (see Castriota, 2006). It is hypothesised that:

H15: High level of education of both parents predict high life satisfaction and positive affect, and low negative affect at Time 2 in overseas and home country students.

7.3.5 Predicting Adaptation Experiences from Time 1 Predictors

“Do well-being indicators, personality traits, importance and satisfaction of values, perceived success, and parents’ level of education at Time 1 predict missing and enjoyment experiences at Time 2 in both overseas and home country students?”(RQ16)

Based on the rationale discussed in the relationships between Time 2 variables on well-being, personality traits, importance and satisfaction of values, perceived success, and parents’ level of education , it is hypothesised that:

H16a: High life satisfaction and positive affect, and low negative affect at Time 1 predict high enjoyment experiences at Time 2 for both overseas and home country students

H16b: Low life satisfaction and positive affect, and high negative affect at Time 1 predict high missing experiences at Time 2 for both overseas and home country students

Apart from external factors, internal factors, such as personality may also influence the ability of a person in adapting in a new culture. People who are highly extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, and opened are more likely to enjoy life than those who have lower degree of these traits. In contrast, neurotic individuals would be less likely to be adaptive in a new environment and being away from their significant others. They are prone to be panic-stricken

if things are not going their ways. Therefore, their level of negative affect would increase, which brings them into missing things back home more than others.

Smojver-Ažić, Živčić-Bećirević, and Jakovčić (2010) found that personality trait neuroticism and pessimism significantly contributed to depression in college freshmen in Croatia. In other study, introverted individuals, especially those who used to have a history of being homesick were potential of being homesick again (Eurelings-Bontekoe, Vingerhoets, & Fontijn, 1994). In relation to the discussion above, I hypothesised that:

H17a: High scores in personality traits Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness predict high enjoyment experience, and low missing experience in both the overseas and home country students.

H17b: High scores in personality trait Neuroticism predict low enjoyment experience, and high missing experience in both the overseas and home country students.

Individuals who tightly cling to their values that are opposed to the values of the immediate environment or culture, for example, in the case of immigrants, may not easily get on well with life. High cultural discrepancy may put people into longing for things that they used to have which are hard to fulfil in their current lives (Ward & Searle, 1991; Joshanloo, 2010). A person who encounters an intense feeling of missing home, may not easily settle down in the new environment. However, if these needs are fulfilled, the persons will be contented. In this study, conservation values are more central to the Malaysian people compared to self-transcendence values. Deep adherence to conservation values may lock people away from experiencing new roles and gain more knowledge, and eventually would contribute to low well-being. However, people may enjoy their life more if the values that are central to the immediate environment are satisfied. It is hypothesised that:

H18a: High importance of embeddedness values at Time 1 predict high missing experience and low enjoyment experience in both overseas and home country students.

H18b: High satisfaction of embeddedness values at Time 1 predict high enjoyment experience and low missing experience in both overseas and home country students..

H18c: High importance of self-transcendence values at Time 1 predict high enjoyment experience and low missing experience in both overseas and home country students.

H18d: High satisfaction of self-transcendence values at Time 1 predict high enjoyment experience and low missing experience in both overseas and home country students.

As mentioned before in Chapter 6, being English proficiency is very important for students in tertiary education, especially for those are studying abroad. As English language is widely-spoken, the ability to converse in English language allows a person to enhance his or her knowledge and lead a meaningful life. High academic achievement may bring high confidence to the students in this study; thus giving them more opportunity of enjoying the new life at the university and less focussing on thinking about home. Also, the parents of high academic background may become a mentor for their children to turn up to when encountering some academic difficulties. Parents who are seen as available resource persons to their children may ease their children in adjusting to the new life at university. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H19: High education levels of both parents predict high enjoyment experiences and low missing experiences in both the overseas and home country students.

7.3.6 Predicting importance and satisfaction of values

“Do the importance and satisfaction of the embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 2 predicted by Time 1 importance and satisfaction of both values, well-being indicators, perceived success, personality, and parents’ level of education in the overseas and home country students?” (RQ20)

In Chapter 6, results showed that Time 1 well-being, perceived success, and personality were associated or partly associated with importance and satisfaction of values at Time 1 (refer to Table 6.10). Therefore, it was assumed that these variables may also predict the importance and satisfaction of values at Time 2. In addition to the predictor variables, parents’ intellectual capability may help in imparting knowledge and instilling values in their children’s life (Coenders, Casas, Figuer, & Gonzalez, 2005). Thus, parents’ level of education education may be potential at contributing to the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values amongst the Malaysian students in this study. Therefore, based on the earlier findings and argument, it is hypothesised that:

H20a: High importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 1 predict high importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 2 in overseas and home country students.

H20b: High importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 1 predict high life satisfaction and positive affect, and low negative affect in overseas and home country students.

H20c: High scores in both Conscientiousness and Agreeableness predict high importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values in overseas and home country students.

H20d: High scores in personality trait Openness predict low importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and high importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values in overseas and home country students.

H20e: Neuroticism and Extraversion do not predict the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values in overseas and home country students.

H20f: High achievement in GCSE and English language fluency at Time 1 predict low importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values in overseas and home country students

H20g: High achievement in GCSE and English language fluency at Time 1 predict high importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values in overseas and home country students.

H20h: High level of education amongst both parents predict low importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values, and high importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values in overseas and home country students.

7.4 Methodology

7.4.1 Method

The study had been designed as a quantitative survey using paper-based and online survey methods.

7.4.2 Sampling

In the follow-up study, 30.05% of the previous samples were retained. Six hundred and twenty-eight (628) of them turned up for this follow-up study, comprising 244 overseas students and 384 home country students. The home country students answered the paper-based

questionnaire, whilst the overseas students answered the online questionnaire. Among the 1118 overseas students, 1062 of them provided their email addresses at Time 1. After sending the email to the respective students, 189 of the email were bounced back, leaving 873 of them being successfully sent. In the end, only 21.82% ($n=244$) of the overall overseas students responded to the online questionnaire.

For the home country students, the questionnaires were distributed in the classes of which were assumed to have high possible number of students who had responded to the first questionnaire (at Time 1). Out of the 650 questionnaires collected, only 384 were found to match with the previous responses, which was approximately 39.51% of the return rate of the home country students. Gender distribution showed that 208 (33.12%) of the participants were males and 420 (66.88%) were females. Overall, almost 36% of them reported that they had been travelling abroad. In comparison to the home country students, more than 60% of the overseas students claimed that they had been to overseas before. In terms of parents' educational level, the overseas group had the highest number of fathers with a degree qualification, whereas for the home country students, the highest number of the fathers' academic qualification fell in the category of secondary education. Both of the groups had the highest number of mothers with secondary education background. Table 7.1 shows further descriptions of the socio-demographic distribution. The overall mean for the duration of enrolment at the university was about 6.5 months.

Table 7.1

Socio-demographic distribution between the overseas and home country populations

Variables	Home country	Overseas	
Gender			
Males	108 (28.1%)	100 (41%)	(N= 628)
Females	276 (71.9%)	144 (59%)	
Travel to overseas			
Yes	63 (16.5%)	161 (66.3%)	(N= 627)
No	319 (83.5%)	82 (33.7%)	Missing data = 1
Father's education level			
Not attending any education	20 (5.3%)	2 (0.8%)	(N= 624)
Primary school	83 (21.8%)	29 (11.9%)	Missing data = 4
Secondary school	211 (55.5%)	61(25%)	
Diploma	29 (7.6%)	46 (18.9%)	
Bachelor degree	20 (5.3%)	72 (29.5%)	
Postgraduate degree	17 (4.5%)	34 (13.9%)	
Mother's education level	32 (8.5%)	3 (1.2%)	(N= 619)
Not attending any education	112 (29.8%)	32 (13.1%)	Missing data = 9
Primary school	186 (49.5%)	83 (34%)	
Secondary school	25 (6.6%)	49 (20.1%)	
Diploma	18 (4.8%)	57 (23.4%)	
Bachelor degree	3 (0.8%)	20 (8.2%)	
Postgraduate degree			

7.4.3 Measures

The measure for this study can be divided into two different phases. In the first phase, a set of questionnaire was used, which contains a 20-item Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988), a 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985), a 44-item Big Five Inventory (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991) and a 10-item Schwartz's Short Value Scale (Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005; Schwartz, 1992), whereby each scale measures the importance and satisfaction of values. The explanation on these scales can be found in Chapter 6. In the second phase of the study or the follow-up, the same measurement was conducted on the same participants; however, it excludes personality and includes a newly-developed scale of adaptation experiences, known as the Adaptation to Life Index.

a. Adaptation to Life Index

Adaptation to Life Index is a self-developed questionnaire which was based on the themes that emerged from the interview conducted earlier in this research and the literature reviews. It consists of two independent scales, namely; ‘missing experience’, and ‘enjoyment experience.’ This index had been pilot-tested on 100 international students throughout the UK, and was found to have high internal consistency of items (i.e. Cronbach’s alpha ranged from 0.90 to 0.94 for both scales), indicating that the Adaptation to Life Index is a reliable instrument. Principal component analysis (PCA) confirmed that the instrument consists of two independent scales. A full report on this can be found in Chapter 4.

In order to help the overseas participants respond to the questionnaire, some wordings related to the experiences in the UK were amended so that the items would be more general and relevant to the overseas participants from other countries. For example, item 11 in the original Enjoyment scale; “*Opportunity to learn about the UK’s culture and norms*” was changed to “*Opportunity to learn about the host country’s culture and norms*”.

For the home country participants, a similar questionnaire had also been developed based on the overseas adaptation questionnaire. In this questionnaire, the participants were asked to refer to the adapting experiences based on their lives at the university which they were attending. Original items were retained as much as possible and amended wherever possible so that the items would relate to the home country students. Three items for the Missing scale and six items for the Enjoyment scale were modified. For example, item 1 in the Missing scale; “Traditional food” was changed to “home-cooked food”. Item 7 in the Enjoyment scale; “*An opportunity to get to know people from other cultures*” was changed to “*An opportunity to get to know people from other ethnic groups*”. The index for the home country version was found to be highly reliable to be used as the Cronbach’s alpha values were 0.95 and 0.94 for the missing and enjoyment scales, respectively.

b. Demographic Section

For the demographic section, the participants were asked about their background, which includes the types of studying they are undergoing, the length of being at the university, and the educational background of their parents. Other information had already been provided at the Time 1 survey, including gender, ethnic groups, age, the institution they were enrolling in, overseas travelling experience, and whether or not they were the government scholarship holders. In order to link the data at Time 1 with the data from this follow-up study, under this section, they were again asked to provide the same email address and the unique code invented at Time 1.

7.4.4 Ethics

The study had been granted the ethics approval by the Board of Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Science and Technology before the beginning of the first phase of this longitudinal survey. For the home country students, a letter was written to the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Students affairs, University Malaysia Sabah, in order to seek the permission for running the study amongst the students. A verbal consent was sought after shortly.

7.4.5 Procedure

In January 2011, a follow-up study to the previous survey was carried out and it commenced with the control sample. The students who had been involved in the earlier research were tracked down based on which faculty programme they were enrolling in with the help of the academic staff of the university. A paper-based type of questionnaire was prepared for the control group as some of the participants did not provide any email address in the first survey due to low accessibility to the internet. An arrangement for administering the questionnaire was made first between the researcher, the programme coordinators and the lecturers involved.

The administration of questionnaire was done during the last 30 minutes of class, which was administered by the researcher herself with the help of the lecturer, whose class was involved in the study. A brief introduction to the study was given including anonymity assurance of students' identity and responses, their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and confidentiality of all the information given.

In order to match the data at Time 1 and Time 2, in the socio-demographic section, the participants were asked again to provide the code that they invented before and the email address that was given in the previous survey. The participants completed the paper-based questionnaire in about 20 minutes. All the questionnaires were collected immediately. However, some lecturers preferred to distribute the questionnaires to the identified students. They were asked to fill in the questionnaire at their own convenient time before returning it to their respective lecturer in the following week. Before letting them administer the questionnaires, they were briefed first on the study and the questionnaire, and were asked if there were things unclear about the study. The administration of the questionnaire lasted for 3 weeks.

For the overseas participants, in March 2011, prior to the actual study, an email was sent to all the participants to announce the follow-up study and to invite them to participate again in the research. A week later, another email was sent to the participants, which provided a link to the online survey. Prior to this, the construction of the online questionnaire was assisted by a staff member of the technician office at the School of Psychology, Plymouth University, with reference to the original questionnaire developed by the researcher's team. In this survey, the participants were asked to click on the link in order to get access to the questionnaire. Before answering the questionnaire, they were asked to read the introductory part of the survey. The introductory part informs the participants about the assurance of the anonymity of their identity and responses, and their right to withdraw from the study at any

time. They were also assured that all of the information given will be treated in the strictest confidence. In addition, they were asked to complete the special code that they had invented for their first questionnaire, namely; the combination of father's initials and the day of the month on which the participants were born, and also to provide again the email address to which they provided at Time 1. After that, they were asked to click on the button to show that they have understood the explanation clearly. In order to indicate the informed consent given, the participants were asked again to click on the button that says "Yes, I agree to participate in this research."

To guard against abuse by the participants or others, the survey was designed not to allow more than one answer in each of the questions asked. To reflect a research environment consistent with paper and pencil completion, the participants were given an option of answering or leaving any question unanswered before proceeding to the next section of the survey. The participants were not able to change their answers once they have clicked on the 'Finish' button. After clicking on the 'Finish' button, a page will appear which provides the access to the debriefing section.

Due to the low response of the overseas participants (91 or 37% of the Time 2 overseas participants), a second reminder email was sent out to remind the participants of the study, i.e. about two months after the online survey was launched. About seven weeks later, another 153 participants (63%) responded to the survey, making all together 244 participants.

7.5 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the SPSS. The statistical analyses used were two-way repeated measure ANOVAs, correlations, and multiple regressions.

7.6 Results

7.6.1 Interaction Effects and Mean Comparison Analyses

“Does well-being change over time between Time 1 and Time 2 as a function of home country/overseas experiences?” (RQ8)

A 2 (Time 1 life satisfaction and Time 2 life satisfaction) x 2 (home country and overseas students) mixed ANOVA showed a significant interaction effect, $F(1, 617) = 5.57$ $p=.02$, partial eta squared = .01. The result showed a significant main effect of time period for life satisfaction, $F(1, 617)= 5.00$, $p=.03$, partial eta squared = .01, whilst the main effect of overseas study intention was not significant, $F(1, 617)= 2.24$, $p = .14$, partial eta squared = .00. The interaction is displayed in the following graph (see Figure 7.2), which shows that the overseas students experienced higher life satisfaction at Time 2 as compared to Time 1 (see Table 7.2) and pairwise comparisons are displayed in Table 7.3. Being able to further study at overseas higher learning institutions and fully-funded by the government is something that can be proud of which increase satisfaction in life.

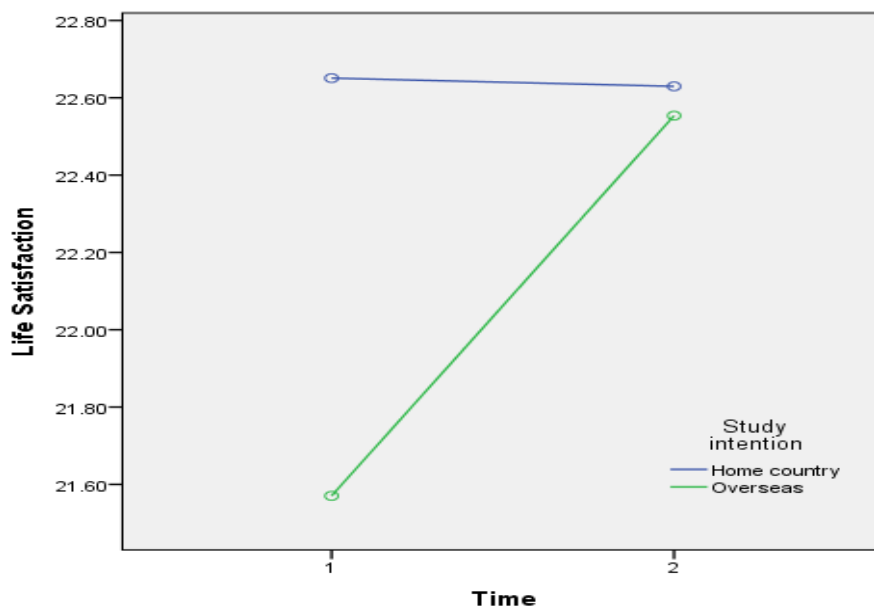


Figure 7.2: The interaction between time period and overseas study intention for life satisfaction

Table 7.2

The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students for life satisfaction at Time 1 and Time 2

	Student types/groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Life satisfaction at Time 1	Home-country students	22.65	5.38	377
	Overseas students	21.57	5.33	242
	Total	22.23	5.38	619
Life satisfaction Time 2	Home-country students	22.62	5.24	377
	Overseas students	22.55	5.42	242
	Total	22.60	5.31	619

Table 7.3

Pairwise comparisons for life satisfaction

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	.58	.38	.13	-.174	1.331
Overseas	Home country	-.58			-1.331	.174
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	-.48*	.214	.025	-.901	-.061
Time 2	Time 1	.48*			.061	.901

* $p < .05$

The result showed that the interaction effect of a 2 (Time 1 positive affect and Time 2 positive affect) x 2 (home country and overseas students) mixed ANOVA was not significant $F(1, 585) = 1.62, p = .20$, partial eta squared = .00. The result showed significant main effects of time period, $F(1, 585) = 5.00, p = .03$, partial eta squared = .01, and overseas study intention, $F(1, 585) = 17.83, p = .00$, partial eta squared = .03 in positive affect. The graph for this result is displayed in Figure 7.3. The descriptive analysis of this finding is presented in Table 7.4, and pairwise comparisons are showed in Table 7.5. The home country students experienced higher positive affect at both times compared to the overseas group. Both groups showed a decline in positive affect at Time 2 which probably because of the pressure from getting used to the surrounding and academic system at the university.

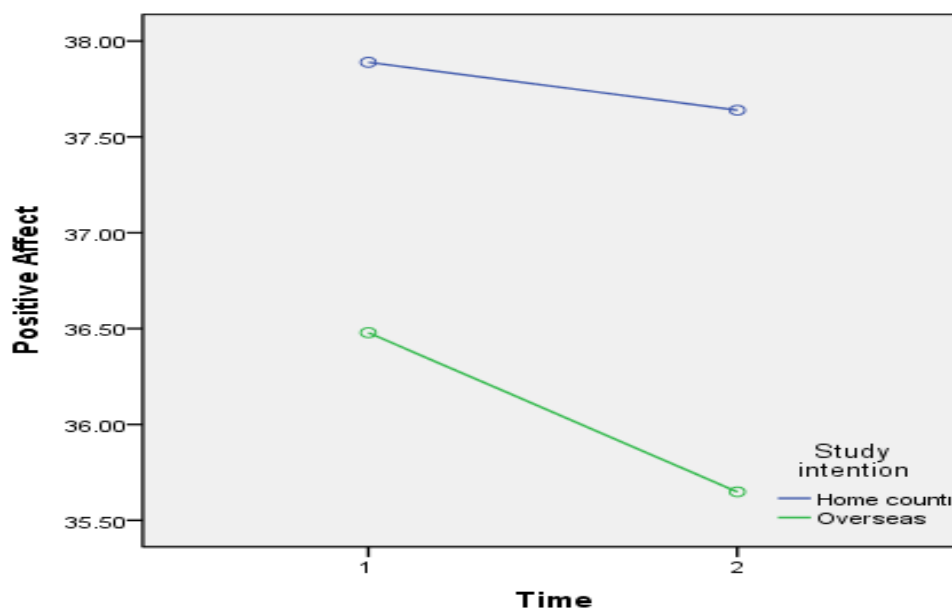


Figure 7.3: The interaction between time period and overseas study intention for positive affect

Table 7.4

The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students in positive affect at Time 1 and Time 2

	Student types/groups	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Positive affect at Time 1	Home-country students	37.88	5.83	351
	Overseas students	36.48	5.19	236
	Total	37.32	5.62	587
Positive affect at Time2	Home-country students	37.65	5.28	351
	Overseas students	35.65	5.88	236
	Total	36.85	5.61	587

Table 7.5

Pairwise comparisons for positive affect

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	1.70*	.40	.00	.91	2.49
Overseas	Home country	-1.70*			-2.49	-.91
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	.54*	.24	.02	.08	1.01
Time 2	Time 1	-.54*			-1.01	-.08

* $p < .05$

The result showed that the interaction effect of a 2 (Time 1 negative affect and Time 2 negative affect) x 2 (home country and overseas students) mixed ANOVA was significant $F(1, 594) = 83.74, p = .00$, partial eta squared = .12. The result showed a significant main effect of overseas study intention, $F(1, 594) = 11.48, p = .00$, partial eta squared = .02) in negative affect. On the contrary, the main effect for the time period was not significant, $F(1, 594) = .64, p = .42$, partial eta squared = .001. The graph in Figure 7.4 displays a significant interaction between the time period and the overseas study intention in negative affect. The overseas students had a lower negative affect at Time 2 compared to the home country students. This is probably the overseas students were exposed by a lot of exciting new experience abroad that turned them to think less about home. The descriptive analysis of this finding is presented in Table 7.6 and the pairwise comparisons are displayed in Table 7.7.

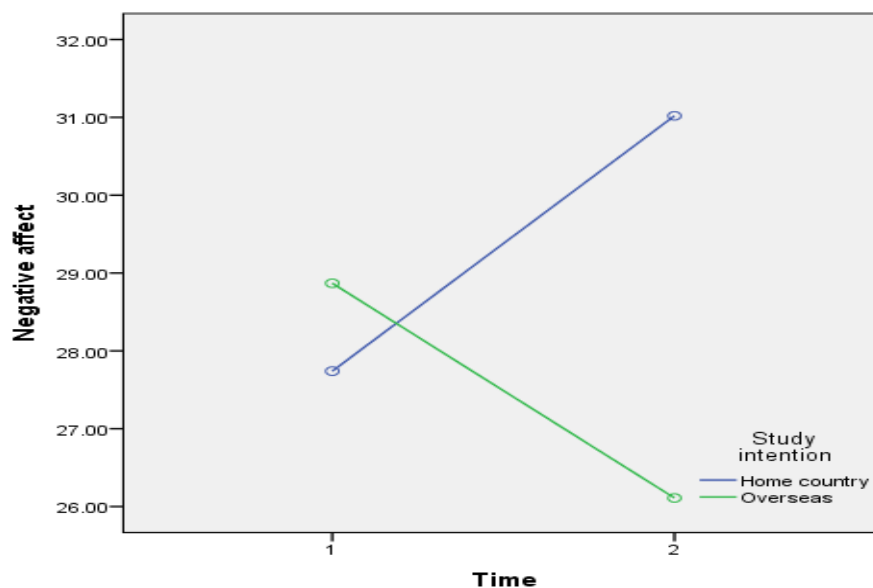


Figure 7.4: The interaction between time period and overseas study intention for negative affect

Table 7.6

The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students for negative affect at Time 1 and Time 2

	Student types/groups	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Negative affect at Time 1	Homecountry students	27.74	8.33	360
	Overseas students	28.87	7.21	236
	Total	28.19	7.92	596
Negative affect at Time2	Homecountry students	31.03	7.58	360
	Overseas students	26.11	7.63	236
	Total	29.08	7.97	596

Table 7.7

Pairwise comparisons for negative affect

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	1.89*	.56	.00	.79	2.99
Overseas	Home country	-1.89*			-2.99	-.79
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	-.26	.33	.43	-.91	.39
Time 2	Time 1	.26			-.39	.91

* $p < .05$

“Do importance and satisfaction of values change over time as a function of overseas/home country experiences?” (RQ9)

A 2 (Time 1 embeddedness importance and Time 2 embeddedness importance) x 2 (home country and overseas students) mixed ANOVA showed no significant interaction between the time period and overseas study intention in embeddedness importance, $F(1, 612) = 3.46, p = .06$, partial eta squared = .01. The main effect of the time period in embeddedness importance was not significant, $F(1, 612) = 2.11, p = .15$, partial eta squared = .00; whilst, the main effect of overseas study intention was significant, but rather weak $F(1, 612) = 4.13, p = .04$. The interaction is displayed in the following graph (see Figure 7.5). The descriptive analysis of this finding is presented in Table 7.8, and the pairwise comparisons are displayed in Table 7.9.

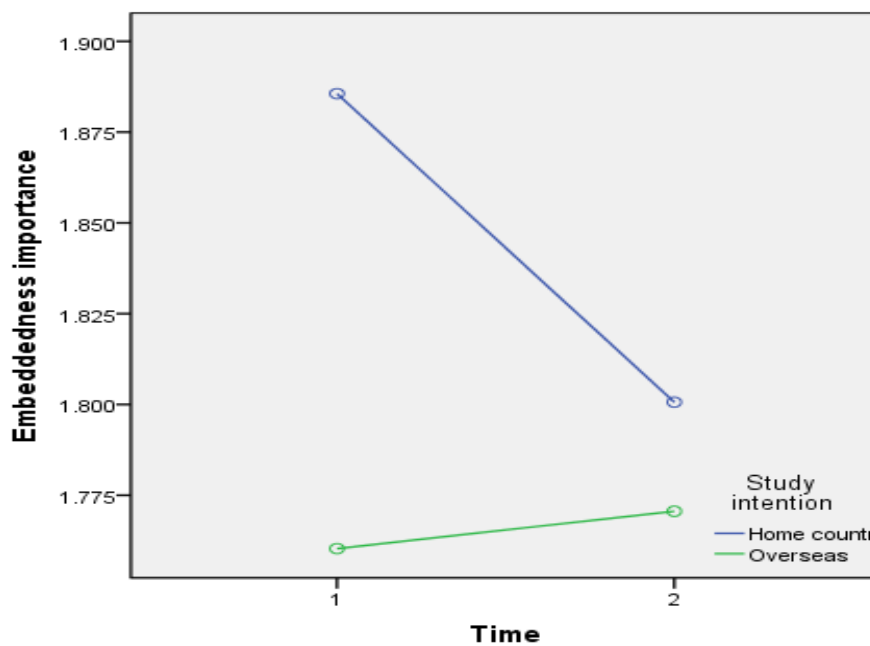


Figure 7.5: The interaction effect of time and overseas study intention for embeddedness importance

Table 7.8

The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students for embeddedness importance at Time 1 and Time 2.

	Student types/groups	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Embeddedness importance at Time 1	Home-country students	1.89	.51	378
	overseas students	1.76	.65	236
	Total	1.84	.57	614
Embeddedness importance at Time2	Home-country students	1.80	.52	378
	overseas students	1.77	.57	236
	Total	1.79	.54	614

Table 7.9

Pairwise comparisons for embeddedness importance

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	.08*	.04	.04	.00	.15
Overseas	Home country	-.08*			-.15	-.00
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	.04	.03	.14	-.01	.09
Time 2	Time 1	-.04			-.09	.01

* $p < .05$

A 2 (Time 1 embeddedness satisfaction and Time 2 embeddedness satisfaction) x 2 (home country and overseas students) mixed ANOVA results showed no significant interaction between the time period and overseas study intention in embeddedness satisfaction, $F(1, 603) = .77$, $p = .38$, partial eta squared = .00. There were significant main effects for time period, $F(1, 603) = 14.61$, $p = .00$, partial eta squared = .00, and overseas study intention, $F(1, 603) = 12.25$, $p = .00$, partial eta squared = 0.02) in embeddedness satisfaction. The interaction is displayed in the following graph (see Figure 7.6). The descriptive analysis of this finding is presented in Table 7.10, and the pairwise comparisons are displayed in Table 7.11. From the graph, each group of students show a downward trend of satisfaction of embeddedness values which explain that satisfaction embeddedness values may be overshadowed by other values that are more encouraged in the new environment.

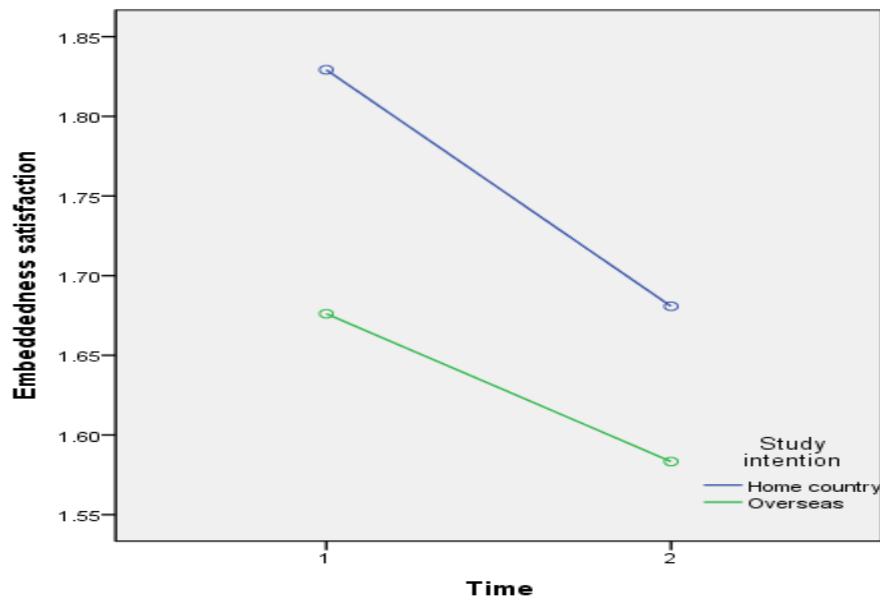


Figure 7.6: The interaction effect of time and overseas study intention for embeddedness satisfaction

Table 7.10

The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students for embeddedness satisfaction at Time 1 and Time 2

	Student types/groups	M	SD	N
Embeddedness satisfaction at Time 1	Home-country students	1.83	.63	367
	overseas students	1.68	.62	238
	Total	1.77	.63	605
Embeddedness satisfaction at Time2	Home-country students	1.68	.51	367
	overseas students	1.58	.51	238
	Total	1.64	.51	605

Table 7.11

Pairwise comparisons for embeddedness satisfaction

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	.13*	.04	.00	.06	.20
Overseas	Home country	-.13*			-.20	-.06
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	.12*	.03	.00	.06	.18
Time 2	Time 1	-.12*			-.18	-.06

* $p < .05$

A 2 (Time 1 self-transcendence importance and Time 2 self-transcendence importance x 2 (home country and overseas students) mixed ANOVA results showed a significant interaction between the time period and overseas study intention, $F(1, 612) = 11.75$, $p = .00$, partial eta squared = .02, in self-transcendence importance. There were significant main effects for time period, $F(1, 612) = 28.69$, $p = .00$, partial eta squared = .05, and overseas study intention, $F(1, 612) = 6.14$, $p = .01$, partial eta squared = 0.01). The interaction is displayed in the following graph (see Figure 7.7). The descriptive analysis of this finding is presented in Table 7.12 and the pairwise comparisons are displayed in Table 7.13.

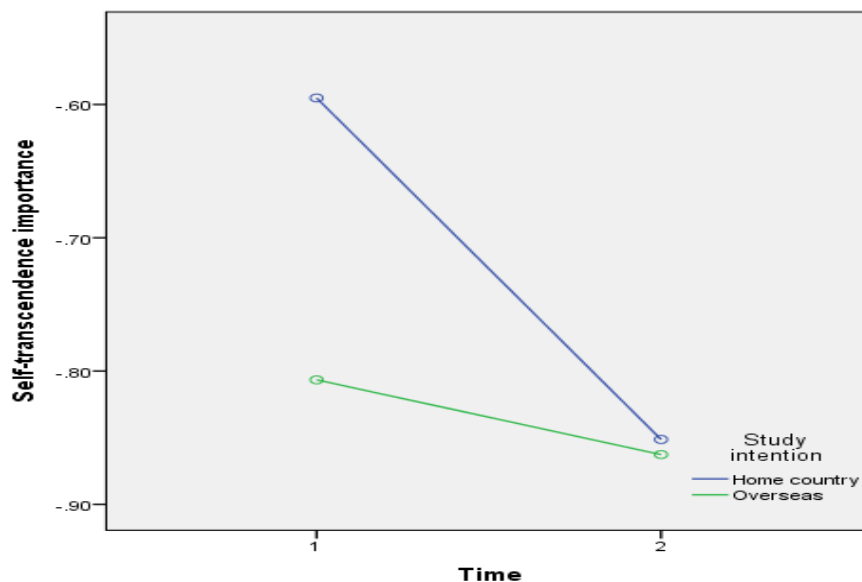


Figure 7.7: The interaction effect of time and overseas study intention for self-transcendence importance

Table 7.12

The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students for self-transcendence importance at Time 1 and Time 2

	Student types/groups	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Self-transcendence importance at Time 1	Home-country students	-.60	.69	378
	Overseas students	-.81	.70	236
	Total	-.68	.70	614
Self-transcendence importance at Time 2	Home-country students	-.85	.59	378
	Overseas students	-.86	.60	236
	Total	-.86	.59	614

Table 7.13

Pairwise comparisons for self-transcendence importance

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	.11*	.05	.01	.02	.20
Overseas	Home country	-.11*			-.20	-.02
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	.16*	.03	.00	.10	.21
Time 2	Time 1	-.16*			-.21	-.10

* $p < .05$

A 2 (Time 1 self-transcendence satisfaction and Time 2 self-transcendence satisfaction x 2 (home country and overseas students) mixed ANOVA results showed a significant interaction between the time period and overseas study intention in self-transcendence satisfaction, $F(1, 603) = 4.20$, $p = .04$, partial eta squared = .01. There were significant main effects of time period, $F(1, 603) = 31.70$, $p = .00$, partial eta squared = .05, and overseas study intention, $F(1, 603) = 5.18$, $p = .02$, partial eta squared = 0.01) in self-transcendence satisfaction. The interaction is displayed in the following graph (see Figure 7.8). The descriptive analysis of this finding is presented in Table 7.14 and the pairwise comparisons can be seen in Table 7.15. The downward trend of satisfaction in self-transcendence values indicate that the students in this study may be driven more by values that are opposite to self-transcendence (i.e. self enhancement values).

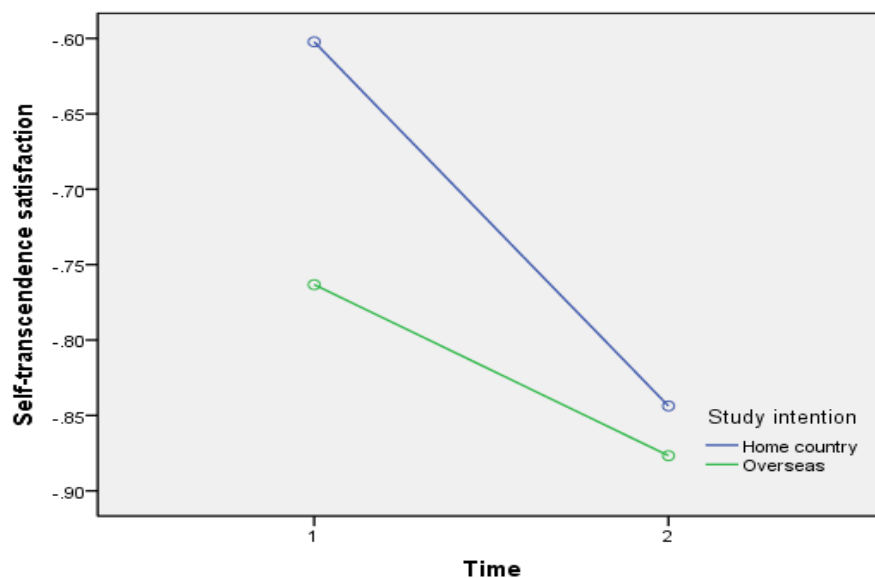


Figure 7.8: The interaction effect of time and overseas study intention for self-transcendence satisfaction

Table 7.14

The descriptive analysis between the home country and overseas students for self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 1 and Time 2

	Student types/groups	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 1	Home-country students	-.60	.69	367
	Overseas students	-.76	.65	238
	Total	-.67	.68	605
Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 2	Home-country students	-.85	.59	367
	Overseas students	-.88	.59	238
	Total	-.86	.59	605

Table 7.15

Pairwise comparisons for self-transcendence satisfaction

		Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
Study Intention					Lower bound	Upper bound
Home country	Overseas	.10*	.04	.02	.01	.18
Overseas	Home country	-.10*			-.18	-.01
Time						
Time 1	Time 2	.18*	.03	.00	.12	.24
Time 2	Time 1	-.18*			-.24	-.12

* $p < .05$

Interpretation of the results

The results showed that the Malaysian students' life satisfaction, negative affect, importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values changed over time as a function of overseas/home country experience. There was no significant difference in change in positive affect, importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values as a function of overseas /home country experience. The overseas students experienced greater life satisfaction and lower negative affect than the home country students.

Both groups of students showed a decrease in positive affect after a few months being in their studies. They also rated the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 2 less than at Time 1, indicating a growing inclination towards self-enhancement values, such as striving for the best academic achievement, which has always been associated with the aspiration of any higher learning institutions.

7.6.2 Correlational Analyses

a. Does adaptation experience at Time 2 correlate with Time 2 well-being, personality traits, importance and satisfaction of values, current perceived success, and parents' level of education? (RQ10)

Pearson correlation analyses showed that the missing experience significantly correlated with life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect at Time 2 ($r = .16$; $r = .21$; $r = .25$, $p < .01$, respectively) Life satisfaction and positive affect at Time 2 positively correlated with enjoyment experience ($r = .26$; $r = .39$, $p < .01$, respectively). Negative affect at Time 2 did not associate with enjoyment experience.

Enjoyment experience showed positive correlations with Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness, and Extraversion at Time 2 ($r = .22$; $r = .22$, $r = .18$; $r = .17$,

$p < .01$, respectively). Positive associations also exhibited between missing experience and Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion at Time 2 ($r = .29$; $r = .24$; $r = .18$, $p < .01$). Conversely, Neuroticism at Time 2 did not show any significant correlations with both adaptation experiences.

The results further showed that the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values at Time 2 were correlated with the missing experience ($r = .23$; $r = .20$, $p < .01$). Enjoyment did not correlate to any values at Time 2; whilst missing experience did not associate with self-transcendence importance and satisfaction at Time 2.

Perceived success marked by the fluency in the English language and current academic achievement at Time 2, each showed negative correlation to missing experience ($r = -.33$; $r = -.16$, $p < .01$, respectively); whilst English language fluency and current academic achievement at Time 2 were not significantly correlated with enjoyment. Likewise, the next results followed the same pattern, i.e. negative relationships were found between both father's and mother's education level and missing experience ($r = -.27$; $r = -.20$, $p < .01$, respectively). Further findings showed no significant relationships between parents' education level and enjoyment. These correlation results are presented in Table 7.16.

Table 7.16

The correlation results of adaptation experiences with Time 1 personality traits, and parents' educational level, and Time 2 perceived success, importance and satisfaction of values in overall student population.

	Correlation coefficients (r)		Mean	S.D.
	Missing experience	Enjoyment experience		
Missing	-		139.69	32.18
Enjoyment	.30**	-	139.86	22.90
Extraversion	.18**	.17**	35.34	5.00
Agreeableness	.29**	.20**	31.33	4.89
Conscientiousness	.24**	.22**	22.46	5.02
Neuroticism	.01	-.07	33.61	4.31
Openness	.02	.18**	22.12	5.53
Life satisfaction	.16**	.26**	22.60	5.30
Positive affect	.21**	.39**	36.79	5.60
Negative affect	.25**	-.02	29.17	7.90
Self-transcendence Importance	.07	-.00	-.86	.59
Embeddedness importance	.23**	.07	1.79	.54
Self-transcendence satisfaction	.05	.02	-.85	.59
Embeddedness satisfaction	.20**	.05	1.64	.52
English language fluency	-.33**	.08	6.09	1.76
Academic achievement	-.16**	.08	6.23	1.31
Father's education level	-.27**	.02	3.41	1.26
Mother's education level	-.20**	.01	3.16	1.40

*Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed). S.D. = Standard deviation*

Interpretation of results

Positive associations were discovered between all the well-being indicators and adaptation experiences at Time 2, except the relationship between negative affect and enjoyment experience. Personality traits at Time 1 that carry positive attributes (i.e. Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness, and Extraversion) showed positive correlations with enjoyment. All traits, except Openness, showed positive relationships to missing experience. Surprisingly, Neuroticism also did not correlate with missing experience. These results implied that missing experience might not present much negative meaning to the Malaysian students.

Negative relationships between perceived success at Time 1 and missing experience suggest that the students' self-confidence operated at a low level, which made them vulnerable

to negative feelings. The students, whose parents were less educated, were more likely to miss home than those whose parents were more educated. Missing experience was positively associated with the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values at Time 2, and not with any of self-transcendence value variables at Time 2, implying that things missed at home were probably characterised by conservative or traditional qualities.

7.6.3 Multiple Regression Analyses

Testing for collinearity

Collinearity or multicollinearity is used to describe the situation when a high correlation is detected between two or more predictor variables (Brace, Kemp & Snelgar, 2009). High correlation is problematic when trying to draw inferences about the relative contribution of each predictor variable to the success of the model. Multicollinearity test had been performed on this data before running the multiple regression analyses through the SPSS software. The results will display an additional two columns of the coefficient table. In these two columns, the tolerance and VIF coefficient values are displayed. Tolerance values are a measure of the correlation between predictor variables that can vary between 0 and 1. If the tolerance value for each of variable is less than .01, collinearity or multicollinearity may have occurred (Brace, Kemp & Snelgar, 2009). Another way of detecting multicollinearity in the data is by examining the VIF values. According to Field (2009), if the average VIF is more than '1', then multicollinearity might be biasing the model. The results of this study showed that the tolerance values ranged from .42 to .81, suggesting no evidence for multicollinearity in the variables.

a. Multiple Regressions on Well-being for the Overseas, and Home Country Students

- i. Does each of the predictor variables at Time 1 (life satisfaction before going for study or at the very beginning of academic term, personality, value importance and satisfaction, and perceived success) predict life satisfaction after being 6 months or less enrolling as undergraduate students (at Time 2)? (RQ11-15)*

The linear regression method was used to examine the independent contribution of predictor variables at Time 1 to measure the well-being at Time 2. Several analyses were also carried out. The first series of analyses were carried out to examine the predictors of well-being, with separate analyses for life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. In the analyses, after controlling the baseline well-being, the variables were entered in the following steps: Step 1 - personality variables, Step 2 - values importance, Step 3 - values satisfaction, and Step 4 - perceived success.

This analysis was repeated two times, first for the overseas students only, and second, for the home country students only. In order to see the contribution of each variable to the outcome, R square change was first examined to find out whether it was significant or not. The unique contribution of the predictor variable on the outcome is shown by the beta coefficient value, indicating its magnitude. The 'enter' method was used in all of the analyses in this study. Every analysis was described by an equation model based on the general equation, as follows;

$$\text{Outcome}_i = (\text{Model}) + \text{Error}_i, \text{ or } Y_i = b_0 + (b_1X_{i1} + b_2X_{i2} + \dots + b_nX_{in}) + \varepsilon_i$$

The followings are a few examples of the equations for well-being prediction analyses:

$$\text{Life satisfaction at Time 2} = b_0 + (b_1\text{LS1}_i + b_2\text{Personality1}_i + b_3\text{VIL}_i + b_4\text{VSI}_i + b_5\text{Perceived Success1}_i) + \varepsilon_i$$

*Positive affect at Time 2 = $b_0 + (b_1PA1*_i + b_2Personality1*_i + b_3V1I*_i + b_4VS1*_i + b_5Perceived\ Success1*_i) + \epsilon_i$*

*Negative affect at Time 2 = $b_0 + (b_1NA1*_i + b_2*_i + b_3V1I*_i + b_4VS1*_i + b_5Perceived\ Success1*_i) + \epsilon_i$*

(*Note: $LS1^*$ =Time 1 life satisfaction; $V1I$ = Time 1 value importance; $VS1$ = Time 1 value satisfaction; $Personality1$ = Time 1 personality, and $Perceived\ Success1$ = Time 1 perceived success)

For the following prediction analyses for adaptation experiences and value importance and satisfaction, the same procedure will be applied.

Life Satisfaction in the Overseas and Home Country Students

Separate regression analyses were carried out on the overseas and home country students in order to see if the predictors of life satisfaction were different between the two populations. In the overseas student population, life satisfaction after being 6 months or less abroad was predicted by life satisfaction before going for study (explained by 22.7% of variance), whilst the contributions of personality, value importance and satisfaction, and perceived success at Time 1 were non-significant (see Table 7.17 for the results).

For the home country students, their life satisfaction at the very beginning of their academic term (Time 1) attributed 31.6% of variance in their life satisfaction at Time 2. There was no change of variance when personality at Time 1 was added into the model. When Time 2 life satisfaction was regressed on value importance at Time 1, the variance changed significantly with a slight increase of 1.7%, contributed by low self-transcendence importance at Time 1. When value satisfaction at Time 1 was entered into the model, the variance change continued to increase, explaining altogether 38.1% of the variance. Embeddedness satisfaction

at Time 1 showed independent contribution to Time 2 life satisfaction and remained to be significant in the final model. However, perceived success at Time 1 did not predict the students' life satisfaction at Time 2. The final model accounted for 38.4% of the variance. Those who had higher life satisfaction at the beginning of the academic term, high degree of Openness, and rated less importance to self-transcendence values and being more satisfied by embeddedness values at Time 1, were significant predictors of life satisfaction at Time 2. These results are summarised in Table 7.18.

Table 7.17

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for Time 2 life satisfaction in the overseas student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)				
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
<i>Life satisfaction at Time 1</i>	.48***	.50***	.50***	.48***	.49***
<i>Personality</i>					
Extraversion		.09	.09	.08	.08
Agreeableness		-.03	-.04	-.01	-.02
Conscientiousness		.00	-.00	-.00	-.00
Neuroticism		.10	.10	.11	.11
Openness		-.01	-.01	-.01	-.02
<i>Value Importance</i>					
Embeddedness importance			.05	.07	.07
Self- transcendence importance			-.01	.01	.01
<i>Value satisfaction</i>					
Embeddedness satisfaction				.00	.01
Self- transcendence satisfaction				-.10	-.10
<i>Perceived success</i>					
GCSE result					-.03
English language fluency					.05
<i>R square</i>	.227	.240	.242	.250	.254
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.224	.218	.213	.214	.210
<i>R square change</i>	.227	.013	.002	.008	.003
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.620	.769	.323	.623

***p<.001

Table 7.18

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for time 2 life satisfaction in home country student population.

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)				
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
<i>Life satisfaction at Time 1</i>	.56***	.57***	.58***	.58**	.58***
<i>Personality</i>					
Extraversion		.06	.03	.05	.06
Agreeableness		-.07	-.07	-.07	-.08
Conscientiousness		-.04	-.02	-.02	-.03
Neuroticism		.02	.03	.05	.04
Openness		.13*	.13*	.12*	.12*
<i>Value Importance</i>					
Embeddedness importance			.07	-.02	-.02
Self- transcendence importance			-.14*	-.10	-.10
<i>Value satisfaction</i>					
Embeddedness satisfaction				.18**	.18**
Self- transcendence satisfaction				-.08	-.08
<i>Perceived success</i>					
English language fluency					-.00
GCSE result					-.06
<i>R square</i>	.316	.338	.355	.381	.384
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.316	.324	.336	.357	.356
<i>R square change</i>	.318	.020	.017	.026	.004
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.151	.032	.005	.471

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.00

ii. Does each of the predictor variables at Time 1 (positive affect before going for or at the very beginning of academic term, personality, value importance and satisfaction, and perceived success) predict positive affect after six months or less enrolling as undergraduate student (Time 2)?(RQ11-15)

Positive Affect Prediction in the Overseas and Home Country Students

In the overseas population, there was a consistent predictive pattern of positive affect and personality dimension of Conscientiousness at Time 1 towards the level of positive affect at Time 2, though adding up personality trait into the model did not actually contribute to the change in the variance. The rest of the models showed non-significant results of variance change. The results are presented in Table 7.19.

For the home country students, positive affect at Time 1 consistently predicted positive affect at Time 2, and in Step 1, it accounted for 34.9% of the variance. Personality, value importance and value satisfaction at Time 1 did not contribute to the changes of the variance. However, in Step 5, when Time 2 positive affect was regressed on Time 1 perceived success, the variance significantly increased. The final model was explained by 40.2% of variance in Time 2 positive affect. Low level of Agreeableness, embeddedness satisfaction, GCSE results, and high level of positive affect and embeddedness importance at Time 1 predicted the positive affect of the students after being approximately six months in the studies. The results are presented in Table 7.20.

Table 7.19

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for Time 2 positive affect in the overseas student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)				
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
<i>Positive affect at Time 1</i>	.41***	.34***	.34***	.35***	.35***
<i>Personality</i>					
Extraversion		.06	.06	.07	.06
Agreeableness		-.03	-.03	-.01	-.01
Conscientiousness		.16*	.16*	.16*	.16*
Neuroticism		.12	.11	.13	.13
Openness		.11	.11	.10	.09
<i>Value Importance</i>					
Embeddedness importance			.02	.07	.07
Self- transcendence importance			.00	.02	.02
<i>Value satisfaction</i>					
Embeddedness satisfaction				-.05	-.05
Self- transcendence satisfaction				-.11	-.11
<i>Perceived success</i>					
English language fluency					.04
GCSE result					.01
<i>R square</i>	.171	.213	.213	.227	.228
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.167	.189	.182	.188	.181
<i>R square change</i>	.171	.042	.000	.014	.002
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.059	.949	.178	.814

*p<.05, ***p<.001

Table 7.20

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for Time 2 positive affect in the home country student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)				
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
<i>Positive affect at Time 1</i>	.59***	.55***	.54***	.57***	.54***
<i>Personality</i>					
Extraversion		.02	.03	.02	.04
Agreeableness		-.12	-.14*	-.14*	-.15*
Conscientiousness		.03	.02	.02	.00
Neuroticism		-.06	-.07	-.08	-.08
Openness		.09	.11	.11	.12
<i>Value Importance</i>					
Embeddedness importance			.08	.13*	.13*
Self- transcendence importance			.01	-.02	-.03
<i>Value satisfaction</i>					
Embeddedness satisfaction				-.13*	-.13*
Self- transcendence satisfaction				.06	.05
<i>Perceived success</i>					
English language fluency					-.01

GCSE result					-.14*
<i>R square</i>	.345	.364	.370	.381	.399
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.343	.349	.349	.356	.369
<i>R square change</i>	.345	.019	.005	.012	.017
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.199	.342	.100	.031

*p<.05, ***p<.001

iii. Does each of the following predictor variables - negative affect, personality, value importance and satisfaction, and perceived success, measured at Time 1 (before the participants went for study or at the very beginning of academic term) predict negative affect after about six months or less enrolling as undergraduate students (Time 2)? (RQ3-6)

Negative Affect Prediction in the Overseas and Home Country Students

In the overseas population, Time 1 negative affect predicted the students' negative affect at Time 2. The variance did not change when the remaining predictor variables were entered into the model. The final model was explained by 20.4% of the variance. The results are presented in Table 7.21

For the home country students, only their negative affect at the beginning of the academic term predicted negative affect at Time 2, which accounted for 31.3% of the variance. When Time 2 negative affect was regressed on the Time 1 remaining predictor variables, the final model accounted for 34.8% of the variance. Although Time 1 personality did not contribute to the changes in negative affect, the personality trait Agreeableness consistently showed a significant contribution towards negative affect (see Table 7.22 for the results).

Table 7.21

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for Time 2 negative affect in the overseas student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)				
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
<i>Negative affect at Time 1</i>	.42***	.31**	.31**	.30**	.31**
<i>Personality</i>					
Extraversion		.04	.04	.03	.03
Agreeableness		-.05	-.06	-.07	-.07
Conscientiousness		.02	.02	.02	.02
Neuroticism		.18	.18	.18	.17
Openness		.06	.07	.07	.07
<i>Value Importance</i>					
Embeddedness importance			.00	-.02	-.02
Self- transcendence importance			.02	.02	.02
<i>Value satisfaction</i>					
Embeddedness satisfaction				.03	.04
Self- transcendence satisfaction				.01	.02
<i>Perceived success</i>					
English language fluency					.01
GCSE result					-.04
<i>R square</i>	.176	.201	.201	.203	.204
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.172	.178	.170	.163	.156
<i>R square change</i>	.176	.025	.001	.001	.002
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.283	.936	.875	.787

p<.01, *p<.001

Table 7.22

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for Time 2 negative affect in the home country student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)				
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
<i>Negative affect at Time 1</i>	.56***	.54***	.54***	.54***	.53***
<i>Personality</i>					
Extraversion		-.09	-.09	-.10	-.09
Agreeableness		.16*	.15*	.15*	.14*
Conscientiousness		-.06	-.07	-.06	-.07
Neuroticism		.03	.03	.04	.04
Openness		.04	.06	.06	.06
<i>Value Importance</i>					
Embeddedness importance			.05	.06	.05
Self- transcendence importance			.01	.06	.05
<i>Value satisfaction</i>					
Embeddedness satisfaction				-.01	-.02
Self- transcendence satisfaction				-.11	-.11
<i>Perceived success</i>					
English language fluency					-.03
GCSE result					-.05
<i>R square</i>	.313	.332	.334	.344	.348
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.310	.316	.314	.319	.318
<i>R square change</i>	.313	.019	.002	.010	.004
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.193	.616	.145	.426

*p<.05, ***p<.001

Summary

All the well-being indicators at Time 1 constantly became the most significant predictors of Time 2 well-being. Openness at Time 1 was the only personality trait that predicted life satisfaction for the home country students at Time 2. The contribution of satisfaction of embeddedness or conservation values at Time 1 in the home country students was found to be the only significant predictor of life satisfaction at Time 2.

Home students who were less agreeable, had poor academic achievement, less satisfied by their embeddedness or conservation values, and put greater importance to embeddedness

values at Time 1 predicted positive affect at Time 2. Meanwhile, the conscientious overseas students at Time 1 tended to have higher positive affect at Time 2.

The home country students with high level of Agreeableness at Time 1 were more likely to have higher negative affect at Time 2, showing a parallel trend to the previous finding with positive affect. Apart from the negative affect at Time 1, none of the predictors was found to be significant in the overseas student sample.

b. Multiple Regressions on Adaptation Experiences for the Overseas, and Home Country Student Populations

The following adaptation experiences, namely, missing and enjoyment, were regressed on six groups of predictor variables, which are described in each of the following general equations:

$$\text{Missing experience at Time 2} = b_0 + b_1 \text{Well-being}_{1i} + b_2 \text{Personality}_{1i} + b_3 \text{VIL}_{1i} + b_4 \text{VSL}_{1i} + b_5 \text{Perceived Success}_{1i} + b_6 \text{Parents' educational level}_{1i} + \epsilon_i$$

$$\text{Enjoyment experience at Time 2} = b_0 + b_1 \text{Well-being}_{1i} + b_2 \text{Personality}_{1i} + b_3 \text{VIL}_{1i} + b_4 \text{VSL}_{1i} + b_5 \text{Perceived Success}_{1i} + b_6 \text{Parents' educational level}_{1i} + \epsilon_i$$

- i. Does each of the following variables – well-being at Time 1, personality, Time 1 importance and satisfaction of values, perceived success, and parents' educational level, predict missing experience among the Malaysian students after being about six months or less away from home? (RQ14)*

Missing Experience for the Overseas and Home Country Students

Two separate analyses were conducted for the overseas and home country students in order to see whether the predictors for missing experience were different in the two populations. The first regression analysis was conducted on the overseas students only. The results showed that the well-being indicators at Time 1 contributed 7% of the variance in missing experience. Personality and value importance at Time 1 did not contribute any change to the variance. The following two predictors, namely, Time 1 values satisfaction and perceived success, accounted for an additional of 3.2% and 4.1% of the variance. When perceived success at Time 1 was entered into the model, the variance rose to 24.6%. In the final model, parents' educational level at Time 1 did not leave any effect on missing experience. However, high self-transcendence satisfaction, embeddedness importance, and low level of perceived English language fluency at Time 1 remained as significant predictors to missing experience amongst the overseas students. The results are summarised in Table 7.23.

A second regression analysis was conducted for the home country students. The results indicated that the well-being indicators at Time 1 explained 8.9% of the variance in missing experience. Personality traits at Time 1 also contributed an additional of 6.5% of the variance. None of the subsequent variables contributed to the change of the variance. In the final model, only negative affect at Time 1 remained as the significant predictor to missing experience amongst the home country students. The results are presented in Table 7.24.

Table 7.23

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for missing experience in the overseas student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction	.17*	.15	.13	.16	.12	.11
Positive affect	.06	.02	.02	.00	.03	.04
Negative affect	.24**	.22	.18	.13	.13	.12
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion		.07	.05	.04	.08	.08
Agreeableness		.15	.13	.07	.10	.10
Conscientiousness		.05	.03	.05	.02	-.00
Neuroticism		.13	.15	.15	.19	.19
Openness		.00	.02	.05	.07	.08
<i>Value Importance</i>						
Embeddedness importance			.20*	.16	.19*	.19*
Self- transcendence importance			-.10	-.14	-.15	-.13
<i>Value satisfaction</i>						
Embeddedness satisfaction				-.01	-.01	-.00
Self- transcendence satisfaction				.23**	.21*	.19*
<i>Perceived success</i>						
English language fluency					-.29***	-.28***
GCSE result					-.01	-.01
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						-.04
Mother's education level						-.10
<i>R square</i>	.070	.097	.129	.170	.246	.261
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.052	.048	.070	.101	.171	.177
<i>R square change</i>	.070	.027	.032	.041	.075	.016
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.011	.488	.070	.031	.001	.230

*p≤.05, **p≤.01, ***p<.001

Table 7.24

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for missing experience in the home country student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction	.14*	.11	.10	.11	.10	.11
Positive affect	.17**	.02	.01	.01	-.01	-.01
Negative affect	.16**	.21**	.21**	.20**	.21**	.21**
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion		.13	.13	.13	.17	.17
Agreeableness		.19*	.18*	.18*	.15	.15
Conscientiousness		.05	.05	.05	.04	.04
Neuroticism		.11	.11	.12	.12	.12
Openness		.05	.06	.06	.07	.07
<i>Value Importance</i>						
Embeddedness importance			.05	.02	.02	.02
Self-transcendence importance			-.03	-.04	-.05	-.05
<i>Value satisfaction</i>						
Embeddedness satisfaction				.07	.07	.06
Self-transcendence satisfaction				.03	.02	.02
<i>Perceived success</i>						
English language fluency					-.09	-.09
GCSE result					-.09	-.09
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						-.02
Mother's education level						.00
<i>R square</i>	.089	.153	.156	.161	.182	.182
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.077	.124	.119	.116	.131	.123
<i>R square change</i>	.089	.065	.002	.005	.021	.000
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.004	.729	.502	.057	.968

*p≤.05, **p≤.01

ii. *Does each of the following variables – well-being at Time 1, personality, importance and satisfaction of values, perceived success, and parents' educational level, predict enjoyment experiences among the Malaysian students after being about six months or less away from home? (RQ14)*

Enjoyment Experience for the Overseas and Home Country Students

Like the previous analyses on missing experience, two separate analyses were also conducted for the overseas and home country students in order to see whether the predictors for enjoyment

experience were different in the two populations. At first, regression analysis was conducted for the overseas students only. The results showed that the final model accounted for 12.9% of the variance. Each of the predictor variables did not contribute to the change of variance in enjoyment experience. However, students who rated themselves to be fluent in the English language prior to the undergoing overseas studies were likely to enjoy their overseas life. The results are presented in Table 7.25

A second regression analysis was conducted for the home country students only. The results showed that, in Step 1, well-being indicators at Time 1 significantly attributed 15.7% of the variance in enjoyment experience through the contribution of Time 1 life satisfaction and positive affect. The remaining of the predictor variables did not contribute any change to the variance in enjoyment experience. The results are presented in Table 7.26.

Table 7.25

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for enjoyment experience in the overseas student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction	.15	.14	.12	.12	.15	.15
Positive affect	.00	-.07	-.06	-.07	-.08	-.08
Negative affect	-.02	-.01	.05	-.05	-.03	-.04
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion		.06	.04	.02	-.00	-.00
Agreeableness		.08	.05	.05	.02	.03
Conscientiousness		.12	.11	.10	.11	.10
Neuroticism		.08	.10	.09	.07	.08
Openness		.08	.11	.12	.11	.11
<i>Value Importance</i>						
Embeddedness importance			.19*	.14	.12	.13
Self- transcendence importance			-.01	-.01	-.00	.01
<i>Value satisfaction</i>						
Embeddedness satisfaction				.10	.11	.11
Self- transcendence satisfaction				-.02	.00	-.01
<i>Perceived success</i>						
English language fluency					.17*	.18*
GCSE result					-.08	-.07

<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						-.03
Mother's education level						-.05
<i>R square</i>	.025	.056	.087	.094	.124	.129
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.009	.012	.034	.029	.050	.044
<i>R square change</i>	.025	.031	.031	.006	.031	.005
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.211	.347	.057	.560	.058	.617

*p<.05

Table 7.26

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for enjoyment experience in the home country student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction	.14*	.12	.11	.11	.10	.09
Positive affect	.23**	.13	.13	.14	.11	.11
Negative affect	-.033	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.01	-.01
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion		.05	.06	.06	.07	.08
Agreeableness		.12	.11	.11	.10	.10
Conscientiousness		.02	.01	.02	.01	.02
Neuroticism		.09	.08	.08	.07	.08
Openness		.07	.07	.09	.09	.08
<i>Value Importance</i>						
Embeddedness importance			.03	.03	.03	.02
Self- transcendence importance			.04	.04	.03	.04
<i>Value satisfaction</i>						
Embeddedness satisfaction				-.02	-.03	-.01
Self- transcendence satisfaction				-.03	-.03	-.03
<i>Perceived success</i>						
English language fluency					.05	-.00
GCSE result					-.13	-.13
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						.15
Mother's education level						-.01
<i>R square</i>	.091	.120	.121	.122	.134	.154
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.080	.089	.082	.076	.081	.094
<i>R square change</i>	.091	.029	.001	.001	.012	.020
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.190	.883	.860	.200	.074

*p≤.05, **p<.01

Summary

For the home country students, missing experience was predicted by the negative affect and high level of extraversion, whilst lack of the English language fluency and high degree of satisfaction of self-transcendence, as well as importance of embeddedness or conservation values significantly predicted missing experience in the overseas students.

Life satisfaction and English fluency predicted enjoyment experience amongst the Malaysian students regardless of studying abroad or at home. Being fluent in the English language would be a potential advantage to the overseas students in enjoying their life abroad.

c. Multiple Regressions on Importance and Satisfaction of Values for the Total Population, Overseas, and Home Country Students

“Are embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 2 predicted by Time 1 well-being indicators, importance and satisfaction of values, perceived success,, personality, and parents’ level of education in the overall, overseas and home country student populations?”
(RQ7)

Importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 2 were regressed on six groups of predictor variables, which are described in each of the following general equations:

$$\text{Embeddedness importance at Time 2} = b_0 + b_3VII_i + b_4VS1_i + b_1Well-being1_i + b_2Personality1_i + b_5Perceived\ Success1_i + b_6Parents' level\ of\ education_i + \epsilon_i$$

$$\text{Embeddedness satisfaction at Time 2} = b_0 + b_3VII_i + b_4VS1_i + b_1Well-being1_i + b_2Personality1_i + b_5Perceived\ Success1_i + b_6Parents' level\ of\ education_i + \epsilon_i$$

$$\text{Self-transcendence importance at Time 2} = b_0 + b_3VII_i + b_4VS1_i + b_1Well-being1_i + b_2Personality1_i + b_5Perceived\ Success1_i + b_6Parents' level\ of\ education_i + \epsilon_i$$

$$\text{Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 2} = b0 + b3VII_i + b4VS1_i + b1Well-being1_i + b2Personality1_i + b5Perceived Success1_i + b6Parents' level of education_i + \epsilon_i$$

Again, a separate analysis was run on overseas student and home country student populations.

Embeddedness Importance for the Overseas and Home Country Students

A regression analysis was firstly conducted for the overseas students. The results showed that the final model explained 20.8% of the variance in Time 2 embeddedness importance. Embeddedness importance at Time 1 consistently predicted embeddedness importance amongst the overseas students. The results are presented in Table 7.27.

A second regression analysis was conducted for the home country students. Time 1 embeddedness importance and satisfaction consistently contributed towards embeddedness importance at Time 2. In Step 3, Time 1 personality traits, especially Conscientiousness contributed an additional of 4.5% to the variance. The addition of other predictor variables to the model, namely, Time 1 well-being indicators and perceived success, as well as parents' educational level, did not contribute to the significant changes of the variance. In the final model, Time 2 embeddedness importance was explained by 22.7% of the variance. The results are presented in Table 7.28.

Table 7.27

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for embeddedness value importance in the overseas student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Embeddedness importance at Time 1	.40***	.32***	.30***	.30***	.31***	.31***
Embeddedness satisfaction at Time 1		.14	.16*	.15	.14	.14
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion			-.08	-.13	-.12	-.13
Agreeableness			.02	.01	.02	.02
Conscientiousness			.03	.02	.01	.02
Neuroticism			-.08	-.00	.01	.01
Openness			-.02	-.03	-.02	-.02
<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction				.04	.02	.02
Positive affect				.11	.11	.11
Negative affect				-.07	-.08	-.08
<i>Perceived success at Time 1</i>					-.06	-.07
English language fluency					.08	.07
GCSE result						
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						.06
Mother's education level						.01
<i>R square</i>	.157	.172	.183	.194	.203	.208
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.153	.163	.154	.152	.153	.149
<i>R square change</i>	.157	.015	.011	.011	.009	.005
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.059	.740	.461	.341	.552

Note: * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Table 7.28

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for embeddedness value importance in the home country student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Embeddedness importance at Time 1	.39***	.32**	.26***	.26***	.26***	.25***
Embeddedness satisfaction at Time 1		.15*	.14*	.13*	.13*	.14*
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion			-.01	-.03	-.04	-.03
Agreeableness			.12	.11	.11	.11
Conscientiousness			.18*	.15	.16	.16
Neuroticism			.09	.10	.11	.11
Openness			-.05	-.07	-.06	-.07
<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction				.01	.01	.01
Positive affect				.10	.11	.11
Negative affect				-.02	-.03	-.03

<i>Perceived success at Time 1</i>						
English language fluency					-.04	-.06
GCSE result					.07	.08
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						.07
Mother's education level						-.01
<i>R square</i>	.151	.169	.214	.220	.224	.227
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.148	.162	.192	.188	.185	.182
<i>R square change</i>	.151	.017	.045	.005	.004	.003
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.022	.016	.642	.524	.613

Note: * $p \leq .05$, *** $p < .001$

Embeddedness Satisfaction for the Overseas and Home Country Students

A second regression analysis was conducted for the overseas students. The results showed that the final model accounted for only 0.6% of the variance in Time 2 embeddedness satisfaction. None of the indicated variables predicted embeddedness satisfaction at Time 2 amongst the overseas students. The results are presented in Table 7.29.

A third regression analysis was conducted for the home country students. In the first model, Time 1 embeddedness satisfaction significantly predicted embeddedness satisfaction at Time 2 (explained by 2.8% of the variance). However, after embeddedness importance at Time 1 was added to the model, none of the predictor variables was significant. In Step 3, the variance dramatically increased to 13.1% after personality traits at Time 1 were entered into the model. The significant contributions of the Time 1 personality traits came primarily from Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Extraversion. For the following models, only high level of Agreeableness and low level of Extraversion at Time 1 steadily predicted Time 2 embeddedness satisfaction. The final model contributed 15.4% of the variance in Time 2 embeddedness value satisfaction. The summary of the results are presented in Table 7.30.

Table 7.29

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for embeddedness value satisfaction in the overseas student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Embeddedness satisfaction at Time 1	.08	.10	.11	.10	.09	.09
Embeddedness importance at Time 1		-.04	-.10	-.10	-.09	-.09
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion			-.10	-.13	-.13	-.13
Agreeableness			.11	.10	.11	.10
Conscientiousness			.03	.02	.02	.02
Neuroticism			-.03	-.02	-.01	-.01
Openness			-.10	-.13	-.13	-.13
<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction				.03	.02	.02
Positive affect				.12	.12	.13
Negative affect				.03	.02	.02
<i>Perceived success at Time 1</i>						
English language fluency					-.03	-.03
GCSE result					.05	.05
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						-.06
Mother's education level						.08
<i>R square</i>	.006	.007	.038	.050	.053	.056
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.001	-.002	.004	.001	-.006	-.013
<i>R square change</i>	.006	.001	.031	.012	.003	.003
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.270	.598	.273	.500	.724	.768

Table 7.30

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for embeddedness value satisfaction in the home country student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Embeddedness satisfaction at Time 1	.17**	.12	.11	.11	.11	.11
Embeddedness importance at Time 1		.10	-.02	-.05	-.05	-.05
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion			-.15*	-.18*	-.18*	-.19*
Agreeableness			.27**	.26**	.26**	.26**
Conscientiousness			.19*	.14	.14	.14
Neuroticism			.12	.11	.11	.10
Openness			-.11	-.14	-.14	-.14
<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction				.10	.10	.10
Positive affect				.10	.09	.09
Negative affect				.02	.03	.03

<i>Perceived success at Time 1</i>					.03	.02
English language fluency					-.03	-.04
GCSE result						
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						-.00
Mother's education level						-.06
<i>R square</i>	.028	.036	.131	.150	.151	.154
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.024	.028	.106	.115	.109	.104
<i>R square change</i>	.028	.008	.095	.019	.001	.003
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.008	.155	.000	.143	.849	.685

Note: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

Self-transcendence Importance in the Overseas and Home Country Students

A second regression analysis was conducted for the overseas students. The results showed that the final model accounted for 23.3% of the variance in Time 2 self-transcendence importance, which was contributed by the self-transcendence importance at Time 1. The results are presented in Table 7.31.

A third regression analysis was conducted for the home country students. In the first model, Time 1 self-transcendence importance significantly predicted self-transcendence importance at Time 2 (explained by 21.6% of the variance). Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 1 did not contribute any change to the variance. In Step 3, there was a significant increase of variance (4.3%) after personality traits at Time 1 were entered into the model. The significant contributions of the personality traits came primarily from Agreeableness. None of the contributions of variance in the last three models was significant. The final model accounted for 28.2% of the variance in Time 2 self-transcendence importance. The results are summarised in Table 7.32.

Table 7.31

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for self-transcendence importance in the overseas student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Self-transcendence importance at Time 1	.42***	.40***	.39***	.38***	.38***	.38***
Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 1		.07	.06	.05	.05	.05
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion			-.02	-.05	-.05	-.05
Agreeableness			.09	.06	.07	.07
Conscientiousness			-.10	-.12	-.12	-.12
Neuroticism			.04	.06	.06	.06
Openness			-.02	-.05	-.04	-.04
<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction				.11	.10	.10
Positive affect				.13	.13	.14
Negative affect				.06	.05	.05
<i>Perceived success at Time 1</i>						
English language fluency					-.07	-.07
GCSE result					.03	.03
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						-.06
Mother's education level						.06
<i>R square</i>	.178	.183	.196	.225	.231	.233
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.174	.175	.168	.185	.183	.176
<i>R square change</i>	.178	.004	.013	.029	.006	.002
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.296	.658	.066	.483	.810

Note: *** $p < .001$

Table 7.32

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for self-transcendence importance in the home country student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Self-transcendence importance at Time 1	.46***	.45***	.40***	.39***	.39***	.38***
Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 1		.02	.01	.01	.01	.02
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion			-.02	-.06	-.06	-.05
Agreeableness			.19**	.18*	.18*	.18*
Conscientiousness			.06	.06	.05	.05
Neuroticism			-.01	.03	.03	.03
Openness			-.07	-.07	-.06	-.07

<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction				.05	.04	.04
Positive affect				.03	.01	.01
Negative affect				-.10	-.09	-.09
<i>Perceived success at Time 1</i>						
English language fluency					.03	.06
GCSE result					-.07	-.05
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						-.04
Mother's education level						-.10
<i>R square</i>	.216	.216	.259	.267	.270	.282
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.212	.210	.238	.236	.234	.240
<i>R square change</i>	.216	.000	.043	.008	.003	.012
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.720	.016	.459	.575	.140

Note: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p < .001$

Self-transcendence Satisfaction in the overseas and home country student population

A second regression analysis was conducted for the overseas students. Time 1 Self-transcendence satisfaction accounted 11% of the variance in satisfaction of self-transcendence at Time 2. The importance for self-transcendence values at Time 1 did not contribute any change to the variance. In Step 3, when personality at Time 1 was entered into the model, the variance change became significant. In the last three models, no changes were observed. The final model accounted for 21.4% of the variance in self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 2. Self-transcendence satisfaction and low level of Extraversion and Conscientiousness at Time 1 predicted self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 2. The results are presented in Table 7.33.

A third regression analysis was conducted for the home country students. Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 1 accounted 8.3% of the variance in Time 2 self-transcendence satisfaction. The variance increased when Time 1 self-transcendence importance and personality were entered in Step 2 and Step 3, respectively. No change in the variance revealed when Time 2 Self-transcendence satisfaction was regressed on Time 1 well-being indicators in Step 4. In Step 5, the variance slightly increased when perceived success variables at Time 1 were entered into the model. The final model was explained by 20.6% of the variance

in self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 2. Self-transcendence important and satisfaction, Agreeableness and the English language fluency at Time 1 contributed significantly to self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 2. The results are presented in Table 7.34.

Table 7.33

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for self-transcendence satisfaction in the overseas student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 1	.33***	.33***	.32***	.30***	.30***	.30***
Self-transcendence importance at Time 1		-.01	-.05	-.03	-.03	-.04
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion			-.31***	-.33***	-.33***	-.34***
Agreeableness			.11	.12	.13	.13
Conscientiousness			-.15*	-.16*	-.16*	-.16*
Neuroticism			-.12	-.12	-.12	-.12
Openness			.08	.04	.05	.04
<i>Well-being indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction				-.06	-.07	-.07
Positive affect				.12	.12	.12
Negative affect				.03	.03	.03
<i>Perceived success at Time 1</i>						
English language fluency					-.01	-.01
GCSE result					.04	.04
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						-.02
Mother's education level						.04
<i>R square</i>	.110	.110	.202	.211	.213	.214
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.105	.101	.174	.171	.164	.156
<i>R square change</i>	.110	.000	.093	.009	.002	.001
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.906	.001	.529	.797	.904

Note: * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Table 7.34

Multiple regression results of predictor variables for self-transcendence satisfaction in the home country student population

Predictor variables	Standardised coefficients (Beta)					
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Self-transcendence satisfaction at Time 1	.29***	.17**	.16*	.16*	.16*	.16*
Self-transcendence importance at Time 1		.24***	.18**	.19**	.21**	.20**
<i>Personality</i>						
Extraversion			.01	.01	-.02	-.02
Agreeableness			.21**	.20*	.22**	.22**
Conscientiousness			.08	.05	.05	.05
Neuroticism			.06	.06	.04	.04
Openness			-.10	-.12	-.13	.04
<i>Wellbeing indicators at time 1</i>						
Life satisfaction				-.03	-.03	-.03
Positive affect				.07	.06	.06
Negative affect				.01	.02	.02
<i>Perceived success at Time 1</i>						
English language fluency					.16*	.18**
GCSE result					-.02	-.01
<i>Parents' education level</i>						
Father's education level						-.05
Mother's education level						-.06
<i>R square</i>	.083	.127	.175	.179	.199	.206
<i>Adjusted R square</i>	.080	.120	.151	.145	.159	.159
<i>R square change</i>	.083	.044	.048	.004	.020	.007
<i>Sig. F change</i>	.000	.000	.017	.775	.053	.360

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p < .001$

Summary

Apart from the Time 1 embeddedness importance, satisfaction of embeddedness values at Time 1 appeared to be the only other significant predictor amongst the home country students; whereas no significant results were found in overseas students. This implies that traditional values, such as respect for customs and traditions, are more dominant in the life of the home country students compared to the overseas students.

In the separate analysis, only the results of high level of Agreeableness and low level of Extraversion at Time 1 were found to be significant and replicated in the home country students. These two personality traits corresponded well to the nature of embeddedness values. Being agreeable and more reserved in personality induce the tendency of becoming more cooperative and compliant with rules and regulations in the society, which encourages harmonious life within the society.

Time 1 importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values showed significant effects in all populations of the students in predicting self-transcendence importance and satisfaction, respectively, after an approximate six months of studying period. Agreeableness at Time 1 was also indicated as a significant predictor towards the importance of self-transcendence values at Time 2 in home country students.

Time 2 satisfaction of self-transcendence values was also predicted by the low levels of Extraversion and Conscientiousness at Time 1 in the overseas students, indicating that persons with reserved and easy-going personality might be able to embrace and satisfied by self-transcendence values. For the home country students, the predictors for Time 2 satisfaction of self-transcendence values were Time 1 Agreeableness, fluency of the English language, and importance of self-transcendence values. As discussed in Chapter 6, self-transcendence and embeddedness values are indicated to be positively related with one another; it is not possible that the personality trait of Agreeableness at Time 1 showed the same magnitude in predicting satisfaction of self-transcendence values at Time 2. Being capable of using the English language at Time 1 will enable one to interact easily with people from wider community and different cultures, thus, this makes them more wary about global needs and actions.

7.6.4 Attrition analysis

In longitudinal research, attrition of participants is common, yet it raises a special concern to the findings. Attrition analysis is performed in order to provide an information on whether or not there is a bias in the sample by comparing participants who stay until the end of the study and those who withdraw from the study on a variable at the first data collection. Significant difference that exists between the two sample groups, suggests that bias has already occurred in the sample (Deeg, 2002), and consequently will add limitations to the generalisability of findings.

In this study a t-test was run on to test whether there were variations in the group. Participants were divided into two: i.e. those responding to both Time 2 and Time 1 data collection (Group 1), and those who responded only in Time 1 (Group 0). Results showed that the students who responded to the study at both times scored higher in positive affect, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, as well as importance and satisfaction of both embeddedness and self-transcendence values, compared to the students who responded only at Time 1. Whilst, the students who responded only at Time 1 scored higher in English language fluency and GSCE results. Therefore, it is concluded that attrition bias has already occurred in these variables. These results suggest that there are limitations in the generalisability of findings that are related to the variables. Table 7.35 displays the attrition analysis results.

Table 7.35

T-test results for differences between students who responded at both time 1 and 2 (labelled as Group '1') and students who responded at Time 1 only (labelled as Group '0') in all of the Time 1 variables that are being studied.

Variable name	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t-value	Sig. 2-tail
Life satisfaction	1	623	22.24	5.36	2067	.65	.52
	0	1446	22.07				
Positive affect	1	601	37.31	5.65	2010	2.14	.03
	0	1411	36.71				
Negative affect	1	609	28.19	7.87	2030	-.001	1.00
	0	1423	28.19				
Extraversion	1	597	27.31	4.99	1982	-1.38	.17
	0	1387	27.65				
Agreeableness	1	597	35.98	4.95	2001	3.75	.00
	0	1406	35.07				
Conscientiousness	1	597	31.75	4.91	1999	2.53	.01
	0	1404	31.75				
Neuroticism	1	608	22.34	5.24	2034	-.69	.49
	0	1428	22.51				
Openness	1	594	33.45	4.50	2001	-1.08	.28
	0	1409	33.68				
Embeddedness satisfaction	1	615	1.78	.63	2050	2.66	.01
	0	1437	1.69				
Self-transcendence satisfaction	1	615	-.67	.68	2050	3.78	.00
	0	1437	-.79				
Embeddedness importance	1	619	1.83	.57	2062	1.93	.05
	0	1445	1.78				
Self-transcendence importance	1	619	-.68	.70	2062	3.58	.00
	0	1445	-.80				
English language fluency	1	623	5.74	1.92	1265.59	-3.89	.00
	0	1453	6.08				
GSCE result	1	626	42.61	9.98	2065	-5.58	.00
	0	1446	45.30				

**Note: Attrition bias is displayed in shaded cells.*

7.7 Conclusion

In general, the overseas Malaysian students seemed to have better well-being compared to the home country students. Furthermore, the overseas students were less likely to miss home compared to the home country students. Both groups of students seemed to be in favour of self-enhancement values after being six months or less in their studies (Time 2), which could be a

result of being inspired by the university aspirations and the surrounding environment. The students' level of well-being at the beginning of the study term or at the time prior to departure for overseas studies (Time 1) was the strongest predictor of their well-being after a few months attending the university. Personality and values at Time 1 did not show much effect to the well-being at Time 2. Nonetheless, the home country students who were more open-minded and less agreeable at Time 1 displayed higher well-being at Time 2, whilst the overseas students who were more conscientious at Time 1 tended to have greater positive affect at Time 2. Those with high scores in the importance and satisfaction of both types of values and Agreeableness, as well as low scores on Extraversion at Time 1, tended to cling on and be satisfied by those values at Time 2.

Although values did not contribute much to the well-being of these Malaysian students, adherence to embeddedness values somewhat contributed to the increase of well-being amongst the home country students. In general, the students who perceived themselves as 'low-achievers' in the previous GCSE tended to have low well-being. Moreover, being fluent in English would be beneficial for all college students as the language is being widely used at tertiary level of education and is especially important for overseas students in order to adapt well in the new English speaking background. Some results were found to be opposite to the theory and past findings that needed careful explanation (e.g. Agreeableness at Time 1 was found to be correlated positively with negative affect and missing experience at Time 2). Small effect sizes were found in the mean differences between Time 1 and Time 2 in well-being and values variables. Detailed discussions on the results of this study are provided in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8

Discussion and Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

In summary, the research examines the predictors of subjective well-being of the Malaysian students in overseas and home country universities after spending about six months in their studies (Time 2). Additionally, the research investigates the predictors of the adaptation experiences, as well as the importance and satisfaction of values at Time 2 in these samples of students. Some results in Chapter 7 were found to be unsurprising. Students' well-being and values at Time 1 predicted their well-being and values at Time 2. These results are in accord with the literature reviews that subjective well-being is consistent across situations and stable across life span, even after the occurrence of intervening life events (Diener & Lucas, 1999), and with the stability of subjective well-being as echoed in the set-point theory by Lykken and Tellegen (1996). In the set-point theory, individuals have their own stable levels of subjective well-being, governed by genetics and personality (Nowok, van Ham, Findlay and Gayle, 2011). Major life changes may deviate the set-points of the individuals' level of subjective well-being. However, the deviations are momentary that the well-being levels will return to their original points. Similarly, value importance and satisfaction were found to be stable across times. However, satisfaction of embeddedness values at Time 1 did not predict the satisfaction of embeddedness values at Time 2 in either home country or overseas students. This implies that priority might have been given to values that are less conventional which are more dominant

in the environment at Time 2. For example, holding onto values that promote independent thought and action, and novelty, would help one more in the academic context. Therefore, to be satisfied by embeddedness values at Time 2 may not be crucial enough in the adaptation to the current life. This final chapter presents an in-depth discussion of the results in Chapter 7, the implications of results for theory and practice, limitations of the study and research problems, recommendations for future research, as well as a conclusion.

8.2. Discussions based on the results in Chapter 7

In order to facilitate the discussion in this chapter, the framework for the follow-up study at Time 2 as demonstrated in Figure 7.1 is presented again.

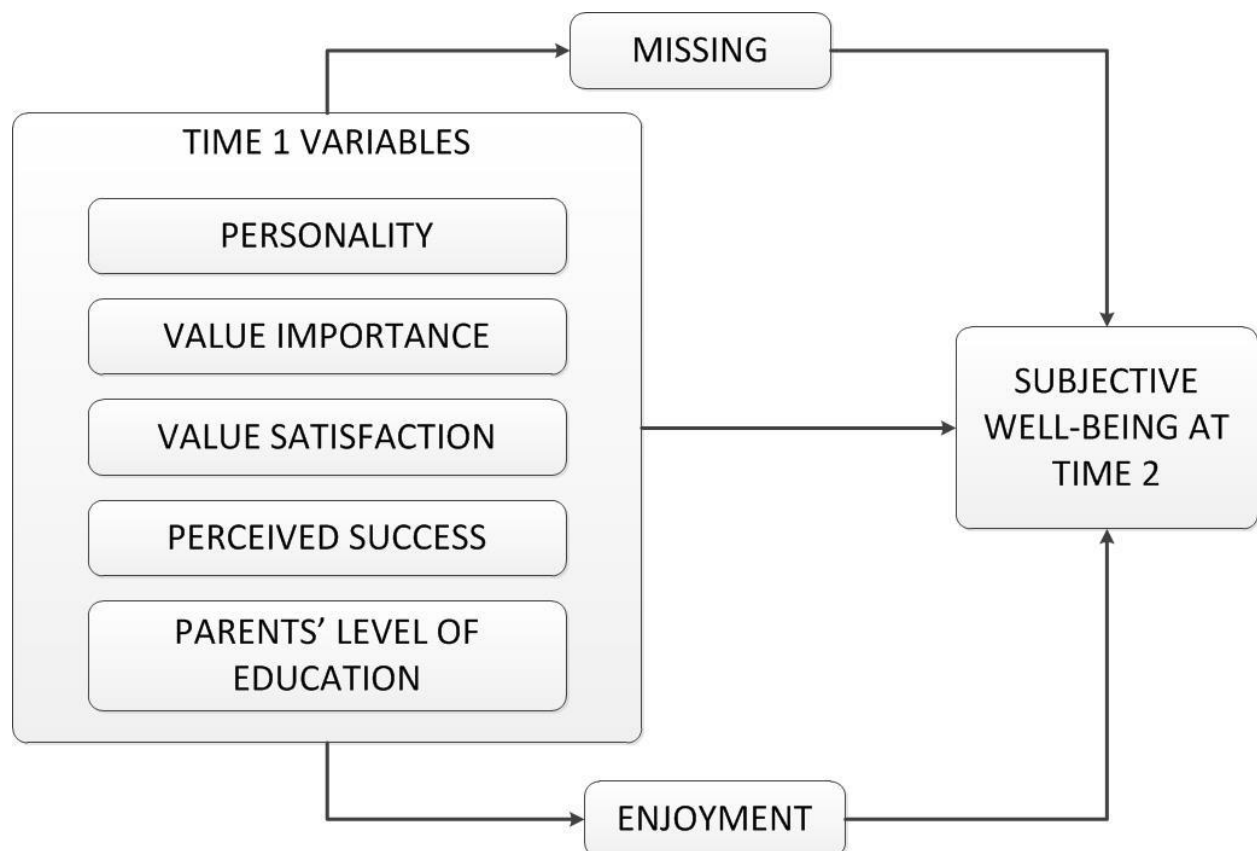


Figure 7.1: Framework of follow-up study at Time 2

8.2.1 Changes in well-being

Life satisfaction and negative affect changed over time as a function of overseas/home experiences. In the overseas students, the life satisfaction increased from Time 1 to Time 2. The home country students' life satisfaction started higher than the overseas students at Time 1, but the level of their life satisfaction was held constant at Time 2. The level of negative affect for overseas students started higher at Time 1 compared to the home country students, and decreased at Time 2. In contrast, the level of negative affect for the home country students started lower at Time 1, but increased at Time 2.

At Time 1, the overseas students were probably undergoing a difficult life as they were preparing for their final examination that would determine their eligibility to continue their studies overseas. At Time 2, the overseas experience might have brought a new excitement that had never been experienced by most of the overseas students. Being accepted as a student at an overseas higher learning institution could mean 'a dream come true', which may act as a booster to the students' life satisfaction, as well as reducing negative thoughts and emotions. The increasing levels of subjective well-being in the overseas students after being 6 months abroad indicate that the students were probably still at their 'euphoria stage'. This is opposite to Markovizky and Samid's (2008) findings amongst the new immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Israel whereby the first day to 5 months of migration is known as the deterioration stage, and the period between 5 to 11 months is described as the low well-being stage.

On the contrary, at Time 1 the home-country students were probably less stressed compared to the overseas students because at the time when they were first approached it was the orientation week and they had not begun any lessons yet. As studies progressed, they probably encountered homesickness, which might increase their level of negative affect.

The difference between the levels of well-being between these two groups of students may also be explained by the extent to which their migration decision is voluntary. The overseas students in this study were mostly the recipients of the Malaysian government's scholarships after successfully going through a tough selection process to be in the sponsored studying programme. The determination shown in undergoing this process indicates a voluntary decision to migrate which may contribute to better well-being amongst the students involved (Nowok et al., 2011). In contrast, the home country students whose previous academic achievement was rather less excellent than the overseas students were perhaps left with limited options in selecting the suitable courses and institutions. The institution they were enrolling in currently might not be their best choice, thus fitting them into the category of 'tied migrants' as described by Nowok et al. (2011) which may eventually contribute to their low well-being.

On the other hand, positive affect did not change over time as a function of home/overseas experiences. Overseas students had consistently lower positive affect at Time 1 and Time 2 compared to the home country students. This indicates that the overseas higher education experience, either at preparatory stage or the actual experience of studying abroad, is tougher than the local experience. Past studies have highlighted that overseas students would have difficulties in adjusting to cross-cultural demands, such as selecting effective coping skills, getting social support, and being tolerant to the incongruence of values (e.g. Khawaja & Dempsey, 2008).

The situational factors may offer another explanation for the findings described above. The time when the overseas students were approached for the first time was crucial in that it collided with the students' preparation for the final examination that would determine their eligibility for continuing their studies abroad under the enrolled government-sponsored programme. The pressure had probably kept mounting as they had to think of the arrangement for the overseas departure and the adaptation which they would have to make once they were

abroad. Brown and Aktas's (2011) study supports this view, whereby they discovered that students who were about to leave for studies abroad would experience a pre-departure anxiety. From their in-depth interviews with 11 exchange-programme Turkish students who were about to continue their studies in a European university, they found that these students encountered several symptoms of culture shock, namely: fear of loneliness and isolation, missing of familiar diet, worry about the quality of accommodation and language ability, and adopting a defensive stance as a fear of being undermined by the prejudice and stereotype as they came from a less developed and Muslim country. Similarly, Ward, Okura, Kennedy and Kojima (1998) found that the greatest psychological and socio-cultural adaptation difficulties for Japanese students in New Zealand were experienced at the entry point (24 hours of arrival). Adjustment difficulties decreased between the entry point and after four months of overseas experience, while psychological and socio-cultural adjustments increased over time, especially after one year of being abroad (Ward et al., 1998).

8.2.2 Changes in values

The importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values did not change over time as a function of home/overseas experiences. However, the overseas students consistently rated the importance of embeddedness values much lower than the home-country students. This probably indicates that students with the intention to further their studies overseas may have already inclined towards values that are more dominant in the country they wish to go for studies. In this case, these students are going for a Western higher education, and values that attach more to the culture, such as being open to new ideas and change, may probably be given priority.

On the other hand, the importance and satisfaction of self-transcendence values seemed to be decreasing over time for both groups of students, implying their inclination towards self-enhancement values. The university's aspirations of producing excellent graduates in academic and non-academic attainments may cultivate a sense of achievement motivation amongst these students. The university environment may also offer a new self-gratification experience to these young people, which may encourage them to cling more to hedonistic values. For the home-country students, the excitement may derive from the co-curriculum courses that they have to join, which are part of their study credits. Although the enrolment in the co-curriculum courses is mandatory, the fact that they are offered a variety of options for the co-curriculum activities may have already given them a thrill. In addition, university has also been a place where talent in leadership is refined, which to some extent encourages more towards self-enhancement values.

For the overseas students, being abroad for the first time may be an important factor for their joyfulness as they can have a first-hand experience of a variety of self-indulgent activities, which most probably are very different from the ones at home. Therefore, these unique experiences over the six-month period of studies may have some effects on the value change. This result is opposite to Caprara, Alessandri and Eisenberg's (2011) finding, in which self-transcendence values increased over time amongst 340 young adults in Italy. However, in the study by Caprara et al. (2011) the value change was assessed after a four-year period on two occasions of data collection (i.e. mean age was 21 at Time 1, and 25 at Time 2). The value change was suggested to be influenced more by life-changing events than age, which to some extent may also be the case for the Malaysian students.

8.2.3 Adaptation Experiences between the Overseas and Home-country Students

Although it is well-documented in previous research that overseas students suffer from homesickness more than the local students, it was found, surprisingly, in the current study that the home-country students scored higher in missing experiences than the overseas students; however, no difference was found for enjoyment experience. This result could lend support to the earlier finding that the level of negative affect of the home students increased after being approximately six months in their studies, which was also higher compared to their overseas counterpart. The data for home country students was collected in the Malaysian public university in the city of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah (which is located in Borneo). These students came from different regions and cultural backgrounds of Malaysia and may have never been to any parts of Borneo or interacted with people in that region. They may have inadequate knowledge about the diverse culture of Borneo and the kind of university life they would lead, which contributed to the anxious feelings amongst the home-country students, especially for those who were from the Peninsular Malaysia.

A majority (more than 80%) of the home-country students had no experience of being abroad; thus, adapting themselves to independent living in a new place which is miles away from family may not be easy. Such an anxiety may not be faced by the Peninsular Malaysian students only, but also by some local students from rural areas of Sabah. Those who come from this area would have to deal with the poor transportation system which makes the accessibility to a big city like Kota Kinabalu a painstaking experience. Hence, limited interaction with outsiders is likely to occur, which may cause a lot of anxieties when meeting with new people in the future and slow down the process of adapting to the university's multicultural life later on.

Compared to the overseas students, the home-country students could be left with limited opportunities for pleasure-seeking activities at the university, which may result in a less exciting life. Furthermore, they may also easily fall into boredom with their surroundings, which may prompt them to miss home. On the other hand, the overseas students may perceive the experience of being abroad as one of the priceless moments in their lives, which only comes once in a life time. They may miss home, but the excitement upon experiencing life abroad may have superseded the feelings of missing home.

Apparently, the current results are opposite to the previous findings, whereby international students are somewhat disadvantaged compared to domestic peers (e.g. Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen & Van Horn, 2002; Jose, et al., 2007). However, international students who are culturally similar to or less culturally distant from their local counterparts may have greater well-being. Jose et al. (2007) found that the Western international students reported less psychological adaptation compared to their domestic New Zealand peers. The researchers suggested the exposure to the Kiwi culture prior to the studies might have prepared the students for the cultural expectations in New Zealand. Moreover, being in a country (New Zealand) that has already won the hearts of many of these students may keep their stress levels down and lead to relatively lower incidence of psychological problems in comparison with domestic peers.

8.2.4 The Relationships between Adaptation Experiences and Well-being Indicators at Time 2, Time 1 Personality Traits, Importance and Satisfaction of Values at Time 2, Perceived Success, and Parents' Level of Education

a. Adaptation Experience and Time 1 Personality traits

Students who were agreeable, conscientious, open-minded, and extroverted at Time 1 tended to enjoy their life at Time 2. The positive correlations with these personality traits reflect the nature of the traits of predisposing individuals with positive feelings and behaviours. Past studies have shown that these personality traits associate with a positive experience abroad (e.g. Feng, 2012; Huang, Chi & Lawler, 2005). Ward, et al., (2004) demonstrated that the expatriates in Singapore and the Singaporeans themselves who have the characters of being extroverted, agreeable, conscientious and less neurotic would adjust better to the cross-cultural demand in the country.

Surprisingly, the missing experience was also found to be associated positively with Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Extroversion, and showed a non-significant association with Neuroticism. These results contradict Poyrazli, Thukral and Duru's (2010) findings amongst 613 international students from a U.S. university in an online survey. They found that Neuroticism correlated with overall acculturative stress and its subscales, namely: discrimination, homesickness, fear and perceived hate/rejection. In this study Openness unexpectedly displayed a positive relationship with homesickness. The researchers suggested that an unsatisfying level of interaction with people in the host country might make the students who are open to new experience feel homesick.

b. Adaptation Experience and Well-being

In this study, the students who encountered negative adaptation experiences at Time 2 also reported higher life satisfaction and positive affect at Time 2. Enjoyment correlated more strongly to positive affect and life satisfaction at Time 2 ($r = .41$ and $.27$ respectively) compared to missing experiences (r ranged from $.16$ to $.21$) so that it might have caused a spill-over effect on the overall adaptation process whereby the greater missing and enjoyment reported by the students, the higher the levels of their life satisfaction and positive affect at Time 2 were.

In order to understand the relationship between the students' missing experiences and the levels of their well-being at Time 2, the classic idea underlying the hedonic treadmill model could be used. According to this theory, a person will quickly react to his or her current life events regardless of a happy or sad event, but in a short time will return to neutrality (Brickman & Campbell, 1971, in Diener, Lucas & Scollon, 2006). This is related to Brickman and Campbell's suggestion:

"...one's emotion system adjusts to one's current life circumstances and that all reactions are relative to one's prior experience" (in Diener, et al., 2006, p. 305).

However, this theory has been criticised by Diener, et al. (2006) when they claim that individuals have multiple set-points of happiness which move in different directions rather than a unitary concept with a single set-point to which people adapt. Their argument supports the unexpected positive relationships found in missing experience with positive affect and life satisfaction. Apart from the biological point-of view, there is also a possible cognitive explanation for this. A cognitive process called "counterfactual thinking" (imagining how things could have been worse or better) could also explain this situation (Koo, Algoe, Wilson & Gilbert, 2008). This process describes how, after a person mentally subtracts negative events from his or her life, he or she will report a better mood,

known as the ‘affective contrast effect’. It is argued that a contrast effect tends to occur when the counterfactual event is operated as a point of reference against which to evaluate its present situations (e.g. “I could have failed the exam; getting a C wasn’t so bad after all”) (in Koo et al., 2008, p. 1218). Hence, the students in this study may still report experiencing high positive affect and life satisfaction at Time 2, despite reporting high missing experience.

This type of correlation between positive affect and negative-emotion experiences may has a connection with cultural factors (Minkov, 2009). In Minkov’s (2009) literature review, he found some research reporting that the relationships between positive and negative affect in most nations were negative, except in some East Asian societies, where the relationships were not significant or weakly and positively correlated.

c. Adaptation Experience and Values

People who lead their lives by conservation values may feel something missing in their lives when they move to a new place where the values are opposite to their own and develop friendship with people who do not live by the same values. Therefore, this could be a reasonable explanation for the positive association between the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness values and missing experience at Time 2. As self-transcendence values are less dominant than embeddedness values in Malaysian society, the relationship between the values and adaptation experiences at Time 2 did not exist.

d. Adaptation Experience and Perceived Success

Results showed that students who had good grades in GSCE and perceived themselves to be fluent in English tended to report less missing experiences. Those who find enjoyment in the new life of being an undergraduate student may see this as an opportunity for further self-development; thus, keeping them committed to their academic endeavours.

8.2.5 Predicting Well-being (Life Satisfaction, Positive Affect and Negative Affect at Time 2)

a. Importance and Satisfaction of Values at Time 1 as a predictor of well-being at Time 2

Based on the results, greater life satisfaction at Time 2 is experienced when one has higher satisfaction of embeddedness values and lower satisfaction of self-transcendence values at Time 1. The prediction of embeddedness satisfaction at Time 1 is expected, in which embeddedness values, such as respect for tradition including customs and religion, and restraining action or inclinations towards violating social norms, have long been ingrained in Malaysians' upbringing system. Adherence to such values is expected among Malaysians, whereas disregard of these values would bring conflict within the individual self and society. Therefore, being satisfied by embeddedness values would increase satisfaction in life among these Malaysian students. In comparison to the overseas students, the home-country students are presumed to have less exposure to values opposite to conservation ideas; thus, holding them tighter to embeddedness values.

Similarly, Karabati and Cemalcilar (2010) found that the Turkish college students, who scored higher on self-enhancement and openness values, showed lower satisfaction with life. They suggested that the mismatch between self-enhancement values, namely, self-direction and universalism, and the dominant values of the Turkish people, which rest more on conservation values, brings more negative effects to its people. They further added that the students with more conservative values were more likely to fit in and enjoy the supportive atmosphere of their environment, whilst those with self-enhancement values were likely to encounter a sense of isolation due to their values.

In the present study, the low satisfaction of self-transcendence values also indicates greater satisfaction of self-enhancement values. In a student's life, academic achievement is an important marker for self-enhancement. Therefore, students who are highly satisfied by their self-enhancement values seem to be highly satisfied with their lives. Although the present study shows insignificant results in the effect of self-transcendence values at Time 1 on the life satisfaction of both groups of students at Time 2, the overseas students with low satisfaction in self-transcendence values at Time 1 showed a better tendency towards life satisfaction after being abroad (Time 2) as compared to their home-country counterparts, as self-enhancement values are more dominant in Western countries.

Similar to life satisfaction, putting higher importance on embeddedness values at Time 1 predicted higher positive affect at Time 2 in the home-country students. Embeddedness values that are tied down to traditional values, such as keeping the group in harmony by abiding by rules and traditions, are part of the national values injected into the co-curricular activities of public learning institutions in Malaysia. In contrast, overseas students could probably not be bothered by these values as the overseas life is much tougher, which prompts them to focus more on their own survival in the immediate environment.

However, for the home-country students, those who were less satisfied by embeddedness values at Time 1 tended to have a higher positive affect at Time 2. The possible explanation for this is that these students who used to fulfil goals related more to openness to change values (i.e. the opposite of embeddedness values) which matched with their self-development needs at that particular time, are prone to have higher well-being in the future whereby similar values are promoted. Individuals whose values are congruent with the dominant values in the community may have better well-being, whilst incongruence of values may bring them to be susceptible to frustration and lower their well-being.

b. Personality Traits at Time 1 as a predictor of well-being at Time 2

Surprisingly, Openness at Time 1 turned out to be a predictor of life satisfaction at Time 2 in the home-country students, but not in the overseas students. The open-minded home-country students may have positive perceptions on the new learning experience at the university, whereby they regard it as an opportunity for self-development. Since university provides a path and place for numerous scholarly activities, such as research and innovations, and appreciation of art and emotion, as well as various other activities, it would continuously be beneficial for students to have a high degree of Openness which may bring more satisfaction to their lives.

For the overseas students, before going abroad for studies they had undergone a special educational training at the overseas preparatory institutions in Malaysia which, in a way, had kept them 'isolated' from their normal life. However, the strict rules and regulations of the institutions had probably brought them closer to one another, which continued when they were overseas. These friendships may have brought them to be dependent on one another. In a relationship like this, group achievements may bring more happiness to individuals than by

their personal achievements. Therefore, the cohesiveness of the group may contribute to the lack of openness to experience amongst the overseas students in this study.

Whilst most research findings show that a high degree of Agreeableness associates with more positive outcomes rather than negative ones (Judge, Heller & Mount, 2002), such as positive relations (Schmutter & Ryff, 1997), faster adaptation towards disability (Boyce & Wood, 2011) and better adjustment in a new country (Swagler & Jome, 2005), the findings of this current study displayed otherwise. In the overall student population, the less agreeable individuals at Time 1 tended to have a higher level of positive affect at Time 2. This is due to the home country, not the overseas students where Agreeableness at Time 1 did not predict positive affect at Time 2. This unexpected result is opposite to previous findings and the theoretical basis, which explains the relationship between personality traits and well-being (e.g. Grant, Langan-Fox & Anglim, 2009; Shiota, Keltner & John, 2006).

However in another study, Jensen-Campbell, Knack, Waldrip and Campbell (2006) discovered that Agreeableness was positively related to self-reported anger amongst 126 college students when moderated by low level of Conscientiousness. They suggested that highly agreeable people may lose control and display more negative emotions than persons with lower Agreeableness when they receive negative feedback about themselves, which implies a greater mismatch of their interpersonal orientation. Highly agreeable persons may not be able to reach their own happiness to the fullest due to the tendency to restrain their emotion and forgo their self-interest in order to create a pleasant environment for other people. The characteristics of highly agreeable people of being too cooperative, easy to forgive and forget, and always being kind, may predispose them to being taken advantage of by other people. This is probably linked to Seibert and Kraimer's (2001) findings in a survey among 496 employees from various occupations and organisations, whereby the agreeable workers tended to feel less satisfied with their career due to being more people-oriented.

In another study, Turiano, Pitzer, Armour, Karlamangla, Ryff, and Mroczek (2012) found that Agreeableness turned out to be a significant predictor for poor self-rated health amongst 3,990 participants of the Mid-life in the US study (MIDUS). In this study, a high level of Openness at Time 1 predicted high positive affect at Time 2. In the context of adjusting to a new life, for example, being a first year student at university, possessing a high level of the personality trait of Openness would be an advantage for students to enjoy the excitement of the new life.

Bardi, Guerra, and Ramdeny (2009) found a direct positive relationship between the personality trait of Openness and positive affect, and an indirect relationship with life satisfaction and negative affect amongst the first year and advanced groups of university students. Openness was demonstrated as an equally important personality trait for both groups of students as it encompasses the element of novelty, which is more relevant at the beginning of university studies, as well as the element of intellect, which continues to be essential at any stage of tertiary education (Bardi et al., 2009).

For the overseas students, the highly conscientious students were more likely to have higher positive affect, which was expected and supported by previous research findings (McCrae & Costa, 1997; Muhammad & Jaafar, 2009; Ones & Viswesvaran, 1999). Conscientious students would be naturally self-disciplined and organised, which is beneficial for their academic success. These two characteristics ensure individuals are on the right track and remind them of their target goal. This is parallel to McCrae and Costa's suggestion that "Conscientiousness affects well-being in an instrumental way" (in Bardi & Ryff, 2007, p. 958). Compared to the home-country students, the highly conscientious overseas students at Time 1 showed the tendency to have higher positive affect at Time 2, as the challenges of being abroad may help them to be more wary in life and elicit conscientious acts more, facilitating them in reaching their goals, thus making them happy. These results are partly supported in Muhammad

and Jaafar's (2009) study amongst 131 college students in Malaysia, ages ranging from 22 to 44 years. In the study, Conscientiousness at Time 1 displayed the strongest predictive effect on positive affect at Time 2, whilst Extroversion at Time 1 happened to be the strongest predictor of life satisfaction at Time 2, which is not supported in the current study. They also found that Openness at Time 1 did not relate to any well-being indicators.

In the home-country student population, those who had a higher degree of Agreeableness at Time 1 were more likely to experience negative affect at Time 2. It seems that being too agreeable sometimes does not fit with the academic environment whereby healthy arguments are encouraged. Highly agreeable individuals may be underproductive, or may not project themselves enough in delivering their work or thought, which may therefore force them into hard times as they may receive bad remarks from the lecturers, or feel a lack of academic skills when not achieving much as compared to their counterparts. These feelings could result in a higher degree of negative affect at Time 2. In the overall data, the results also showed that the neurotic individuals had the tendency to experience higher negative affect at Time 2.

c. Perceived Success at Time 1 as a predictor of well-being at Time 2

The students with poor GCSE performance at Time 1 might indicate less seriousness and concern in their studies. They might indulge themselves more in entertainment than academic matters, or pay more attention to co-curriculum activities run by the university which are probably more exciting for them. Perhaps due to this excitement, they scored higher in the positive affect at Time 2 compared to those who performed better in the GCSE. These low-achievers might find the 'university life' tougher than any other studies that they have gone through before, and might continuously feel burdened by the thought, which implies a lack of

emotional resilience. Poor academic performance in the GCSE unsurprisingly emerged as a predictor towards negative affect in the overall student population. This history of academic success did not have any effect on the life satisfaction of these students.

8.2.6 Predicting the Adaptation Experiences (Missing and Enjoyment Experiences) of the Malaysian Students

a. Well-being Indicators at Time 1 as a predictor of adaptation experiences

The level of well-being indicators at Time 1 predicted the adaptation experiences of the Malaysian students in general. It is expected that the students who experienced a high level of negative affect and life satisfaction at Time 1 would also experience a high level of missing home and enjoyment after being approximately six months in their studies. This result is aligned with the findings of several previous studies as reported in Compton (2005).

The following result is quite puzzling, in which high life satisfaction at Time 1 was associated with missing experiences at Time 2. However, it is quite reasonable to think that those who used to have higher satisfaction with life may no longer experience the same satisfaction, as the reality of being away from home is characterised by losing ties to what one used to achieve or being deprived of what one used to have before. Perhaps this has brought the students to realise how important those things were to them; thus, the feelings of missing home may deepen.

b. Personality Traits at Time 1 as a predictor of adaptation experiences at Time 2

The overall findings showed that the highly agreeable, neurotic and extroverted individuals at Time 1 were more likely to report about missing home. The higher scores on Neuroticism than average are believed to be associated with feelings of anxiety, anger, guilt and depressed mood. Neurotic people persistently show the inclination to be in negative emotional conditions, which tend to make them less capable of handling stress. For these people, ordinary situations may be interpreted as threatening, which makes them easily fall into helplessness over minor frustrations. Therefore, it is expected that the neurotic students in this study were less likely to adjust well to the new life and more likely to report missing home.

On the other hand, agreeable people are generally described by their positive characteristics, such as being able to get along with people because they are considerate, friendly, generous, helpful and willing to compromise their interest with others, and have a very optimistic view of human nature. However, some of those good qualities of keeping social harmony that lie in a highly agreeable student may act as a factor of hindrance to critical thinking, which is an important quality that a university student should possess. Being critical may make one more sceptical and, sometimes, antagonistic towards others as debates over certain academic issues would seem inevitable. In this study, the highly agreeable students were probably going through a transitory process towards embracing a new thinking style, which perhaps brought much 'uneasy' feelings to these persons. This new experience could be to some extent intolerable to them as their mind could still be blurred with the nostalgia of the 'good old days' and the wish that everything was just the same as before. At this point, missing home might have probably come about. For the extroverted students, being away from home might mean that they were away from entertainment or activities that they mostly had before that keep them active. Therefore, they were left in 'boredom' with the new life which they

might interpret as ‘not interesting enough’, thus making them feel low, and missing home might creep in. This result is supported by Armes and Ward’s (1989) study that extroversion was found to be linked with depression, poor health, boredom and frustration amongst expatriates in Singapore. The researchers suggested that the expatriates may find it less comfortable to lead their lives in a relatively unfamiliar formal and reserved style of interpersonal interaction and the family-oriented culture of Singaporeans.

Swagler and Jome’s (2005) findings among American students in Taiwan were different to the current results. They found that greater Agreeableness was associated with successful psychological adjustment to life in Taiwan. Additionally, the agreeable American students were found to be more conscientious, extroverted and more acculturated to the Taiwanese culture. They also found support for positive association between Neuroticism and adaptation. Interestingly, their findings implied that individuals with personality traits that are favourable to the culture they are dwelling in tend to adapt well to the environment. Similarly, positive correlations between Agreeableness and Openness to experience and overseas excitement were found amongst 131 Taiwanese students who were studying abroad - mainly in the U.S. and Australia (Feng, 2012).

In other studies amongst expatriates it was revealed that a high level of Openness to experience benefits them more in work adjustment. Huang, et al., (2005) found that, amongst 83 U.S. expatriates in Taiwan, those with higher levels of Extroversion and Openness to experience had better life adjustment in Taiwan. Specifically, Extroversion and Agreeableness were both positively related to interaction adjustment, and Openness to work adjustment. A study in Malaysia showed that expatriates who held managerial posts where the main task involved selecting and training staff for overseas assignments, would be more successful if they possessed high levels of the personality trait Conscientiousness and, more importantly, Openness (Rose, Ramalu, Uli & Kumar, 2010).

c. Importance and Satisfaction of Values at Time 1 as a predictor of adaptation experiences

Overall, the data showed that the more importance placed on self-transcendence values at Time 1, the less likely the students reported missing experiences. When people placed priority on the self-transcendence type of values, such as concern for the welfare of others (benevolence) and understanding, appreciating, and protecting the welfare of people and nature (universalism), which are commonly linked to higher well-being, there was a probability that they would not be much affected by negative emotions within them, including becoming vulnerable to missing things at home.

However, this is not the case with satisfaction of self-transcendence values, whereby in this study, the higher satisfaction derived by accomplishing goals related to self-transcendence values at Time 1, the more the feelings of missing home were reported at Time 2. This is particularly evident among the overseas Malaysian students. Being selected to a government funded overseas studying programme, these students are always being reminded of their ultimate goal in coming abroad, which is to produce an excellent academic attainment. Living in a Western culture that promotes individualistic values has probably moved them more into “the need to achieve” so as to ensure their survival in the community. These students may isolate themselves from others as a way of keeping themselves focused. However, this strategy may not be viable for those who used to be satisfied by self-transcendence values. Denying connection to others may bring deficiency effects on them. Loneliness may be one of them, which makes them vulnerable to missing home. So far, there is no study that directly supports this view. However, positive associations that occurred between adherence to traditional values related to home country, and occupation and immigration-related stress among Latino immigrants in the United States which is found in Arbona, Olvera, Rodriguez, Hagan, Linares, and Wiesner’s (2010) study, may provide the nearest support to this.

d. Perceived Success at Time 1 as a predictor of adaptation experiences

In this study, the ability to converse well in English is an advantage for the university students who are non-native speakers, regardless of studying abroad or locally. As English is widely used in the tertiary education in Malaysia, those with low command of the language may face difficulties in most of the academic activities, such as understanding class lectures, reading materials and having engaging conversations with their lecturers and peers. In order to cope with the academic demand, these students may shift their minds into thinking about something that is rather pleasant that they feel much connected to them. However, at this point, the feelings of missing things they used to have or do may start to develop, which in turn may distress them.

The importance of mastering the English language has been pointed out by several researchers. For example, Yeh and Inose (2003) found in their study that international students who were not fluent in spoken English also reported more difficulties in their acculturating experiences than those who were proficient. In another study, perceived English fluency completely mediated the effects of the acculturation level on depression among 112 Taiwanese international students in the United States (Dao, Donghyuck & Chang, 2007). In this study, the fluency of the language is vital for overseas survival, which is indeed shown in the overseas students' samples that the more the students were believed to be proficient at English, the less likely it was for them to report missing home. Low scores in their GSCEs predicted missing experiences in the overall population of the Malaysian students, irrespective of being overseas or home-country students. One possible explanation for this is that those who scored low in the examination tended to be those of the same group who perceived themselves as not fluent in the English language. In short, students with low academic capability may also have low cognitive ability in responding to problems and challenges surrounding them; thus putting them down easily.

In the overall population, the students with greater fluency of English at Time 1 enjoyed life more than those who claimed to be lacking in the language. For the overseas students, English language fluency at Time 1 was the most significant predictor of the enjoyment they experienced whilst being abroad. Being proficient in the host society's language is essential for them to adapt well in the new country. This finding is well-supported by some previous studies. Amongst the studies, Yang, Noels and Saumure (2006) came out with an interesting finding that individuals who had high confidence in using the host society's language would adapt better than those who did not, regardless of the actual linguistic competence. In their study among 81 international students in Canada, they found that language self-confidence was associated with psychological adjustment and socio-cultural difficulties. They also discovered that those students with independent self-construal (characterised by orientation towards independent success and achievement, being in control of and responsible for one's behaviour and its outcomes) directly predicted English self-confidence.

8.2.7 Predicting Importance and Satisfaction of Embeddedness and Self-transcendence Values at Time 2

a. Well-being Indicators at Time 1 as a predictor of the importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 2

The results showed that only the prediction of positive affect at Time 1 on embeddedness importance at Time 2 in the overall population was significant. Given that the cultural norms of the Malaysian society are basically made up by embeddedness values, the effect of positive affect at Time 1 on the importance of embeddedness values at Time 2 was shown to be stronger than the self-transcendence values. The students' positive emotional experience may be

associated with being able to live their life up to the society's expectations without much hassle, which later stood out as a significant predictor for the importance of embeddedness values. The point has been supported by Wong et al. (2011) that Singaporean Chinese whose lay beliefs of happiness were congruent with that of the local culture were likely to have greater well-being.

b. Personality Traits at Time 1 a predictor of importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 2

The results showed that a high level of Agreeableness and low levels of Extroversion and Openness at Time 1 predicted satisfaction of embeddedness values at Time 2 in the overall student population. None of the results was replicated in the overseas students. Only the results for Agreeableness and Extroversion were repeated in the home-country students, wherein embeddedness values are more central to Malaysians. Conservative features, such as being compliant, compassionate and cooperative are already embedded in the personality trait of Agreeableness, which has unsurprisingly contributed to the satisfaction of embeddedness values. These conservative characteristics also form the nature of collectivism, which has been found to be highly related to Agreeableness (Benet-Martínez & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2003).

Being less open-minded and more introverted adds other attributes to the values. Hence, people with these traits are anticipated to be satisfied by their embeddedness values. Low and high levels of Extroversion and Agreeableness at Time 1 predicted satisfaction of self-transcendence values at Time 2. This finding is supported by Caprara et al. (2011) in which Agreeableness directly predicted self-transcendence values and indirectly predicted emphatic self-efficacy beliefs and pro-sociality in young adults in Italy.

c. Perceived success at Time 1 a predictor of importance and satisfaction of embeddedness and self-transcendence values at Time 2

Mixed results were produced that high academic achievement at Time 1 predicted the importance of embeddedness values at Time 2 in the overall data, and high fluency of English language at Time 1 predicted satisfaction of self-transcendence values at Time 2 in home country students. The GCSE in Malaysian terms – SPM (Malaysia Certificate of Education) - assesses not just core subjects, such as Mathematics, Science, Bahasa Melayu (Malay Language) and English, but also includes subjects like History and Islamic Knowledge or Moral Education, reflecting the aspirations of the National Philosophy of Education Malaysia that emphasises a holistic and integrated approach in educating students. Past studies have shown that students who performed well in their academic work are associated with higher learning aspirations (e.g. Beal & Crockett, 2010; Cuthbert & Hatch, 2008). The students in this study may have been inspired by the underlying values and characteristics learnt at school, especially from school subjects, the involvement in co-curricular activities and the school's environment.

The impacts of school environment on students' academic achievement have been echoed by Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn and Smith (2003) through their research in 'character education'. They commented on several programmes run by schools that were found to have positive impacts in improving students' social attitude and behaviour. Benninga et al. (2003) extended the studies by exploring the further the impacts of character education in schools. The following criteria had been found to contribute to the academic performance: "(a) a school's ability to ensure a clean and safe physical environment, (b) evidence that parents and teachers modelled and promoted good character education, and (c) quality opportunity at the school for students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school and its community" (Benninga et al.,

p. 28). In Malaysia, the teaching of values, whether implicitly (embedded in the education curriculum) or explicitly (during lecture/class), can be found at every level of education including tertiary education. Therefore, it is not surprising when students who performed well in their GCSE at Time 1 tended to score high on Time 2 importance of embeddedness values, which happens to be amongst the core values of Malaysian society.

8.3 Implication for theory

The positive correlations between missing experience and well-being indicators (i.e. positive affect and life satisfaction at Time 2) indicates that the adaptation experience may not bring negative meaning to the students as it was thought to do. It shows that these students may have already prepared themselves psychologically for the consequences of being away from home. The experience of missing home comes naturally for one who has just moved to a new place and has no experience of being away from family and friends. As these students were mentally prepared to face the challenges of independent living, they would cope well with the adaptation. The Adaptation to Life Index in this research offers a new perspective in understanding the adaptation process at a new place – the missing experience and enjoyment experience. This index was found to be highly reliable in both overseas and home country Malaysian students.

8.4 Implication for practice

Agreeable people is expected to be happy, but in this study Agreeableness may not necessarily contribute to happiness to the Malaysian students. In higher learning context, one is expected to be able to debate and provide critical justification upon issues that are brought up at an academic discourse. At this point one may turn to be 'less agreeable', but acceptable in an

academic context. As being 'less agreeable' and open-minded may contribute to the academic success, and eventually bring more happiness to students, it should be encouraged amongst students. This encouragement is especially important for the home country students who have long been raised in a culture that encourages one to be compliant and respectful to traditions.

For overseas students, Conscientiousness is an undoubtedly important personality trait. Being organised and self-disciplined helps one to survive in a foreign culture. Therefore, the importance of these personality traits should alert the student support unit at the local higher learning or overseas preparatory institutions in Malaysia to prepare suitable programmes for their students.

In future, students who are going overseas for their studies should be taught more about the culture of the country they are going for study through various approaches which hopefully bring them closer to the culture. However, there should also be a balance between this effort and preserving the common values of the Malaysian society in order to support the well-being of these students. As perceived English language fluency was found to correlate the most with missing experiences (in overseas students), the existing approach to the language learning at respective institutions should be revised. More importantly as well, students should also be encouraged to be self-confident in using the language.

8.5 Limitations of the research

There are a few limitations to this research. Firstly, the sample size at Time 2 was small with an overall return rate of 30.05%, 21.8% for the overseas sample and 39.51% for home country students. This could result into insignificant findings and sample biased, which could limit the generalisability of the findings. In this study, parts of the problem might arise from the

unmatched code or wrong email addresses provided by the participants in order to trace back the participants. Missing responses were also found in the data which adds to the limitation.

Secondly, although the overseas students went to English-speaking countries for study, but the culture of each country may result them in different adaptation experiences. Therefore, the findings in this study should be cautiously interpreted. Thirdly, overseas students departed for study at different times which could also affect their adaptation process and how they responded to the questionnaire; thus, adding another limitation to the research. Fourthly, the selection process of home country participants has only been targeted on a public university in Sabah whereby the responses were gathered from first year students at the beginning week of the semester. No other control had been used in the selection process, for example by having an equal number of participants from rural and urban areas of Malaysia. This could result a sampling bias. Lastly the questionnaire on adaptation experience had been piloted on international UK students, which most of them were students from Malaysia. The questionnaire had been prepared in two versions, i.e. for home country and overseas students. Although the questionnaire has an equal number of items and developed under the same theme in every version of questionnaire, a few of the items may be not equivalent enough to the other version.

8.6 Recommendations for future studies

Firstly, as the adaptation experiences of the overseas students may vary between individuals who go to different countries for study, a separate analysis should be done for each group. Secondly, ‘satisfaction of values’ is a newly introduced concept which in this study has been referred to as a “satisfying the goals related to the values that are important to you”. Future researchers probably could consider ‘satisfaction of values’ in terms of ‘the extent to which efforts in satisfying values that are important to a person are made’. Thirdly, adaptation

experience (“missing” and “enjoyment”) can be introduced as moderator variables to the relationship between the personality, important and satisfaction of values, as well as perceived success, and indicators of well-being (positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction) in future studies.

Lastly, in order to overcome the technical problems of tracing back participants in follow-up studies, the paper-based questionnaire at Time 1 should provide an answering template that requires participants to blacken any letters or numbers that spell out their email addresses and the special invented code. By doing this, mismatched emails and codes can be avoided.

8.7 Conclusion

This research indicates that being less agreeable is important for the home country students in Malaysia in order to have a happier life; whilst being highly conscientious seems to be more rewarding for overseas students. Overseas students who place less priority on both self-transcendence and embeddedness values, and perceive themselves to be fluent in the English language, are likely to adapt better in the new culture. The experience of being abroad exposes one to the uniqueness of other cultures and brings more excitement to life, which may explain why the home country students are relatively lower in their well-being than the overseas students after spending a few months in their tertiary studies. Lastly, the inclination of Malaysian students in general towards openness to change and self-enhancement values indicates how dynamic people would be in prioritising their values in order to preserve or increase their well-being.

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APPENDIX A1

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE AT TIME 1

- a. Self-invented Adaptation to Life Index (the original version)**
- b. Questionnaire for Time 1 survey**

ADAPTATION TO LIFE

The questionnaire is divided into two parts; Part I and Part II. The aim of this research is to develop an adaptation to life index. Please answer each item and indicate how clear you find the item to be. Number '1' indicates "unclear and difficult to answer", and number '4' indicates "clear and easy to answer".

If you find an item that is not relevant to you please answer '0'.

Part I

The following is a list of things you may miss about home while studying in the UK. Please rate how much you may miss each of them by circling any number from '0' to '7'. Number '0' represents "I don't miss this at all", and number '7' represents "I miss this a lot".

		Answering scale (<i>this will be appear in the final questionnaire</i>)								Clarity of item (<i>this will not appear in the final questionnaire</i>)			
		"I don't miss this at all"				"I miss this a lot"				Unclear	Clear		
1.	Traditional food	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
2.	Eating out activities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
3.	Ease of getting the right food	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
4.	Varieties of food choice	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
5.	Hanging out with friends	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
6.	Making friends	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
7.	Support from friendship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
8.	Hanging out with family members	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
9.	Involvement in decision making within the family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
10.	Having a face-to-face conversation with family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
11.	Spending quality time with family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
12.	Helping family (e.g. voluntarily give monthly allowance to younger siblings, or to the elderly parents).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
13.	Physical and mental supports from the family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
14.	Staying in your own house	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
15.	Satisfaction with the salary received every month	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
16.	Easier money-making activities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
17.	A safe place to live and work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
18.	Performing prayers	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
19.	Practising of your religion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
20.	Attending religious talks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
21.	Nice weather	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
22.	Not having to bother about being trendy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
23.	Recreational activities during weekends (e.g. picnicking, visiting relatives or going out for a movie)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
24.	Shopping during leisure	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
25.	Visiting different places	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
26.	A peaceful life	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
27.	Do hobbies	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
28.	Confidence with appearance	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
29.	Preserving customs and cultural values	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
30.	Speaking in the mother tongue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
31.	Understood by people when talking	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
32.	Not being isolated from others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
33.	A sense of belongingness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
34.	Having to dress appropriately to the weather	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4

ADAPTATION TO LIFE (contd.)

Part II

The following is a list of things you may enjoy while studying in the UK. Please rate how much you may enjoy each of them by circling any number from '0' to '7'. Number '0' represents "I don't enjoy this at all", and number '7' represents "I enjoy this a lot".

		Answering scale (<i>this will be appear in the final questionnaire</i>)								Clarity of item (<i>this will not appear in the final questionnaire</i>)			
		"I don't enjoy this at all"				"I enjoy this a lot"				Unclear	Clear		
1.	Having a face-to-face conversation with experts	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
2.	Sight-seeing activities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
3.	A high quality of goods and services	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
4.	A supportive studying environment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
5.	Western food	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
6.	An opportunity to travel to neighbouring countries	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
7.	An opportunity to get to know people from other cultures	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
8.	Experience of a four - season weather	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
9.	Lots of choice of goods and services	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
10.	Cheap goodies	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
11.	Opportunity to learn about the UK's culture and norms	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
12.	Being respected for your uniqueness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
13.	Being exposed to the latest technology in telecommunication	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
14.	An opportunity to practise English	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
15.	Get to know British people	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
16.	Opportunity for personal development	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
17.	Opportunity for career progression	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
18.	Learn new types of activities or hobbies	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
19.	Being with a close group of friends	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
20.	Developing a meaningful friendship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
21.	A busy or fulfilling life	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
22.	Helping others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
23.	Voluntary activities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
24.	Having more freedom to express yourself	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
25.	Flexible working hours	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
26.	Becoming more independent	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
27.	Transparent communication	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
28.	Easy access to the internet resources	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4

Is there anything else you may have enjoyed which is not written? If yes, please state:

(this will not appear in the final questionnaire)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

There will be a follow-up for this study. Please tick (/) in the right box if you agree or disagree to take part in the follow-up study. ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

If AGREE, please give your name and your contact email below. This information will be kept strictly confidential and will be deleted as soon as the study completed.

Name : _____ Email : _____

Additional Information

Is there anything else you would like to add that has not come up already on the questionnaire? If yes please state below:



SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS

Dear Participants,
This study is the first part of a longitudinal research on the relationship between satisfaction of important values and well-being, while adapting to overseas studies among Malaysian students. Because we will be contact you in the future, your contactable email address is requested in this questionnaire. All of your information will be treated in the strictest confidence. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the following email address if you want to know more about the study.

iazni.mustapha@plymouth.ac.uk

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Iazni Mustapha,
PhD student,
University of Plymouth, UK

DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Please tick (✓) in the right box or fill in the blanks appropriately.

1. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. In order to match up your responses to future requests for data, please give your father's initials and your day of birth only in the box below.
(e.g. if your father's name is Adam bin Mohammad, and your day of birth is on the 10th of April, write AM10 in the box).

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3. Age: _____ years
4. Ethnicity: _____
5. Which institution are you enrolling in at the moment?
☐ INTEC ☐ Teacher Training College
☐ MARA College ☐ Other: _____
6. a. Have you travelled to overseas before?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 b. Which country are you going to for study?
☐ UK ☐ Australia ☐ New Zealand
☐ USA ☐ Ireland ☐ Canada

c. Have you previously visited the country in which you plan to study?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Are you on the government scholarship?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. E-mail address : (Please state below)

9. Which of the following months has this questionnaire been administered to you?

☐ April ☐ May ☐ June
☐ July ☐ August

PERCEIVED SUCCESS

a. Knowledge of English Language

1. Using the scale below, please tick (✓) in the box the number which best represents your fluency of the English language.

10	Perfect	
9	Fluent	
8	Nearly fluent	
7	Very good	
6	Good	
5	Moderately good	
4	Somewhat bad	
3	Bad	
2	Very bad	
1	Extremely bad	

b. Academic grades

2. Please state how many subjects that you scored based on the grades in your previous SPM results.

3. (e.g. Grade: A 7)

Grade	Number of subject(s)
A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	

(1)

(Please turn over)

PERSONALITY

Below are a number of personal characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please circle a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that you have that characteristic.

I see myself as someone who ...

		Disagree strongly 1	Disagree a little 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree a little 4	Agree strongly 5
1.	Is talkative	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Tend to find fault with others	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Does a thorough job	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Is depressed, blue	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Is original, comes up with new ideas	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Is reserved	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Is helpful and unselfish with others	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Can be somewhat careless	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Is relaxed, handle stress well	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Is curious about many different things	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Is full of energy	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Starts quarrels with others	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Is a reliable worker	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Can be tense	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Is ingenious, a deep thinker	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Generates a lot of enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Has a forgiving nature	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Tends to be disorganised	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Worries a lot	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Has an active imagination	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Tends to be quiet	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Is generally trusting	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Tends to be lazy	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Is emotionally stable, not easily upset	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Is inventive	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Has an assertive personality	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Can be cold and aloof	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Perseveres until the task is finished	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Can be moody	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Values artistic, aesthetic experiences	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Is sometimes shy, inhibited	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Does things differently	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Remains calm in tense situations	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Prefers work that is routine	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Is outgoing, sociable	1	2	3	4	5
37.	Is sometimes rude to others	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Make plans and follows through with them	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Gets nervous easily	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Likes to reflect, play with ideas	1	2	3	4	5
41.	Has few artistic interests	1	2	3	4	5
42.	Likes to cooperate with others	1	2	3	4	5
43.	Is easily distracted	1	2	3	4	5
44.	Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	1	2	3	4	5



VALUES

Please rate the importance of the following values as a life-guiding principle. Circle the number which best describes yourself.

	Opposed to my principles 0	Unimportant			Important			Of supreme importance	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Power, that is social power, authority, and wealth	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. Achievement, that is success, capability, ambition, influence on people and events	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. Hedonism, that is, gratification of desires, enjoyment in life, self-indulgence	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. Stimulation, that is, daring, a varied and challenging life, an exciting life	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. Self-direction, that is, creativity, freedom, curiosity, independence, choosing one's own goals	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. Universalism, that is, broadmindedness, beauty of nature and arts, social justice, a world at peace, equality, wisdom, unity with nature, environmental protection	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7. Benevolence, that is, helpfulness, honesty, forgiveness, loyalty, responsibility	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8. Tradition, that is, respect for tradition, humbleness, accepting one's portion in life, devotion, modesty	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9. Conformity, that is, obedience, honouring parents and elders, self-discipline, politeness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10. Security, that is, national security, family security, social order, cleanliness, reciprocation of favours	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Please rate to what extent goals related to these values are satisfied. Circle the number which best describes yourself.

	Not a relevant value to me 0	Unsatisfied			Satisfied			Complete satisfaction	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11. Power, that is social power, authority, and wealth	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12. Achievement, that is success, capability, ambition, influence on people and events	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13. Hedonism, that is, gratification of desires, enjoyment in life, self-indulgence	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14. Stimulation, that is, daring, a varied and challenging life, an exciting life	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15. Self-direction, that is, creativity, freedom, curiosity, independence, choosing one's own goals	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
16. Universalism, that is, broadmindedness, beauty of nature and arts, social justice, a world at peace, equality, wisdom, unity with nature, environmental protection	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
17. Benevolence, that is, helpfulness, honesty, forgiveness, loyalty, responsibility	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
18. Tradition, that is, respect for tradition, humbleness, accepting one's portion in life, devotion, modesty	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
19. Conformity, that is, obedience, honouring parents and elders, self-discipline, politeness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
20. Security, that is, national security, family security, social order, cleanliness, reciprocation of favours	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

WELL-BEING

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feeling and emotions. Please read each of the words and then circle the number which best represents the level to which you generally feel like this. Number '1' representing "very slightly or not feeling this at all", and number '5' representing "extreme feeling".

		Very slightly or not feeling this at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extreme feeling
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Interested	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Distressed	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Excited	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Upset	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Strong	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Guiltily	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Scared	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Hostile	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Proud	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Irritable	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Alert	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Ashamed	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Inspired	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Nervous	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Determined	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Attentive	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Jittery	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Active	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Afraid	1	2	3	4	5

LIFE SATISFACTION

Below are a number of statements that relate to life satisfaction. Using the 7-point scale below please circle the number which best represents the degree to which you agree with each statement. Number '1' representing "strongly disagree", and number '7' representing "strongly agree".

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	The conditions of my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	So far I have got the important things I want in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	If I could live my life over I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND, ONCE AGAIN, PLEASE BE ASSURED OF YOUR COMPLETE CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY BY TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY.

Please return your completed questionnaire to the personnel at the Students' Affair Department within two weeks of receipt.

APPENDIX A2

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE AT TIME 2



SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH, UK

**SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING
AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS
PART II**

Dear Participants,

This study is the second part of a longitudinal research on the relationship between satisfaction of important values and well-being, as well as adapting experiences among Malaysian students. Because we will be matching your responses in this questionnaire with the one you answered a few months ago, your contactable email address is still requested in this questionnaire. All of your information will be treated in **the strictest confidence**. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the following email address if you want to know more about the study.

mazni.mustapha@plymouth.ac.uk

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Mazni Mustapha,

PhD student

School of Psychology,
University of Plymouth,
Drake Circus, Plymouth,
PL4 8HN, Devon, UK



SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH, UK

DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Please tick (/) in the right box or fill in the blanks appropriately.

1. In order to match up your responses to previous data, please give your father's initials and your day of birth only in the box below.

(e.g. if your father's name is Adam bin Mohammad, and your day of birth is on the 10th of April, write AM10 in the box).

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2. Please provide your email address below (the same one you filled in the first questionnaire).

3. Study programme you are enrolling in at the moment? (Please state below)

4. How long have you been studying in the university?

_____ month(s)

5. Parents' education level. Please tick (/) in the right box.

Father's education level

- ☐ Not attending any education
- ☐ Primary school
- ☐ Secondary school
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor degree
- ☐ Postgraduate degree

Mother's education level

- ☐ Not attending any education
- ☐ Primary school
- ☐ Secondary school
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Bachelor degree
- ☐ Postgraduate degree



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PERCEIVED SUCCESS

a. Knowledge of English Language

Using the scale below, please tick (/) in the box the number which best represents your fluency of the English language.

10	Perfect	
9	Fluent	
8	Nearly fluent	
7	Very good	
6	Good	
5	Moderately good	
4	Somewhat bad	
3	Bad	
2	Very bad	
1	Extremely bad	

b. Current academic performance

Using the scale below, please circle the number that best represents your academic performance.

10	Highly excellant
9	
8	
7	
6	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	Extremely poor



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ADAPTATION TO LIFE

The questionnaire is divided into two parts; Part I and Part II.

Part I

The following is a list of things you may miss about home while studying at UMS. Please rate how much you may miss each of them by circling any number from '0' to '7'. Number '0' represents "I don't miss this at all", and number '7' represents "I miss this a lot".

		Answering scale							
		"I don't miss this at all"				"I miss this a lot"			
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Home-cooked food	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	Ease of getting the right food	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Varieties of food choice	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	Hanging out with friends	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	Making friends	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	Support from friendship	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	Hanging out with family members	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	Involvement in decision making within the family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	Having a face-to-face conversation with family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Spending quality time with family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	Helping family (e.g. running the house chores).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	Physical and mental supports from the family	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	Staying in your own house	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	A safe place to live and work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	Practising of your religion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	Attending religious talks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	Peaceful environment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	Recreational activities during weekends (e.g. picnicking, visiting relatives or going out for a movie)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



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		"I don't miss this at all"							"I miss this a lot"
19.	Shopping during leisure	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	Visiting different places	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	A peaceful life	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	Do hobbies	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	Preserving customs and cultural values	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	Speaking in the mother tongue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	Being with people I have known for a long time	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.	A sense of belongingness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part II

The following is a list of things you may enjoy while studying at UMS. Please rate how much you may enjoy each of them by circling any number from '0' to '7'. Number '0' represents "I don't enjoy this at all", and number '7' represents "I enjoy this a lot".

		Answering scale								
		"I don't enjoy this at all"							"I enjoy this a lot"	
1.	Having a face-to-face conversation with experts	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2.	Sight-seeing activities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3.	A high quality of goods and services	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4.	A supportive studying environment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5.	Different types of food	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6.	An opportunity to travel to neighbouring countries	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7.	An opportunity to get to know people from other ethnic groups	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8.	Opportunity to engage in various outdoor activities at any time	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	



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VALUE IMPORTANCE

Please rate **the importance** of the following values as a life-guiding principle. Circle the number which best describes yourself.

	Answering scale								
	Opposed to my principles	Unimportant			Important			Of supreme importance	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Power , that is social power, authority, and wealth	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. Achievement , that is success, capability, ambition, influence on people and events	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. Hedonism , that is, gratification of desires, enjoyment in life, self-indulgence	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. Stimulation , that is, daring, a varied and challenging life, an exciting life	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. Self-direction , that is, creativity, freedom, curiosity, independence, choosing one's own goals	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. Universalism , that is, broadmindedness, beauty of nature and arts, social justice, a world at peace, equality, wisdom, unity with nature, environmental protection	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8



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	Opposed to my principles 0	1	Unimportant 2	3	4	Important 5	6	7	Of supreme importance 8
7. Benevolence , that is, helpfulness, honesty, forgiveness, loyalty, responsibility	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8. Tradition , that is, respect for tradition, humbleness, accepting one's portion in life, devotion, modesty	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9. Conformity , that is, obedience, honouring parents and elders, self-discipline, politeness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10. Security , that is, national security, family security, social order, cleanliness, reciprocation of favours	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
VALUE SATISFACTION									
Please rate to what extent goals related to these values are satisfied . Circle the number which best describes yourself.									
	Not a relevant value to me 0	1	Unsatisfied 2	3	4	Satisfied 5	6	7	Complete satisfaction 8
11. Power , that is social power, authority, and wealth	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12. Achievement , that is success, capability, ambition, influence on people and events	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8



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	Not a relevant value to me	Unsatisfied			Satisfied			Complete satisfaction	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13. Hedonism , that is, gratification of desires, enjoyment in life, self- indulgence	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14. Stimulation , that is, daring, a varied and challenging life, an exciting life.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15. Self-direction , that is, creativity, freedom, curiosity, independence, choosing one's own goals	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
16. Universalism , that is, broadmindedness, beauty of nature and arts, social justice , a world at peace, equality, wisdom, unity with nature, environmental protection	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
17. Benevolence , that is, helpfulness, honesty, forgiveness, loyalty, responsibility	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
18. Power , that is social power, authority, and wealth	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8



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	Not a relevant value to me	Unsatisfied			Satisfied			Complete satisfaction	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
19. Achievement , that is success, capability, ambition, influence on people and events	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
20. Hedonism , that is, gratification of desires, enjoyment in life, self-indulgence	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

WELL-BEING

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feeling and emotions. Please read each of the words and then circle the number which best represents the level to which you generally feel like this. Number '1' representing "very slightly or not feeling this at all", and number '5' representing "extreme feeling".

	Very slightly or not feeling this at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extreme feeling
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Interested	1	2	3	4	5
2. Distressed	1	2	3	4	5
3. Excited	1	2	3	4	5
4. Upset	1	2	3	4	5
5. Strong	1	2	3	4	5
6. Guilty	1	2	3	4	5
7. Scared	1	2	3	4	5
8. Hostile	1	2	3	4	5
9. Enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5
10. Proud	1	2	3	4	5
11. Irritable	1	2	3	4	5
12. Alert	1	2	3	4	5
13. Ashamed	1	2	3	4	5
14. Inspired	1	2	3	4	5



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	Very slightly or not feeling this at all 1	A little 2	Moderately 3	Quite a bit 4	Extreme feeling 5
15. Nervous	1	2	3	4	5
16. Determined	1	2	3	4	5
17. Attentive	1	2	3	4	5
18. Jittery	1	2	3	4	5
19. Active	1	2	3	4	5
20. Afraid	1	2	3	4	5

LIFE SATISFACTION

Below are a number of statements that relate to life satisfaction. Using the 7-point scale below please circle the number which best represents the degree to which you agree with each statement. Number '1' representing "strongly disagree", and number '7' representing "strongly agree".

		Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neither Agree nor Disagree 4	Slightly Agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
1.	In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	The conditions of my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	So far I have got the important things i want in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	If I could live my life over I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH, UK

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

*Once again, please be assured of your complete
confidentiality and anonymity for taking part in this study.*

Please return your completed questionnaire to the personnel at your faculty office
within two weeks of receipt.



SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH, UK

Research title: "Subjective well-being among Malaysian students"

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research.

The general purpose of this research is to investigate the extent satisfaction of important values and personality, contribute to the outcome variables, i.e. positive and negative affect, life-satisfaction, and adapting experience among Malaysian undergraduate students while they are abroad.

This research involves longitudinal studies with two times of data collection among overseas Malaysian students (experimental group), and home country Malaysian students (control group). We are also interested to investigate whether subjective well-being and personality measurements in Time 1 data, predict subjective well-being in Time 2 data. For the overseas students, we would like to see whether 'missing' and 'enjoyment' experiences in overseas are predicted by satisfaction of values that are important to the students while in overseas. We expect to see differences in the outcome variables of the experiment group and the control group.

This research requires participants to fill in questionnaires and an online survey. This research is hoped to contribute to the theory building in particular area of this study, and provide information that is useful to enhance the mental health services provided to the students. Hence, your participation is very much meaningful and greatly appreciated. However, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage.

Should you have any further question about the research, please do not hesitate to contact:

***Mazni Mustapha, School of Psychology, University of Plymouth,
Portland Square Building, Drake Circus, PL4 8AA, Plymouth, UK;***

Email: mazni.mustapha@plymouth.ac.uk ; +44-(0)789629114 (h/p).

APPENDIX B1

SELF-INVENTED CODES FOR NON-VERBAL FEATURES OF SPEECH

Element	Meaning
....	To indicate pauses
[]	To indicate missing sentences or unfinished sentences
()	To provide meaning for things that have been said, and to indicate body-languages, voice tones, etc.

APPENDIX B2

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

INTERVIEW PART I

Participant#1, Male

Q : Can you please describe about yourself?

A : What about?

Q : Like where you are from, how long you have been here, etc.

A : Oh, I am married with a son, only one child. I used to work at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). I have been here for almost 2 years. Before this, I used to work in a private company. I studied at UTM, pursuing both bachelor's and master's degrees in Civil Engineering. It is the same field I am working on here, which is Coastal Engineering. Maybe in the UK, this is the [best] place [to study Coastal Engineering] as we have the biggest group.

Q : So, you have been here for almost 2 years. How did you feel when you first came here?

A : The climate was the hardest thing.

Q : Although it was already April?

A : At first, it was due to the dry climate. I developed spots on my skin. Firstly, it was the weather, then the unstable financial, this was the problem when I first came here as the scholarship had not been increased. At that time, I received the same amount like those singles get nowadays for a family allowance. It was not enough. I had to work part timely, but I quit after they increased the scholarship. After my scholarship was increased for a few months, then I ended my [working] contract, which lasted till the end of the year – that was for about 10 months. I had to work, and my wife too, because of the financial constraint. It was hard as the living cost here was high, and the scholarship was just meagre.

Q : What about now?

A : Now it is okay.

Q : Alright, how would you describe yourself?

A : I am a simple person, ...just simple. I don't fuss much about everything. I'm easy-going, and I like to listen to others talking. I like to listen rather than to talk, because when someone is talking regardless of whether he or she is right or wrong, it is you who will filter it.

Q : In your life, what are the things you want to achieve?

A : Just one word, 'easiness'.

Q : Can you explain further?

A : "Easiness" in the financial sense, rich-poor, not that rich, no. I just want to have an easy lifestyle, at least, I have a car to ride, a house, and some money to spend. These are from the financial perspective.

If I want to do anything, I want it to be easily accomplished, not something that is impossible.

Q : Does this mean that you still assess the risk of that particular task?

A : If the risk is too high, I will not commit it.

Q : Apart from that, what else do you think is important in life?

A : To be successful is important, isn't it?

Q : Yup. What do you aim for?

A : Now, I want as much as possible to complete my PhD. The more time I spend on doing this PhD, the more stressful I would be. Apart from that, there is hope for the family. Yes, there is. I am the only son and the eldest from a poor family background, ... a bit poor. For the time being, my family depends on me. Moreover, my old folks are not employed anymore, they only stay at home. As for my siblings, one is a teacher, two are already married, one has just finished school, and one is still in the secondary school. Not so bad.

My wife is also the same. All of her siblings are girls, no boys at all, so she has a pretty high commitment for the family as well. Before this, she was a teacher.

So now, I have to support both families. That is why it is quite hard for me. I have a lot of commitment. So, when the scholarship was not sufficient, it was pretty stressful. Lucky enough, I had some savings. Almost all the savings were spent upon coming here [laughing].

Q : What made you pursue your PhD?

A : One of the reasons was I was thinking I might as well finish all of my studies to the ultimate level so that I don't have to think about it anymore.

Q : Was that demanded by your university?

A : That was one of the reasons too. But I have my own dreams of not only completing my bachelor's degree, at least, I must have a master's degree as well. When I became a lecturer, I was required to do the PhD. So, it became one of the reasons.

Later, I came here because there was a choice between going to Turkey or Australia, but I had already known one professor here in Turkey before this. However, due to many entrance procedural problems in Turkey, I thought it would be better to go to the UK instead.

Q : Did you get any encouragement to come here?

A : Before this, there was a friend here. I've known nobody in other places. If there is no one familiar, I will be quite worried. If I am single, it is alright, but when you are with a family, you will think differently.

Q : Apart from the academic achievement, do you have any other reasons why you pursue your study abroad? Like, you want to have a chance for touring, perhaps?

A : Yes [laughing]. That's only a little part of it.

Q : What do you expect from your PhD later on?

A : After completing the PhD, one of the great things is the networking. Our group is the largest, comprising researchers and scholars from Mexico, Spain, American countries, Asian countries, China, and Europe. This big group will produce research fellows, scholars and lecturers who will work in top universities in the world, such as

Mexico, India, China, Spain, and others. So, there is a big network in this field.

In other universities, for example, Oxford, ... Oxford is good, but there is only one professor there in that field, and his group is small. So we may not know many people if we want to join the research there.

Therefore, there is a chance for self-development. Aha! At least you can co-author some papers with them. That would be good.

Q : Are there any changes in your goals or things you perceive as important in life since coming here?

A : In life? It is the same thing. Nothing has changed.

Q : What about studies?

A : About studies? I did this other ‘thing’ (research project) when I first came here. After 7 months, I had to change it. There was a problem in the initial stage. I came with ‘it’, but ‘it’ was given to another student, but since there was a new project, I decided to continue with it. I didn’t care because I needed to study hard.

After 7 months, the project was cancelled due to certain reasons. So it was stopped after 7 months !! (making the ‘pap’ sound with his hands). I closed the book and started from scratch to find a new topic again. My supervisor was not happy because he did not expect that to happen.

Q : What actually happened?

A : There was a conflict among those in high ranks. It was a big project, so many people from various groups wanted to join in. I was told that my third supervisor had his own interest there, and he wanted to dominate all. So I couldn’t follow him as I was not directly under his supervision. I was asked to join the other department, which was the Geography department. Then, how would this be possible as I am from the engineering field?!

So, another option was to change my research project. Again, I fell into a deep thinking ... [once again making the ‘pap’ sound]. It was a long thought, and I was thinking of what I wanted to do. How much would the cost be if I

wanted to pursue it? Can my supervisor afford it? Am I good enough to do it?

One thing before this, after 7 months, it was already clear and ready to commence. But, it was problematic later on when my supervisor suggested doing something different, which made me fall into a deep thinking: What if we did that, how was it going to work? Could it be achieved? How about its cost? Was it affordable? Was this thing logical?

All of these issues would take months to accomplish. In about 3 to 4 months, I really had to come out with something. I told myself, once I start on this, I will not change anymore, and I will not do the thing if it is not clear. So now, I have completed my transfer [from MPhil to PhD]. It's alright, this is my style, and my supervisor also understands me. However, at that time, it was such in haste as it was already November. When December came and the Christmas season, everyone was taking his or her leave. Then, there came January, and by April, it was quite clear. I had to do the literature review again, and submitted my transfer report in January. I had even been chased by the university's administration. They should be more considerate as it was done in less than a year and it wasn't my fault either.

Q : So, what will be your strategy if the project is feasible to be done? Will you strive for it?

A : Yes, I won't be wasting any more time.

Q : Are you satisfied with your life as a PhD student?

A : The best satisfaction I have received from studying so far was during my first degree. That's the best time and the most enjoyable one. PhD is the most stressful experience because there are no deadlines. Although there are deadlines, they look like they will never end. We have started from somewhere, but we will be wondering when and where the finishing line is. I have this doubt, "Am I supposed to be here from 8 am to 10 pm everyday?" Compared to when you're doing the bachelor's degree, once you have done the assignments and exams, and after you have struggled for them, you will get a real threat afterwards, like going for a nap or just relaxing. You don't

feel being continuously burdened for the three years of the study period. It's crazy!!.

Q : Does it make you feel bad if you don't meet the goals?

A : Sometimes yes, especially if I didn't get what I desired. However, with God's blessing, normally, I would achieve my goals. There's nothing to say if I would not achieve anything, but I will try my best by changing my strategies.

INTERVIEW PART II

Participant#1M

Q : Before you came to Plymouth, what are your normal activities at home?

A : Oo if it's in Malaysia?

Q : Yes... what did you do in Malaysia?

A : At this time around I would be probably working. Sometimes I went home late. I also worked at night. I taught 8 to 10 hours a week. Normally a new lecturer will be given less hours of teaching, but they need to do other things more.

Q : In between did you do other things apart from working?

A : Yes, I did go out with friends for a coffee break, meeting and chatting with friends. It's fun. I enjoyed it. **Full of lives**. There's a lot of ways of making money as well through the construction projects offered by some contractors.

Q : Did you take the offer?

A : Yes I took some of those. That's why I went home late. Long time ago, I used to work at the construction site. Many of my uncles are contractors. So, I had done everything since working at the site starting from being a

labour. So when I became an engineer, I didn't make fuss about the job, because I had been a labour before this...starting from layering the bricks, all kind of bricks, building the scaffolding, etc... I had done all of those when I followed my dad to work.

Q : What else did you do?

A : Usually, almost every week I played badminton at the university court. Sometimes I played in the lab with the lab staffs. Sometimes we played table-tennis too. It's fun.

Q : What about family activities?

A : Normally we merely went out on Saturday and Sunday, or doing the shopping. Well, that also depends if I don't have things to do on Saturday. If I had some projects, I would hang on it. It was easy before as my wife could drive. She would drive and take our son, Haziq out. She had all the freedom to do that, but not when we are here. Luckily she's working in the morning, and Haziq goes to school...At least her time has been occupied.

Q : Back then in Malaysia, did you always visit your parents?

A : Yes, quite frequently. At least in 4 or 6 weeks, I need to go home. Once a month I have to go home. It's quite far as the trip will surely cost me at least RM200 for petrol and tolls.

Q : Where are you from?

A : Sepang. The journey is about four hours and a half, but normally in five hours and a half I will reach home. Usually I would stop in between during the journey for a nap. I couldn't help feeling sleepy.

Q : Hmm... what were things you always do at home?

A : The usual thing, hanging out with my parents and some old friends. I still have good friends back home. We went to the same school. Sometimes we went out for dinner in Bagan Lalang.

Q : Did you go out with your family too?

A : Not really, most of the times I was with my friends [laughing]...

Q : Do you do any other activities at your parents' home?

A : If there was a feast, we usually went home for a few days. We wouldn't take long leaves because my wife was a school teacher...

Q : So you have to wait for the school holiday if you want to take longer breaks?

A : Oh, yes. We have to wait for the school holiday for the longer one. But that really depends on my schedule as well. If I don't have any lecture on that particular day, it's OK. If not, ...[shaking his head]. That's the problem between the schedule of the school holiday and the university holiday. They are not the same. Only at the end of the year we share the same schedule. But, it's a rainy season, so we

won't be going anywhere, though. My place has never been flooded, but other areas, yes. Even if I wanted to go to Tioman Island, it wasn't advisable to do so. We'd been thinking of where to go to. Sometimes we spent time in town. But, that's not what a holiday is all about, it's a shopping time! [laughing].

Q : What are your normal activities here?

A : Normally I send Haziq to school, send my wife to work, park the car and walk to the university. In the afternoon, I go to pick up Haziq, and my wife. At home after lunch, I would have a short rest, after the afternoon prayer I go to the university again and go back home at night.

Q : Where does your wife work?

A : At a book store. It's not far from Zalisham's (a Malaysian friend) house.

Q : That's quite far.

A : Yes, quite far. I really need to pick her up.

Q : Where do you send Haziq to?

A : At the Bambino Nursery, Hardiscombe Road. So see, I really need the car to send my wife and son...

Q : There's not many parking places around the university. So, where do you normally park your car?

A : Oh, normally at the nearby hospital, the infirmary hospital, near the train station, or at my house area. I'm the only one here who has to suffer walking back and forth to the university and home.

Q : Do you need to pay for the parking?

A : If it is parked at my zone, I don't have to pay. I can just park anywhere within my zone as long as I like. But, if it is not, I have to be careful. We can only park for free at our own zone. We have to apply for our zone sticker every year. It's £25 a year. They go checking everyday even on weekends. As early as 8am they are already there, and already issued a fine note. There is no parking available at the university. We need to go and park the car somewhere else. We can just park anywhere except at the street with a yellow line, and as long as you are not blocking anyone. That's the free parking. We can still park our car at other zones depending on what it says, for example, "Zone S only, 1-5 pm". That's the only time you can't park, or if you want to park your car there you need to park before 1pm. If you're still there they will surely give you the 'love letter' (the fine note).

Q : It sounds tensed with this parking stuff. What do you think of this?

A : Yes, it's really stressed me up. If I happen to park my car at other people's zone, I really need to act fast to move it to another place. It's stressful. The fine is quite costly...£30...It tires me out.

Q : What do you enjoy doing here?

A : I don't know. What is good about here is that I don't have to work like usual, enjoy my leisure. But, the only

problem is that PhD itself...that sicken me. Apart from it is OK. What else ya...hmm...sight-seeing? Not really...I think it's the weather makes it unpleasant. But I love summer...

Q : Do you really enjoy going out in summer?

A : Oh, yes, It's a real threat. But, I haven't gone out far from here...Only around Plymouth, or the adjacent town like Newton-Abbot, or a stroll at the seaside. But when it is October and November, it's upsetting me. My son kept pleading to bring him out to play. It's too cold and not advisable to do the outdoors. I'm afraid we might get sick...It's hard...

Q : What are other things you find interesting here?

A : In Malaysia I didn't really play golf, but here I do play. A few years back before joining the university, I used to play golf after office hour. But later on, I didn't have time, and I didn't have my golf buddies. It's more costly then here. So I enjoy golfing here more. I play with my Malaysian friends, sometimes I play badminton too.

Q : What are the things that you miss out since you're here?

A : My family and friends...going out for sight-seeing, eating out, and chit-chatting, watching football at 'mamak' stall (Indian cuisine food stall). Sometimes I miss my working life. I don't need to think much, just do the routine. I don't have to be that stressed for 3 years! It's fun to watch them [the students] sometimes, but not always.... I really miss our usual eating out. We have to cook by ourselves here. Always need to bring food from home. We have to...and the same kind of food. I have no choice. My wife

is getting fed-up with cooking. I just eat whatever she cooks. One more thing, it's expensive for eating out.

Q : Do you experience health difficulties when you're here?

A : Yes , I do. My head gets dizzy when I'm too stressed. Or maybe because of not enough sleep, or I had been staring too much on the computer. I have backache too which I have experienced this before. I have dry hands and skin. There are spots on my arms. I'm too lazy to put on the lotion or cream. It's too tedious!

Q : What about smoking?

A : Yes, I do smoke. I have been smoking since school. But now, I smoke when I get so bored.

INTERVIEW PART I

Participant #2, Male

Q : Could you please describe about your background?

A : I'm from Keluang, Johor , the nearest town is Simpang Renggam. I finished school there. After that I went studying at UTM for my first degree, and then after graduated I worked with UTM, and from there I continued my studies till now in the UK. I am now married with a son.

Q : How long have you been here?

A : This is the second time I am here. The first time was in 2003-2004 for a year for the masters' degree. The second time is for this PhD. I arrived in 2005 till now. Now it has been three years, going to be three and half years...

Before this I was a lecturer at UTM. I started my career as a tutor. Shortly after obtaining my masters I was promoted as a lecturer.

Q : Are you under the 'lecturer's scheme'?

A : Yes I am now under the lecturer's scheme.

Q : It's interesting that you have come back to Plymouth. What made you so?

A : Coincidentally, my supervisor for the masters project introduced me to this field, that made me thought that it would be easier for me to work with him, someone whom I have already known. So that's why I have come back to Plymouth, under his supervision. But he is my second supervisor.

Q : So, are you already at your final stage?

A : Oh!Yes, supposedly. I am now still doing my experiment...still doing the data collection.

Q : What is your field?

A : Wireless communication in general. Before this I studied error control in digital communication. Now I am looking into wireless channel. How the communication looks like. If we send data, what would be the effect...

Q : How do you see yourself as a person?

A : I think I am a serious person, but I am sociable. I have no problem in making friends.

Q : In this life, what are the things important to you in general?

A : In this life, in the perspective of ‘external life’ I want to be successful, for example in terms of career, we want to achieve as higher as possible in academia, for instance, a lecturer may want to become a professor. From outside of the career life, I would like to achieve “external and internal” happiness. It means you want to have a peaceful life. It’s good to be peaceful and wealthy. But, not to be rich and unpeaceful life. There are people who are like that. That’s what my perception is. That’s from the emotional side...

Q : What about material? Have you been dreaded for something in life?

A : I have some dreams. If possible I want to have bigger house, but one thing we need to ask whether is it achievable or not? ... not to the extent of being stressed so much on this till neglecting the family...That’s what my feeling is. For one thing, what we get is a gift from Allah the Almighty. We strive...it is up to Him ...We have to have faith...

Q : In your life as a postgraduate student, do you have any specific goal that you may want to achieve?

A : PhD is one thing. That’s a physical thing to me. The other thing is knowledge. A lot of things I don’t know. After arriving here, I have learned a lot of things. The third one is experience. Those are the two things important to me.

Q : Do you have other goals?

A: To publish papers...Oh!yes, network...hopefully, when I go back to Malaysia, I still maintain the network with my supervisor, that is more towards the work I am working on ...

Q : What about consultancies?

A : I'm interested in consultancies. That is why I have been working hard try to gain knowledge and experience. You can do research and consultancy. In these two, you will learn new things, gain more knowledge and experience...Technology has changed, so you have to have an updated knowledge...

Q : Yes, you are right. Well, do you face changes as well in your goals?

A : In the scope of the project, you will experience that. In doing the experiments, I have many times encountered problems. I have been exploring to the extent that I realised it has long been abandoned, it is worthwhile of not to go and explore that anymore, and as a result I changed my perspective and started to look for the new possible and not-too complex because it's not because I couldn't do it, but it might take time to do it. It's a scary thing that if with the lack of resources, say, the computer speed is low, I would not finish my PhD. So I have to limit my scope, and stay focused.

Q : So you mean you would do something that is feasible, with moderate risks?

A : Moderate risks and the goal is achievable.

Q : What made you further your studies, apart from being told to do so?

A : Apart from my responsibility as an academic staff of UTM, I have always dreamed to further study to the highest level.

Q : Was it more from your heart or the responsibility as an academician at your university?

A ; I think it was more from myself...because the opportunity was there, it made me easier to sail with my dream. It has always been my dream since small to go studying abroad. I had said that to my heart, and I still remember it. Thank God, my path was easy. Thank God, I got through, what's left is to finish my PhD, and then I will go back home to serve.

One more thing, knowledge is very important. I love learning.

Q : Do you agree if I say that one would be in such a waste if he or she doesn't grab any opportunities as possible?

A : Yes I agree. There is opportunity, the environment is very encouraging, why don't we grab the chance, and try to make use as much as possible to create something good. I believe that's what we should do. We can feel the difference in this environment, culturally, for example from our place and here...

Q : How would you feel like if you don't use the available resources and opportunities?

A ; I will definitely feel dissatisfied with myself. If I have strived, but I still cannot achieve my goal, at least I would be dissatisfied with my performance, but not to myself.

Q : Did you face any difficulty in settling down here?

A : My problem here is depending on the scholarship. It will be problematic if the scholarship does not continue. In a few months time, it will be hard for me. The scholarship really helps. I can focus, but for the months ahead...I've been thinking...

Q : Do you work?

A : Yes, I do part time job 10 hours a week...I need to focus...my wife works as well.

Q : So, who takes care of your son?

A : We take turns to look after him. She goes to work in the morning. Three hours in the morning, so I look after him along the three hours...

Q : Do you think you work hard to achieve your goals?

A : Yes , I do. For example, this PhD is all I have ever wanted in life.

Q : Till now are you satisfied with your life?

A : I think I am satisfied...Be grateful to what I have achieved so far. If I am stuck at certain point, but on the other I think I have got most things in my life, that

somehow contributed [to the satisfaction]...For example, [I have] family, child, ...Akil (his son) really reduces my stress, when I got home I played with him, I relieved...emotionally relieved and relaxed...

Q : What do you understand with life satisfaction?

Ultimate goals...which to me, is happiness, success, and material satisfaction. The first two must exist first, happiness refers to life, peaceful life, feel happy,...success refers to career and things like that...

Q : Do you feel bad if you don't fulfil your goals?

A : If I have tried out, but in vain, I will surely feel frustrated, but if I don't, I will probably be angry with myself.

INTERVIEW PART II**Participant #2, Male**

Q : Could you please describe your normal activities in Malaysia?

A : I would be working in the office, do some office stuffs. On weekdays, I would be working as usual, and sometimes I went home late. Normally at 8pm I had my dinner, eased myself in front of the TV and went to sleep at 11 or 12pm. That's my weekday routine. Not much things done on weekdays. If I wasn't busy, sometimes I went home late after eating out in town with my wife or my buddies. During weekends, normally once a month, I went back home in Simpang Renggam (SR) to visit my parents. Sometimes twice a month...

Q : What did you do at your parents' place?

A : Just loafing around at home. Normally on a weekend, I would be going to town, visiting my relatives, not far from the university, almost at Johor Bahru (JB). Sometimes, when I went home in SR, but I would always go to JB to visit my grandfather.

Q : Did you do some sports?

A : In Malaysia, used to play badminton twice a week with my friends.

Q : What about your normal activities here?

A : On weekdays if I don't go to the university I will be looking after my son for three hours in the

morning after my wife went to work. I will be going to university after my wife returned and will be there until late afternoon or evening. Lately, I go home late at night almost every day. I work part-time on Monday. If I have other matters I will be going late to the university. For example, going to the bank, send my son to the clinic. Eating out is very seldom. Once a month I went to Pizza Hut in Barbican, and ordered the Vegetarian Pizza. There are four types of the pizza that are being kept rotated each time when we are there. We seldom go to other places. Normally I buy the take-away, or ask for home-delivery.

Q : What about weekends?

A : On weekend I really enjoy the car-boot sales. It's normally held at the Union Street, near the cinema...it's going towards Devonport. It opens almost every day, though. That's what I enjoy doing during weekend. Normally I have a list of things to buy.

Q : What had you bought so far?

A : Oh... spanner set, toys and books for my son, shoes, plates,...

Q : Are they still in a good quality?

A : Yes, they are. They are not old stuffs, still in good quality. What is good about here is its system of disposing things. Not really disposing, but recycling...

I used to play badminton during weekends at the Nancy Astor Building. It's £6 for one hour. Normally I played with Hidayat (Malaysian friend) and a few other international students, and also a friend from Derriford. Hmm...I work on Saturday as well...at the Mail Centre of the Royal Mail.

Q : What do you miss out while you are here?

A : The thing I miss the most is the food, as well as the eating out activities.. I miss *soto, mee rebus, laksa Johor...*

Q : What do you enjoy here?

A : I enjoy doing the sight-seeing. It's beautiful here, in Plymouth, especially the Hoe. One more thing is the shopping. I think I am being appreciated more [as a customer] here. The customer service is good. So I guess it is more enjoyable when dealing with people. They appreciate us as a client. The internet connection is brilliant, fast. The technology here is undoubtedly excellent.

Q : What about food here?

A : I don't enjoy much the western food. I can eat Western food, but there are some limitations. There are things we cannot eat, so can't really eat all well. It's limited. If possible I really want to try the steak, but it's forbidden...

Q : Apart from food, have you ever felt that there are things back home, such as a responsibility, that you miss when you are here?

A : Yes, I have. A couple of months ago, my parents had just started renovating the house. That time my parents really needed support from us, especially in terms of monitoring the progress of the project. But I couldn't do anything as I wasn't there. I could only help from the economic side. All things needed to be done on our own. Get the roof, find the right bricks and so on. My dad was working somewhere else that time. So, it's my mum who had to take over the responsibility. That's not her expertise though, nor her responsibility, but she had no choice, had to do it. I felt sorry for her...

Q : Is your dad still working?

A : Yes, he is still working. He is a lorry-driver. From morning till late afternoon, sometimes till evening sending things here and there. So, it's mum who had to manage all that, at the same time looked after the house too. If I were there, I could help.

Q : How is the progress of the renovation?

A : It's almost done, but at one time it was left unattended because the contractor did not do it accordingly, so my mum terminated his service, and it took us some times before we could get a new contractor.

Q : Did your siblings lend their help too?

A : Yes, a little bit. Actually I was the only one who lived the nearest. My siblings live a little bit further from my parents' home.

I miss doing this too, monitoring the education of my younger siblings. Helping to identify the right college or university to enter, and helping the one who just graduated... I couldn't help much. We can only correspond to one another through phone calls and emails. This long-distance relationship is pretty hard... If I am near them I will definitely help. Now I am guarding them from afar. I think it's important to spend time with family. The commitment is important. Most of the time, we are corresponding via phones. Luckily, the phones are not costly. In a week, I spend about 2 to 3 hours phoning them.

Q : How do feel when you think about your family?

A : If I think about them sometimes I feel sad, but not too sad, just the feeling of missing them...

Q : Do you face any health difficulty here?

A : I normally get headaches. I might get them once a month. If I don't get much sleep or being too busy, less rest, I will feel tensed on the back of my neck. It could be because of age. I am now almost 30, I have found that I'm not as robust as before. Before this I could stay up late until 3 in the morning. I could still push myself in front of the computer, but not now. I need to sleep early. May be I have been thinking hard these days. Thinking is one of the factors that make us tired. I usually experience back pain too. It could be because of long hours sitting in front of the computer.

INTERVIEW PART II

Participant #3, Female

Q : What do you miss out about Malaysia since you are here?

A : Of course my family, my mum, my dad, and my brothers, and sometimes I miss what I'm probably missing out on, for example my daily life, such as in the morning I used to send my daughter to my mum, we are very close and my mum's place is not far from my workplace. Here I feel it is difficult as we have to do things on our own. It's tedious. If at home in [in Malaysia], if I am too tired, I can just get things [food] from the stalls, eat out. Here there's no other way than to cook on your own. Sometimes my daughter kept whining. I imagine that if in Malaysia I could go out for movies with my husband and leave our daughter in my mum's care for a few hours, but here there's nobody who could take care of my baby. Whatever it is, I have to...sometimes it come to my mind and I wonder how is life in Malaysia? I have many friends who are doing their PhD in Malaysia. When I read their blogs, I notice their lifestyle and imagine that if I still lived in Malaysia, I would have the same kind of life. We already have a house at home. I am always dreaming of properly settling down in that house. It's hard for me. We left the house under my sister-in-law's care. I can't stop thinking that the way she looks after the house might not be the same as I did. I am not really satisfied. We have a car in Malaysia, but we don't sell it, as the value is going down. So, we keep it.

Q : Did you drive before this?

A : Yes, I did. But now I don't. I don't even have a car here. I lead a very humble and simple life. But I think it is a pleasant thing to keep this way. There is no sense of competitiveness. It is not supposed to be like that though. Islam forbids us [from being competitive in the sense of showing off]. But, automatically it could happen. Could be because of the financial stress. Before this we earned a

double-income. Now my husband is on a fully-unpaid leave. We need to pay the house and car back home in Malaysia, and now it's only depending on one person's salary. We can't save anything from my salary. The scholarship is always just barely enough for our monthly expenditure. We can't save anything from it. My husband has not started working yet. Every month whenever I pay for the online bills, I am stressed. Just look at my friends in Malaysia, they are not affected. Both husband and wife receive their normal pay, and at the same time they still receive the scholarship. It seems to be really enjoyable that they can buy toys to their children and branded clothes. So I'm missing that...

Q : So, do you mean that you have some regrets by coming here?

A : No, definitely no. I have already felt what it was like during my Masters. There were plenty of work and distractions. Here, there are distractions too, but in Malaysia, it's 10 times bigger [laughing]...My husband thought I would be crying or feeling very homesick, but since coming here I have never cried. Now I keep praying hard that nobody in the family fall sick. I'm scared that I would be unable to cope.

Q : Could you tell me about your activities here?

A : My routine?

Q : Yes, your daily activities...

A : As a Muslim after wake up, I will perform the morning prayer. Sometimes I go back to sleep after the prayer. But, I try not to. So, I will be working from 8 am to 930 am. Afterwards, I'll read the newspaper. At 930 Aisyah [her

daughter] normally wakes up, I feed her, change her nappy, and bath her, play with her till almost 1030 or 11am. Then I will go to lab. Do my research work, stop for lunch at 1.00pm to 2 pm. After the afternoon prayer I will continue working till 4pm. After a coffee break, I continue working until 7. By 730 I reach home, play with my daughter, breastfeed her, start to cook for dinner at 8pm, have dinner at 9pm. At 1030 or 11.30 after putting Aisyah to sleep, I normally doze off. The next day, the same routine continues.

Q : How about weekends?

A : During weekends, I would wake up late. Normally on Friday we go shopping for groceries. I look forward to it because it's a family-day-out. I love going to town with my husband and daughter. Furthermore, it is Friday and it is not many people around. I love shopping and we will be back home at almost dusk. Shopping makes me happy [gigling]. On Saturday I normally stay at home, do the house chores.

Q : What about Sunday?

A : Oh, I work in my lab on Sunday. I work from Sunday till Thursday. But usually I start late at 1 pm and work till 6pm on Sunday.

Q : What do enjoy doing now in the UK?

A : In terms of research, it is much enjoyable experience compared to the one in Malaysia.

Q : Apart from research, what are the normal activities you enjoy doing here?

A : Travelling, shopping, or even window shopping

Q : Where do you normally shop?

A : Just anywhere, in the town, at the e-bay...

Q : What made you love shopping here?

A : I just love shopping! I find it here the fashion design is beautiful, even at Primark, everything is just nice and cheap. One more thing about this shopping, I have developed a habit of converting the price [from pounds to ringgits], and begin thinking, “it must be expensive in Malaysia, so let’s buy it”. For example, things at the Early Learning Centre, the preschoolers’ product, in Malaysia it can be costly, but here you can get from £20 to £40 only. That doesn’t cost you much. At first I loved to buy household things. Though the house is furnished, but things like cooking pots, food container, and as such, need to be bought. But now, I don’t buy those things anymore. I’m getting smarter at spending. I always go to charity shop for clothes. Not bad. Now I have a new interest. Online bidding at the e-bay! I used to buy books for 49 pence. Sometimes there are second-hand books, but there are also new books or first-hand books, which are sold at the e-bay at a very low price. You just need to be diligent and patient in bidding something. Things you bid will be mailed to you by post. I have done this a few times, but still need to put limit to this activity.

Q : What else do you find interesting here?

A : If now, I like the weather, it’s fairly warm, not that cold. If it is too cold, I totally hate it. The same thing in Malaysia, if it is too warm, then I will get headaches. Sometimes here I could get headaches too if the heater is too warm.

Q : What about food?

A : Nope, not at all here.

Q : What is your view on the practice of religion?

A : I'm scared that I'm getting 'swayed away' [loosening the strength in terms practising of religion]. But sometimes, being here is great. For example, before this I dare not perform the prayer in front of other people when I'm the only one doing that, but here I can just perform it without feeling conscious or any worry. In terms of knowledge of food intake, I have become more particular. Before this, we could just buy food at any stalls after satisfied that the cook is a Malay [who normally being associated as a Muslim], but here really need to scrutinise what the ingredients are...That turns us to be more conscious [with food].

Q : What about your level or 'tawakkal' [leave everything in the hands of the God] ?

A : We have to be more 'tawakkal', and positive with what the God has sent us. We have to rely on Him, and be more positive because there is no other person who can help us. I need to remind myself every pounds of the scholarship money that I need to spend must be wisely spent on. That's what I always request in my prayers.

Q : Did you do any recreational activities in Malaysia?

A : No, not really, but I used to go to the cinema or watching DVDs which I got at a cheap price. . I don't really miss that though now, because I don't have time to watch

them here. What's bugging me is that my husband's complaint [of being unable to go for movies and getting cheap DVDs], because he's not working...

Q : Do you experience any health problems here?

A : No, I don't think I have any problem. I feel much healthier here compared to when I was in Malaysia. Maybe it is because I cook the food myself. We can control the cholesterol, and more hygienic.

INTERVIEW PART I**Participant #3, Female.****Q : Could you please describe briefly about yourself?**

A : I am from Malaysia. I am currently doing MPhil/PhD in Computer Music. I started in 2008. I'm in my late twenties...going to be in my 30s. I'm here with my family; my husband and also my eight month old baby. I'm pretty much juggling between being a PhD student and a wife and a mummy at the same time. Before this, I worked with University Putra Malaysia...I worked there as a tutor and had been working for four and half years in the Department of Computer Science.

Q : Could you tell me a little bit of your studies here?

A : As I said earlier, I'm doing PhD in Computer Music so most of the things I'm dealing with is musical data set. What I'm trying to do is actually to produce a new form of music through *cantiantive* (?) music method and I'm trying to add some artificial intelligent into it. So that's basically what I'm trying to do it for my PhD. I'm in my fifth month right now and that's why I'm proposing my third month report, and I'm working on my six month report which is coming very soon, and ...basically I'm working on the processing and experimenting of my data set, trying to use tools that are available and see how I could improve them. That's what I'm doing right now.

Q : What do you hope to achieve in life?

A : Okay... I guess I want to be happy. I want to achieve happiness. I want to make my family and those around me happy as well. I don't want to burden anyone. Of course, I'm doing PhD right now, and ultimately I want to get that doctorate title in the end...so that I can better myself in the employment opportunity and improve the condition of my family's well-being, but ultimately I want to be happy.

Q : Do you think material is important to you too?

A : It is very crucial to say I don't want to do anything with the material...I guess up to certain extent, yes. It is an important aspect of life.

Q : What are other things that important to you?

A : As I said before...I want to be happy and those around me happy. The most important thing to me is my family.

Q : Do you believe in God?

A : Yes..yes.

Q : Can you describe your relationship with the God?

A : I'm a Muslim. I try to do what a Muslim is supposed to do, like pray five times a day, fasting during the month of Ramadhan, all of that,... and I try to live my life in a way which the God will also stay happy with me. I don't want to anger Him in any way such as doing things wrong and things that stray from the right path basically.

Q : Are there any reasons why you pursue your PhD?

A : Okay...hmm...the easy answer to that question is that I was working with Universiti Putra Malaysia, and basically I was forced to do one, a PhD. But there's also a part of me that wanting to do the PhD.

When I was small, I always wanted to be a lecturer, and in this kept on continuing as I grew up. I had a very ...I would say a good role model because my dad himself is a PhD holder. So along the years, when I looked at my dad and I only saw that when one has a PhD, only then he or she can say that "I have gained all the degrees or of the qualifications that I need". So to me if I have the bachelor degree that I won't be easily satisfied...I didn't stay satisfied, that's why I pursued for the Master degree. When I obtained the Masters degree I felt like there's a need to have the PhD. It's not like to compare or compete with my dad, but something I felt I really wanted to do. The fact that I worked with UPM, made the path easier for me...

Q : Apart from the PhD, what have you been aiming for in life?

A : Okay... this is getting a little bit personal, but I guess I'll share...hmm...throughout life things have been pretty much easygoing for me. I obtained my first and Masters degrees, of course after working hard. But one important thing that I had ever wanted in life that I thought I had no control was being pregnant. When the first time I got married, I was under the impression that...oh after certain period of time we'll get pregnant easily and have a baby. But that was proven wrong. In my case I'd been married for three whole years and probably I had been trying for one and a half years but without any success. I had been pregnant on the first time and then miscarried. That was the extremely black period in my life and it had kind of affected my masters' study that time. I took it really badly, and I was... I would say I was a bit depressed though I was

never clinically diagnosed as being depressed or anything. That's one thing I wanted in life was to get a baby. And then Thank God after two years I was given the greatest gift, my baby.

Q : Has there been a change in goal since becoming a PhD student?

A : No.. I still ..want that PhD.

Q : Do you think you work hard enough to achieve your goals?

A : I think I work hard. I certainly put my effort in the work I do. But I guess I could push myself harder. Yes... I think I am capable of giving more [laughing] into my work. But I'm kind of happy with what I'm doing so far. But I could be happier if I could spend a bit more.

Q : What made you didn't put much of effort in your work? Do you have some hindrance factors in that?

A : I wouldn't say hindrance factors, but I'm currently trying to find a balance between family and work or study. Hmm...before this when I was doing my masters and degree I had not become a mom, and when I did my masters I was...I became somebody's wife, and it was already difficult for me in trying to balance the house chores and so on, but with the addition of the baby right now, I'm full forced.

I'm feeling it full force. I'm not complaining and I am trying to adjust and balance things up, so I guess if I try to work harder as in if I stay up late at night after my baby has gone to bed or something... probably that would be my

limit, but right now I'm not doing that,...I sleep early and then probably get up early as well,...I think I'm really slow...maybe it is because of the flow of PhD and I am not really in hurry or whatever. But if once I am forced on a deadline, I might push myself to that limit.

Q : Do you employ any strategies if you want to achieve something that is important in your life? For example in finding the balance?

A : I don't employ any approach. What I do right now is kind of let go with the flow and take one thing at the time, take each thing when it comes, and try to do with most what you have. So basically my motto is, if when the God gives you lemon, you will turn it to be lemonade, see or not? Lemons are sour, but you will try to make it sweet.

Q : Do you think you have strive to the fullest potential as a person?

A : Again, I could give more ...

Q : Are you satisfied with your life right now? Say, if I give you a scale of one to ten. Ten means you're very satisfied with your life, one shows the least satisfied you're. How much do you rate your satisfaction?

A : Okay...say 9.5 , and I only said 9.5...the other 9.5 is probably because I haven't had the PhD and my family is away.

Q : So, what makes you sound that satisfied?

A: I don't know if just today if you ask me after a very bad day probably I'll give a five, but maybe today I kind of feel good because hmm...There have been some issues lately because I notice I couldn't get into the lab until eleven every day, and then I go back home at 8, and then my hubby... he didn't complain, but he kept telling me that I had been spending less and less time with the baby, which I shouldn't be.

So now I'm trying up a new phase for me to work out, which is to get up early like 6.30 and start working at half past seven to half past 9 which normally the time when my baby wakes up, and then I tend to her from half past 9 till half past 10, which is like changing her nappy, bath her, and then start feeding her breakfast, and then I have my own breakfast with her, and at 11 I would leave for office, and then I work and try to get home at 7 the latest...like half past 6 or 7. So, when I get home, I would spend more time with her...So I'm pretty happy because this morning I managed to do that and I think it's working for me if I stick to it. As I said before, If the God gives me lemon, I will make it lemonade. I have slightly less time spent on my work compared to others who have no responsibilities as mine. So I have to work around it.

Q : Well, that's one of the strategies...

A : Is it? Well, yes, that's one of the strategies. But, yeah...that's what I'm trying to do and since that's working for me and I feel happy. You know, I'm guilt-free today. I worked in the morning and at the same time I get to tend to my baby. It's not I'm focusing on my work alone and I'm leaving the baby, or I'm looking after my baby and missing out my work...so that's why I am kind of in good mood today ...at least...

Q : Do you agree that satisfaction in life should include happiness in getting what you want in life and having good relationship with the God?

A : Okay...I would have to say yes...but you always don't get what you want. In my case, I usually turn to the God I would pray to him or complain to him...but this is a little bit embarrassing...But sometimes when I don't get what I want in life especially doing the trying out for the baby phase, that's was very hard for me and I sometimes felt I didn't want to face the God...I mean...I thought that it was unfair of Him at the time...but I was lucky because my husband was with me and he was the one who set me down and you know...corrected me when I was wrong. We share the same belief and he was the one who pulled me back and said "look it was not the God's fault,"...whatever and so on...

**Q : Have you been harassed before this in this country?
I mean something got to do with the racial things?**

A : Yes, several times [laughing]

Q : How did you take it?

A : Funny when you asked this question...I was in England ten years ago when I was doing my A-Level...and I'm back here again...and I went back to Malaysia and came back here. When I was doing those teenage-A-Level years, I was self-conscious. I was wearing a hijab, a veil, in front of other students or...people of who are not from the same belief, who do not know Islam or whatever...I would be very embarrassed if anyone went up to me and said whatever ...made a bad remark of how I look or my appearance with the head cover. I would probably be very upset for days. But now, ten years afterwards, I don't know whether it's got to do with me being a mother, me being matured or I just like ya...[laughing] whatever...Ya...whatever because I knew the people who made those remarks were below me...their level of maturity or intellectual or whatever you call it, they were just

somewhere below down there. So it's just...it doesn't get into me anymore. But, ya...but this time around I had been called several names... especially when the Gaza War...just now...I mean a few months ago...it was at its peak ...and people were looking at me really, horribly and some said “Go back to your country” and things like that...but that doesn't bother me anymore.

INTERVIEW PART I**Participant #4, Female**

Q : Could you please describe about yourself?

A : Obviously, I'm from Malaysia, I used to teach in one of the universities in Malaysia. I had my first degree in one of the local universities and I did my Masters in one of the universities in the UK, and now I'm doing my PhD in Plymouth.

Q : How long had you been working before this?

A : I have started working in 2001 and hold the post as a lecturer since 2003.

Q : Okay, tell me about your studies, what year are you now?

A : Currently I am in my second year doing my PhD, waiting for the approval to the transfer from MPhil to PhD.

Q : In what field?

A : Information security.

Q : How do you describe yourself as a person?

I am a stubborn person. I think I am quite determined, if I want something I work for it. Always looking for self-actualisation which means that I will search for the knowledge until I feel satisfied. But, you know that human nature it's difficult to be satisfied.

Q : To reach certain points of satisfaction...?

A : It depends as satisfaction may change from time to time.

Q : Okay, in life what do you hope to achieve?

A : In life...hmm...could it be in religious reason?

Q : Yes, could be in any reason...

A : Okay, this is embarrassing. I wish to be like a very good daughter to my parents, live life to the fullest, enjoy the present, keep the past, learn from the past, never look back except to learn. That's my principles.

Q : Is there any reasons for you to pursue your study up to this level now?

A : When I was teaching my students, I felt like I didn't have enough knowledge or skills to become a good teacher to my students. I don't get easily satisfied with my current knowledge. That's why I took the opportunity to continue study and improve myself from time to time.

Q : Is that the only reason?

A : Of course there's some other factors, which one of them is that...in my university you can't confirm your position as an academician without a PhD. Otherwise, I'm on a contract basis which means they can just terminate me whenever they want. In other way is the security of the job, to secure my job in the university...

Q : So that's why you really need to get the PhD?

A : Yes.

Q : In life as a postgraduate student, what are the things matter most to you?

A : Research ...I think so. Meeting high expectation from your supervisors, which is not being based on examinations like we used to have during the undergraduate years. We really concern about our marks, and you know...But as a postgraduate, what matters most is how do you learn, how do you improve or emerge from this point to this point, what have you learned in the between, what have you gone through the experience, and also a little thing that you learned...

Q : Is that also to include relationship with people?

A : Ah! Yes,...communication skills and also how do you manage your time and how do you manage your

stress because during postgraduate is a little bit more... I mean it's not a little bit more, but I'm sure it's more...the stress is different, so you have to cope with stress...

Q : Which you think is more stressful than before?

A : Yeah ...I think so.

Q : To you, which phase is more stressful? ...like 3 to 4 months before, compared to now?

A : To meet the deadline for the transfer report is very stressful for me because it's like the entry point for you to become a PhD student. Otherwise if you're not eligible, then you remain as an MPhil student, which is...means that you fail to...to meet the requirement of scholarship financial guarantor or for those who give hopes for you to finish PhD.

Q : Has there been a change in your goals, since you become a postgraduate student?

A : You mean life goals?

Q : Yes...

A : Well, what I can tell you is that PhD may change me from a person to a new person. I think it has the capacity to change myself from previous to now...What do you mean by changing goals?

Q : Hmm...maybe you could have different goals before this. When you entered the life of a postgraduate student doing PhD you may have different...see things differently and change your goals eventually.

A : See things differently, yes, but not mainly changing my goal. My goal is still there. It might have come out with other objectives or other small goals, come out from time to time, but...

Q : In order to reach the big goal? Is it?

A : I don't think it change the goal. It still remains as my goal, but just that it has turned me to something else like changing myself, like changing how I cope with the stress level, how you manage your time.

Q : Do you think you work hard to achieve those goals?

A : I don't know what the measurement of working hard. It's subjective. But what I know is that I haven't done enough what I'm supposed to do.

Q : Is it difficult for you to reach out for a goal?

A : Yeah ...it's difficult, I mean for my past few years...I mean in my life, lots of things that...I'm not a genius person when you can just sit and do a little bit and you can get whatever you want. But, I'm just a person that has to work for it. I have to do a lot of things for whatever I want. But, I'm just a person that has to work for it. I have to do a lot of things, and

whatever it takes, I'm willing to do it, as long as it will reach what I want.

Q : Do you employ any specific strategies in order to achieve something in life, say in the academic life?

A : I do discuss with my colleagues who already obtained the PhD, try to learn from them and try to learn how they cope with the difficulties in their studies. What else?...and of course I'm using the religious approach, which is to pray, recite the Quran, do extra prayers, and fasting, sometimes, talking to my friends, talking to my mom, my family sometimes...is not mainly to talk about your problem, but just try to control stress basically, because when I'm panic I can't do anything. So I try not to get panicked and try to make it you know like not to let things to the last minute...but it always happen to the last minute...I don't know I'm still searching for strategies how to make life...you know...avoid the last minute...

Q : Do you think you have strived to the fullest potential of yourself in order to meet whatever you desire?

A : I did a few times. The first time was when I was doing the SPM and the second time was when I was doing the MSc. That's the biggest strive that I have ever done in my life...I worked until I couldn't work anymore. It's like...until the last point where I thought if other people asked more from me I couldn't give anymore...This is me and you can't expect more than this. This is my capabilities and this is what I can do. I think so...

Q : Are you satisfied with your life?

A : Is it satisfied same as grateful?

Q : In whatever your interpretation is...

A : Hmm...being grateful yes...I'm grateful with what I have, with what I'm here, with what I'm doing now. Satisfied...? I'm not satisfied with my current knowledge. That's it. Because usually in my area of study, people know how to do the programming, and I don't know. I'm not good at programming. So I guess...I need to learn more of it...

Q : What do you understand about satisfaction in life in general?

A : Be happy...satisfied...what could you asked more...? Very satisfied which is you're not searching any other things that make you satisfied...you're OK...you're at the Alpha level. eh?...means that it's like you are very peaceful, not a...

Q : A comfort zone, huh?

A : Yeah...not being threatened...you will get what you have is what you want, you will feel satisfied.

Q : If you don't meet your goal, would that made you feel bad?

A : I might be upset, dissatisfied, down, demotivated, bla...bla...bla...But that would be in some interval times but after that I'll get up and try to figure out whether I can turn this opportunity like to gain another big goal or to find why this is happening because things happen for reasons...so...

Q : If I give you are given a scale of 1 to 10. Ten is the happiest you are, 1 is the least happy you're. Where do you think you place yourself?

A : Seven

Q : What about a month before?

A : One month before?...Six.

Participant #6, Male.

Q : Could you please describe about your background?

A : I'm _____. I'm 29 year old from Perak Malaysia. I am the second child from eight. I worked with the University of Malaya (UM) before I came here to study. I did my undergraduate and Masters' degree at UM. In 2003 I joined the university as a lecturer. Five years later I was appointed as a Senior Lecturer.

Q : Can you tell me about your study experience in Plymouth?

A : I have been here for 6 months. I'm doing Computer Science, focussing on the network security in detecting intrusions. What I am trying to do is to identify which attack has the actual higher risks. For the time being we can detect the intrusions, but we still can't specify which intrusions are the real ones.

Q : How do you perceive yourself?

A : I have a high belief of myself that I am better than any others, unless they can prove to me that they are better than me. I am hard to be convinced by people. I don't care who the person is, ...could be someone who is younger than me, or older, he or she could be anybody...as long as he or she could prove to me that I am wrong.

Q : In life what do you expect to achieve?

A : In the short run, I need to finish my PhD. I don't have anything to think about, just that. In the long-run I want to be somebody.

Q : For example...?

A : Say to become a Vice Chancellor, or at least a Deputy of Vice Chancellor...or the highest administrator at the university. But, we have to have our own strength, our academic strength, some politics, personality, social support, and our own influence. To me, in order to be a somebody, it has to start with achieving something impossible to achieve by normal people, for example getting promoted to become a senior lecturer at a young age, then people will remember you more.

Q : What made you think it is important to you to have this sort of achievement?

A : I came from a poor family. I have seen that when we are nobody people don't bother about us. My family only gained respect when my brother and I have become somebody, for example when I was appointed as a lecturer at UM everyone seems to bow at us. UM is a popular university, everyone knows it. Those people sort of impressed...

For one thing, if possible, before 36 I want to be a professor, or to break someone's record. For example, if someone in the department gets promoted to be a professor at 42, so I want to get it at an earlier age, say 40...

Q : What is important to you in your life as a postgraduate student?

A : To me it is only a stepping stone to get a PhD. Nothing more, nothing less. I have already involved in research for five years, I used to get grants of hundred thousand [ringgits]..., I have already supervised masters students, and even PhD students. So I think I am here because I was asked by my professor to come here and to get the PhD. That's it. I can't think of any reason, except that. Oh...for one thing, I can save some money too.

Q : What do you mean by 'save some money'?

A : If you're still in Malaysia, you can't save much of your money because the money is out there, and there are always things to be spent for. When you're here, it is enough to spend on the scholarship. That's how you can save your money.

Q : Do you think you work hard enough to achieve your goals?

A : Previously, I think I had done like any other people, but actually when I sat down analysing, it turned out to be that I had done more than what I was supposed to do. Then I knew that compared to others, I had achieved more than them.

Q : Does it make you feel bad if you don't achieve your goals?

A : Yes, I do.

Q : How would you describe that?

A : I would ask why I didn't achieve it. Let say, if I didn't get promoted last time, I would ask my dean why I didn't get it. So basically I need to know the reason first. I'm a very concrete-minded person. If they gave me a good reason, I wouldn't be angry with them, and keep silent.

Q : Would you be stressed out because of that?

A : No, I don't think so. I wouldn't go to that far. I would get stressed if I get myself into thinking hard about achieving my goals. That would make me stress. Once I know that I fail to meet the goals, because of something...I would normally think on how to work things out...

Q : If I give you a happiness scale of one to ten. How much do you rate your level of happiness at this moment? Ten is the most happy you are...

A : I am not satisfied in life since I am not married yet. I have been talking to myself that if I don't get my PhD, I will not get married. I have to achieve certain things first, for example at the moment, the PhD, before get on with other things in life, such as getting married. I would say I'm on the average of seven...

I am satisfied because I can help my family, I have a job, I have some *rizq* (provision), assets, but there are two important things still missing from me; children and the PhD.

Q : Okay, let's talk about home. What were the normal activities you do in Malaysia?

A : Apart from working, I went to the gym or involved in some sports. My everyday routine in Malaysia and here are

almost the same, except on Saturday and Sunday. I would try to spend time with my friends and visit my relatives. Basically, I would avoid staying at home. It is also the same here when I always go and poke my buddy, Zarul, asking him to go out somewhere with me. Before this, most of the time I went for movies and played bowling with my friends. On Sunday afternoon I loved to jog around the campus, or at a lake near my house. But here, I don't jog because it is too cold. Normally I substitute that with running on the treadmill. Apart from that, I don't have any other activities. Such a boring life, huh... That is why you can see me travelling whenever semester breaks.

Q : What do you miss about home?

A : Food, my house, and my life in Malaysia. I can easily make money there. People are looking for me. It's quite a lot of money. I also miss my family.

Q : What do you enjoy about life here?

A : No, nothing at all.

Q : What do you think of going out, visiting places ...could it be something that make you happy?

A : Yes, simply to make my life colourful. It's not something that really excites me.

Q : Do you face any health related problems here?

A : No so far, nothing at all.

Participant #5, Male.

Q : Could you please tell me about yourself?

A : My name _____. I am 29 year old. I am married with a son. I was selected by the university where I worked with to do PhD in Information Security in the UK under the staff training scheme or locally known as the SLAB scholarship.

Q : How long have you been in the UK?

A : I have been here since 2006, so nearly three years here. I have started in Nottingham, but continued in Plymouth since January 2008. Supposedly I have a year and a half more to go...till December 2010. The other day I applied for the scholarship extension, and I managed to get through. But it is for the next six months only. If I extend for another six months, I will not get any scholarship, I will then have to be on my own.

Q : How do you see yourself as a person?

A : Basically, I am a cool person, but sometimes if I am not satisfied with something, I could be carried away. To some people, they can just calm down after sometime, but for a person like me, I could hold a grudge. But I am not always like that. It rarely happens.

Q : What do you want to achieve in life generally?

A : Frankly speaking, I don't know what to achieve in life. To me, it is enough to complete my study, have my own

family, have my own children, I can go back home, and continue to serve to the country. That's all. I don't expect to achieve any bigger dream. I am satisfied enough to be in the comfort zone.

Q : What made you pursue your PhD?

A : First and foremost is to help my family. Secondly, is to maintain the dignity of my family...it is because I come from a village, and being the firstborn...I bring hopes to my family, a motivator to my brothers and sisters that though we come from a poor family background, in a village with lack of facilities, however, we have managed to come to this far. In other words that if other people managed to arrive to this level of achievement, so why can't we achieve the same thing? So I think it is a kind of motivation...

Q : What about for your own development?

A : Yes, I guess for my own development as well, but I don't think I have developed much while doing the PhD, because I have been too focus on the research...

Q : Do you think being in the third year, you have this style of thinking?

A : Yes, true. I was excited at first, but as time goes by, I think how much I have wasted my time. At my earlier stage of doing PhD I felt that I had seen the direction, but as time passed I have been intrigued with what I have actually done. To me, going to the university or not, are all the same. But as I said earlier, I study because of my family...

Q : What do you think it is more important to you now?

A : First, my family. Before this PhD was my first priority. But now it means nothing to me. Could be some kind of egoism, huh? But I think it is not all that matters, it is my family that matters most. When we have our own family, our responsibilities are getting bigger. There are certain percentages of the well-being of the family, my parents, the PhD and for myself that need to be taken care of.

Q : Do you experience any changes in your goals whilst you are here?

A : Yes a lot...most people come here to study, they seem to know what to be done and wish to get the degree on time. In my experience, I came here just to set my foot here, in the UK, regardless of the title, of the research, I just want to come to the UK. When I was young, I was easily influenced by friends, I was moved by branded items. I was a fan of a football club. But, when I was here I found that it was far from my expectation. That's why I think I have been wasted my time in the first year. Only now, I have started to see my direction.

I know a lot of people want the opportunity of studying in the UK, but there is no chance available for them. I have been thinking, why the God has selected me to come here? Maybe there is a blessing in disguised. I was sceptical before this; being a boy from a village, never been out from that village, went to the local school, did the undergraduate years under the same geographical territory... Only when I did my masters, I went out from the shell. So that turned me to be easily sceptical about things or having a negative thinking in making decisions. When I see my friends are successful, it moves me to change...

Q : Do you think it is hard for you to achieve your goals?

A : I am the kind of person who believe that one will never fail for the second time. There's a *hadith* (the prophet's saying) on that. So I believe that when I was in Nottingham, I had chosen a topic which was out-of scope for my research. It was a hard-core computer science thing, and I am not from computer science background, as I did the Information Technology. Eventually it didn't work out for me though I tried many times for it. My performance was low. My supervisor didn't want to help me. He already had a negative thought about me. After consulting my former head department, I finally quit from Nottingham and came to Plymouth to continue my study. Here I do things I love doing, and that are manageable. I still have not really reached my satisfaction, because as a human being one can never get satisfied with what he or she has already possessed.

Q : So, do you think your goal now is achievable?

A : I think it is clearer than before. I am grateful to the God for the good relationship I have with my supervisor here.

Q : What do you do when encountering a problem concerning your studies?

A : There is always a solution to a problem. I am grateful that things come at ease for me. For one thing, if you have a problem, then you need to tell people...because without letting people know what your problem is, nobody will know the problem and how to help you. Mixing around with people definitely helps me in certain ways...

Q : What do you understand with life satisfaction?

A : To me life satisfaction is to get what you wish to have for the moment...

Q : If whatever your wishes are not achieved, how do you feel towards that?

A : Of course when you have been devoted so much to it, you will feel sad if it is not achieved. But I always believe that there is blessing in disguised. I associate my failure in Nottingham to be the reason of why I am here now. Maybe Allah wants me to be here.

Q : If I give you a happiness scale of one to ten, ten shows the happiest you are, where do you place yourself?

A : Seven

Q : Alright, we go to the next questions of life in Malaysia. Firstly, I would like to know what are your normal activities in Malaysia?

A : Most of my time have been spent on studying. After finishing my masters, only then I started working. During weekends I went out with few friends, played tennis, picnicking, dating with my girl friend...When I got married, I had no time to do that anymore. I got married in March, and in April my wife and I had already flown to the UK. So, I didn't have much experience as a married man in Malaysia. My social life that time had changed. For example, I went out eating mostly with my family, sometimes with my closest friends. Whenever weekends, I went visiting my parent-in laws in Kuala Lumpur.

Q : What are the things you missed most about home?

A : Food!! Besides that is the inner part of religion enrichment. Though we can search most of the things in the internet, but I think it is different. Religious talk can only be heard on Friday. It's far different even compared to Nottingham. Here, there are not much of religious activities. I have to search through Google for reference in order to clarify certain things related to religion. I don't feel contented. It would be nice if there is an *ustaz* (religious teacher) in person whom we could refer to. I miss my family too. They don't want to come here though I invite them. We have never gone home since we came here.

Q : What are the things you enjoy most here?

Not much. Except for we could travel and get to know other countries. There is a saying that, “ you will gain as much as you walk/travel”. Our folks back home have a lot of taboos. We are also too obsessed with the Western people. But when you come here then you can experience things by yourself. It might not be the same as we thought before. Might not be that superb...

In our country status is perceived as an important element. For example, if a person is a professor, we have to call him or her 'Prof' (professor)...or we have the tendency to call him or her 'Prof'. But here, such things are not being entertained. What people look at is our performance. If you are good, then you are able to develop further. In Malaysia, we can see that some people can get promoted by being nice to their bosses. That's what I enjoy here. We can see the cultural difference and we can make comparison.

Being in an advanced country demands a change in attitude. Basically, what I have got here while doing PhD is to become an open-minded person as before this I was a very close-minded one.

It is undeniably that one may feel great after getting PhD over a three-year studying period, but what a waste for a person who comes here solely for PhD. Then he or she may only get the degree. It's good to be here because there is no cultural constraint, and you can experience a lot of things here. Our country focuses more on their own ethnicities, but not on the religion part...

Q : Have you experience any adaptation problems here?

A : Yes, I have. Actually I have experienced a lot of cultural shock. It started for the first time when I got married. When I was single, I didn't know how to tackle a girl and furthermore I wasn't that handsome [laughing]! I didn't know all those things. It came to my mind that I need to get married before going for studying in order to avoid foul acts. I had been thinking that it's going to be three years in the UK, and decided that I should get married. When I got married, there were two different things I had to encounter; living as a married man and also adapting to the new culture. In addition to that, a few months later, my wife gave birth to our son. Thank God, when I was in Nottingham, I learned a lot of things on how to socialise. The environment in Nottingham was different from here in Plymouth. I miss the activities there.

Q : What is important about those activities in Nottingham?

A : It is a way of learning how to socialise with people in the right manner. You will establish a network, you will learn how to adhere to the norms, and respect it. There's a concept of 'host and guest', whereby you will be helped to find the right accommodation, help you settling down. When you have already settled down, now next time you will be doing the same thing to other people. There's give and take... toleration...

Q : Do you think it is important to have activities like visiting one another?

A : Yes, definitely.

Q : Why?

A : It is important to do that in order to maintain the relationship.

Q : Do you work?

A : Both of us work. My wife only works during weekend. I have just started working in the past two months. I work at the university. My wife works part-timely at a laundry shop.

Q : What are your normal activities here apart from going to the university or to work?

A : As usual, I love going to the 'car-boot sales'. In Nottingham there were always activities of going here and there because there were many Malaysians there. There were also activities of *muhasabah* (introspective looking of self in a religious way). The guys would attend prayer activities held at one place, while the ladies would prepare the food.

Normally on Saturday we would go for the car-boot sales. In the afternoon I taught some young kids in a religious class. In the evening we would gather again, and discussing or just chatting for hours. Sometimes till 2 or 3 in the morning. The next day we would go to the car-boot again and sometimes we had a picnic...brought our own

food....On the way back we would stop at ASDA for the groceries.

Q : What about weekdays?

A : If I feel like going to the school , I would go. Sometimes I would merely stay at home. Sometimes I go to the office [the lab], but I couldn't work like other people. It's hard for me to stay put from 8 to 5. During winter, it's already dark at 4pm and I would start to feel restless. So I now go to school based on my will. I can't stay from 9 to 5. But if I need to stay, then I will. When you are married you need to think of your other half too. It's hard for me to stay up at the office until night.

One thing when we were young, there was quite much of attractions and what we need to do. If I had been invited to attend an event, definitely I would go. In terms of gadgets, I could possibly be charmed by them, since my background is in the Information Technology...

Q : Do you experience any health difficulties here?

A : Yes, since coming here I have been suffering from gout. It could be because of the cold weather and no control of food taken. Sometimes I have got fever because of the changes of weather. Other than that, not really...

Participant #7, Male.

Q : Could you please describe about yourself?

A : I am a cheerful, talkative and free-thinker, I mean free to think and speak up whatever I think it is right to speak about.

Q : An open-minded person?

A : Yup

Q : Where are you from?

A : I am originally from Kuala Lumpur (KL). I lived in KL...I was born in KL, and most of my time I spent in KL, except during my undergraduate years I was in Kedah. Shortly after graduation, I worked with LHDN (tax council) for almost a year, and then as a Diplomatic and Administrative Officer at the Prime Minister's Office for almost a year, almost two years in DBKL (Kuala Lumpur City Council). Shortly after that I received a scholarship from USM to do my Masters in London and then returned back to Malaysia for a year, before continuing here.

Q : How long have you been in Plymouth?

A : Less than a month.

Q : Tell me about your studies. Um...what have you been doing now?

A : For the time-being, I do research in information security, focussing on how people react on each item of security usability.

Q : Okay, in life there are things that we wish to have. In your experience, what have you been dreaded for?

A : Well, I can recall one thing when I have been dreaming of studying abroad like my sister. When she got an offer to study abroad years ago, it turned me into dreaming of having the same thing. I didn't have the opportunity to go abroad for my bachelor degree because of it was too competitive that time. I had been asking my mom whether it was possible for me to go. But it wasn't due to the high currency exchange rate that time. So I promised myself that I will go studying abroad sometime later in life. My dream came true when I went studying for my masters in London. Now my biggest dream is to pass the PhD.

Q : Apart from that, is there any other thing you look for in life?

A : Of course I want to get married, have children, I want that all. Since I am already 28, and most of my friends are already married, ... It is not that stressful to think of this, but it is something you still have to think about.

Q : What are the things matter most to you at the moment?

Firstly, the weather; secondly, the financial support, as everything is expensive here and the price of goods and services are always increasing. Thirdly, to be with my family...My parents are getting older, and being the only son, my responsibility is bigger. I really want to go home as immediate as possible after getting the PhD.

Q : What do you understand about life satisfaction?

A : In my opinion, satisfaction is fulfilling the needs and wants. The needs must be satisfied, without satisfying them, one could die. I mean, needs is like the basic needs, such as water, and electricity... I believe satisfaction is more towards satisfying the wants, what one has been aiming for in life. So I think life satisfaction is about the positive aspects that could be beneficial for us in the short and the long run.

Q : Are you satisfied by life?

A : As a Muslim, it is unfair to say that you're not satisfied. To some extent I am satisfied, but there are still other things I need to achieve...

Q : What made you come here for studying?

A : It's mainly because the experts in the field that I am focussing on now are mostly in Plymouth. Since they were also interested to take me in, so that's why I am here. The satisfaction is there when you can right away meet the experts in person, those of whose papers you used to cite in...

Q : What will you expect to get after obtaining your PhD?

A : For sure, after getting my doctorate, I need to return teaching at my former university, continue life, build my own family, own a car, a house...In short, I want all of this complete life-package.

Q : What is your view on career advancement?

A : Yes, it's really important and very essential. Most of my friends here were lectures...and I've found that it is essential for one to achieve at least at the Associate Professor level in order to develop well in the academic career. I believe establishing a network with the supervisory team and maintaining it would somehow support me in building up my expertise as well as fulfilling my own satisfaction. All of these would serve as a merit towards the performance appraisal.

Q : Do you think you have worked hard enough to achieve your goals?

A : Well, yes. I have already started to work hard. Frankly speaking, I have never involved in a research like this before. Every morning I go to the university, around 9 am, and come back around 6 or 7pm. Most of my time is spent in the lab. It's quite a tremendous job. But I would have an intermission for lunch or coffee-break, and would then go back to work. It's quite stressful for me learning that I haven't had the experience of being a lecturer. Secondly, the rests have already seen their directions in their studies, and thirdly, I have no idea at all [about research]...

Q : Have you reach the point where you feel that you can't take it anymore in your studies?

A : So far, I haven't reach that point yet, because I have just started. But I haven't found my direction yet. Frankly speaking, sometimes it made me 'de-motivated'. To some people it could be a normal thing, but to me it is not...because it made me not knowing what to do. But I think I have to start somewhere, put a title for my research, so that I will have a sense a direction...so that I can just keep reading...

Q : Is it hard for you to achieve something in life?

A : To achieve something valuable is not always easy. My experience while doing masters was not an easy one. After seven or eight months studying, then we were given a test that compressed of lessons in Semester One and Two. Just imagine! I even cried during the exam. I was so scared that I would fail. It was truly a challenging experience...

Q : How much would you rate yourself as being happy on a scale of one to ten?

A : I would say, 6.5, because the journey of the PhD has just begun. I've got to be serious. It demands me to work hard.

Q : Do you experience any adaptation problem here?

A : No, I think it's not really a big problem, even the jet lag had lasted for only two days. That could be because I had already been here before. So, it's not really a problem to me. I had already walked around the city centre on my own on the second day in Plymouth.

Q : Have you ever feel threatened or conscious with your identity here?

A : Impossible if I say no. Through my observation, the majority here is the local...the White people. Not many Asians around, there are some Chinese, not many Blacks as well. I have the feeling of consciousness of being different than other people, and there are eyes gazing at us when we walk. But anyway, I have to accept things as they are, as long as these people don't disturb me.

Q : Do you experience any health difficulties whilst you're here?

A : No, so far I have no problem.

Q : What are your normal activities here?

A : On weekdays, almost every day from Monday to Friday, I'll cook something at night, since I always bring home-cooked food to the university. After the morning-prayer, I will tidy up my room, watch TV, sometimes I go back to sleep. Very seldom that I read something related to my research before going to the university. Just go through the pages lightly. Sometimes I don't understand what I'm reading. Just to have a glance. Then, off me go to my office or lab and spend most of my time there. At about 5 or 6 I go home. Sometimes I take a walk out of the university after trying hard to understand what I am reading. That's what I normally do after I have been reading for a few times and still can't understand it. I would just walk to the city centre, to the shops, or just walking before coming back to the university. It's a good exercise for me and at the same time releases my stress. I used to practice this when I did my Masters. I think it is fun as well because if I only stare at the computer, I could end up like a nerd. It needs like thirty minutes to just go out and see things outside, the trees, people...you will feel fresh after that.

Q : Ok, what about weekend?

A : I would wake up as usual. Normally I will cook heavy meals on Saturday and Sunday. In the afternoon I would take a walk along the Hoe or the Barbican.

Q : Do you enjoy doing that?

A : Yes , I really like it. This is a kind of therapy for me after much time spent on studying. Well, I guess so...Life must go on...I really enjoy the Barbican, but I can't enjoy much because of I haven't had enough money to spend for such leisure activities, such as to have coffee by the sea...

Q : Can you please describe your normal activities in Malaysia?

A : The usual things, working from Monday till Friday. At night, shortly after work, if I have class I will go teaching. After that, I would spend my time at the National Library. Sometimes my friends and I would go for lunch at the nearby eating outlets. On Saturday, I would be going out till night with friends. On Sunday, normally I would stay at home.

Q : What would you do at home on Sunday?

A : I would be browsing on the internet, helping my mom in the kitchen, watching TV or DVDs, reading the magazines or books, and 'disturbing' other people...

Q : What do you miss about home now?

Food!![laughing], especially...I think I have loosen some weights. I used to lose about 20 kilos before this after 6 months in the UK. I'm hoping that it will happen again. Apart from that, I miss my family and friends of course. There were a lot of people sending me off at the airport upon coming here that day. I thought I could hold back tears, but I couldn't when I started to embrace my family especially my parents...

Q : Do you think family is important to you?

A : Yes, definitely. For me family always comes first. I don't care if people call me Mommy's boy, family man or whatever..., I will always contact them at least once a week. It's my responsibility as a child. Sometimes I send my sister a text asking her to call me since I haven't had the internet account yet.

Q : What do you enjoy about been in the UK?

A : In terms of academic I meet the experts. In terms of non-academic, the environment, for example the opportunity to experience the four seasons which I have been dreaming since small. If I have a free time, I would like to go to Europe for a tour. Also, the second hand items here which are still in good condition...

Q : What do you dislike about been in the UK?

A : Basically it is the UK's high currency rate, the price of goods and services that are always increasing, and the very cold weather. What I don't like in Plymouth is that it is hard to get *halal* food product. There are very few shops that sell *halal* stuffs.

INTERVIEW PART II

Participant #4, Female

Q : What are the normal activities that you do in Malaysia?

A : If it's weekday, I will go to class, if not I would try to do all the unfinished work. I always have those and other things to be done. If I don't really have work to do, I would do some planning like what I am supposed to do. But, it rarely happens. Sometimes after office hour, I would hang out with my colleagues, my friends, going out for dinner, or go to JUSCO (shopping complex), go for a drink, just casually...basically just hanging out...

During weekend I would hang out with Kak Sai [a female friend]. We were quite close. Since we're busy during weekdays, sometimes we don't have time to hang out together. So, usually during weekends, I go to a gym near Kak Sai's house. After gym, we meet up and go to eat somewhere. We go for a movie, loafing around, sometimes I follow her visiting her sister in-law.

Q : You're so close to one another, aren't you?

A : Yes, we are good friends. She's a friend, a sister, and sometimes like a mother to me. She's among a few people that I can listen to.

If I don't have any other activities, I would go home in Penang...at least once a month. Other than that, my activities would be attending workshops organised by the faculty, or attending students' organised activities at the hostel.

Q : Do you miss doing those activities?

A : Yes, I really miss the hang outs. Sometimes I love going out with friends, but sometimes I like to be by myself. So, I just go to Ampang Point, walking alone and do whatever I want.

Q : Do you think it is important for you to maintain like this?

A : Sometimes I want my space, where I should be going on my own. Sometimes I need a friend to hang out with...

Q : How about in Plymouth now, do you do the same thing?

A : Yes, I still do, during weekends I like to walk to the town, to shopping complexes, though it's just for window shopping. Sometimes I ride my bicycle. Usually here I would go and find kids to play with. Normally I go to Ismail or Noris's house to play with their babies. It's a kind of therapy for me. It makes me happy and releases my stress.

Q : What are the activities you usually do here?

A : After wake up, I tidy up my room, take shower, do the prayer, have breakfast, and check my emails. The first thing is to check emails from my supervisor because he could ask me to have an immediate meeting, or whatsoever... Then I go to the university, start working, then have a break for lunch with my Malaysian colleagues, get back to work again. At home after dinner, I would be in front of my PC

again, or watching TV, or do some readings. At 3 am I normally doze off.

During weekends, I would go for gym, if not I would be enjoying my leisure at home, tidying up my room, only then take my shower, cooking, or pay a visit to some friends. Sometimes I go out walking, and sometimes I ride on my bicycle.

Q : What is your opinion on the importance of friendship?

A : To me friendship is important. Friends like my own family. There's the Prophet's saying that, "A person is not in deep faith [of Allah] till he cares for the other [other Muslims], as he loves himself". I tried to apply this one day, as I saw a nice box in a shop. Then I gave it to my friend. I tried to practice "to love your sister like you love yourself".

I think it needs to be persistently practiced in order to ingrain that in someone's life. So that's what I feel towards my friends. I have friends who really care about me who would be coming down just to soothe me whenever I'm down. Sometimes my family don't understand me.

When I'm far from family, my friends are my family. They always pray for me. I always believe that if you do good deeds to your friends or family, you'll get something good in return. There's a lesson I have learned in the past, whereby I used to give a pair of expensive shoes that I wore only once to a friend, but later on I received two pairs of brand-new expensive shoes from another friend. See, what goes around passed around. How much we have been valued by Allah by being generous. If we help people, there will always time when we are being helped.

Q : Apart of the family, what are other things you miss about KL?

A : I miss about praying anywhere I want. I don't have to think hard of where to pray. The prayer place is always available everywhere. I don't have to be afraid to go out at night, not like here. It is not advisable to go out after 9pm. But of course, there are also black areas in Kuala Lumpur, so those places have to be avoided in the first place. There's more freedom to move around.

I have more freedom in my own country. I am nobody here. If you see how the Indonesian and Bangladeshi in our country are being treated so we are the same here. I'm sort of them here. I feel isolated. But that has given me a positive effect on me. When you're home, you will not have that kind of sentiment of those Indonesian or Bangladeshi foreign workers because they come here to earn some money. So it's good to go out from your country and it will change the way you think. I would be furious if I knew my students mocked these people around. I would say, "You guys watch out!! If you go to a country like UK now you're those 'Bangla'[a common address by the locals for the Bangladeshi]. You never realise that you're the Bangla yourself. You will be desperate, and when people are being a little bit racist, you will become more sensitive. Definitely you will become sensitive.

Q : What else do you miss about home?

A : Food!! But it's a good thing, though. When you need to cook on your own it will be more healthy, hygienic, and everything. It will make you creative as well. For example, if you don't have coconut oil you may substitute it with yogurt or milk. It is still tasty.

I miss my family, my nieces and nephews, my cats, those shopping complexes that closed at half past 10 or 11 at night, the night life, not clubbing, but eating out activities at the food stalls, the hawkers, playing 'futsal' at night, squash, swimming...

Q : Does it affect you much when you're missing those things?

A : Not really, it depends on the degree of how high you want it...And because it is always been balanced by other things.

Q : What are the things you enjoy here?

A : Well, I can focus in the study compared to if I am in Malaysia whereby life is more hectic. It's a rubbish and nonsense excuse if you decline an offer or try to say no to a request. If you say, "I have work", they will simply reply, "Everybody's working", or if I say "I have more work to do", they will say, "We also have more and you're not married". Another thing I hate about Malaysians is that they think single women don't have much commitment like they do, and forgetting that we also have the responsibility towards our parents. They will give you a lot more work and tasks compared to those who are married. There's always excuse for them to let me substitute their work. So I have to sacrifice of not visiting my parents for that week just to substitute for them or attending workshops.

Apart from that, I like the weather, I can go visiting new places. I like shopping here, the quality of goods is excellent. Sometimes I can go shopping almost every day. Sometimes I just do the window shopping.

Q : Do you have health difficulties while you are here?

A : Normally if I don't have enough sleep I will get headaches, very seldom dizzy head...but I used to feel nauseated and kept vomiting when I let myself starved before a long journey, and that developed me into gastric. I can get constipation if I don't take much water and eat less fruit and vegetable. Sometimes if I got so tensed, I could have breathing problem.

APPENDIX C

ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

Faculty of Science and Technology



Portland Square A106, Plymouth

To:	Mazni Mustapha	From:	Paula Simson
cc:	Prof Michael Hyland, Pam Jacobs		Secretary to Human Ethics Committee
Your Ref:		Our Ref:	scitech:\d:\human ethics:
Date:	12 April 2010	Phone Ext:	84503

Application for Ethical Approval

Thank you for submitting the ethical approval form and details or the amendments concerning your project:

'Subjective Well-being among Malaysian students'

I am pleased to inform you that this has been approved.

Kind regards

Paula Simson