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The Relationship between Personality Traits and Life Satisfaction among Generation Z in Malaysia

Ahmad Amar Aqwa[1], Amalina Ibrahim[1]*, Nor Akmar Nordin[1], Shah Rollah Abdul Wahab[1], Maizatul Mardiana Harun[2]

[1]School of Human Resource Development & Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor Darul Takzim, Malaysia, [2]Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and life satisfaction among Generation Z (Gen Z) adults aged 18–28 in Malaysia. Specifically, it assessed the level of life satisfaction, examined its associations with the five personality traits, and identified the traits that contributed most strongly to life satisfaction. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed, with data collected through an online survey involving 422 Gen Z respondents in Malaysia. Personality traits were assessed using the 50-item International Personality Item Pool (IPIP-50), while life satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Data were analysed using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression. The findings showed that respondents reported a high level of life satisfaction. Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability were each positively and significantly relationship with life satisfaction. However, when the personality traits were examined simultaneously, only Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness emerged as significant predictors, with Extraversion showing the strongest unique contribution. Collectively, the personality traits explained 46.1% of the variance in life satisfaction. These findings suggest that personality is meaningfully associated with how Malaysian Gen Z adults evaluate their lives, although the contribution differs across individual traits. In particular, the stronger contribution of Extraversion may reflect the relevance of social engagement and interpersonal orientation to life satisfaction within this population. The findings extend the understanding of personality and subjective well-being among Malaysian Gen Z and may inform the development of student and youth support initiatives that recognise individual differences in personality.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Life Satisfaction, Generation Z, Malaysia

Research Background

Life satisfaction refers to how individuals evaluate the overall quality of their lives based on their own standards and expectations (Diener et al., 1985). It is an important component

of subjective well-being because it reflects a person's overall judgement of life rather than feelings or reactions to a particular event. For Generation Z (Gen Z) in Malaysia, particularly those aged between 18 and 28, life satisfaction is relevant as many are going through important transitions in education, employment, relationships, and independent adulthood. These changes can bring new opportunities as well as challenges that may affect how young adults perceive their lives. Concerns about stress, anxiety, and psychological well-being among Malaysian youth have also been reported by Nasir et al., (2023), suggesting a need to better understand the factors associated with life satisfaction within this population.

Personality is one factor that may contribute to individual differences in life satisfaction. Personality traits represent relatively stable patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that influence how individuals respond to everyday experiences and challenges. The Five-Factor Model describes personality through five broad dimensions: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Previous research has established associations between these traits and life satisfaction, although the strength and direction of these relationships are not equally consistent across all five dimensions. For instance, Extraversion and Conscientiousness have generally been associated with higher life satisfaction, whereas Neuroticism has been linked to lower life satisfaction (Schimmack et al., 2008; Anglim et al., 2020). These associations suggest that individuals who are more socially engaged, organised, and emotionally stable may be better positioned to evaluate their lives positively. However, the extent to which each personality trait contributes to life satisfaction requires further consideration.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the relevance of personality to life satisfaction, differences in the strength of associations across the Big Five traits raise questions about their relative contributions. In particular, while Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism have received considerable attention, the relationships involving Openness and Agreeableness appear less consistent across the broader literature (Anglim et al., 2020). Furthermore, a personality trait may demonstrate a significant relationship with life satisfaction when examined individually but contribute less when the other personality traits are considered simultaneously. This distinction is important because the Big Five traits are not entirely independent of one another, and their shared associations with life satisfaction may influence their relative predictive contributions. Consequently, identifying which traits are associated with life satisfaction does not necessarily establish which trait contributes most strongly when all five dimensions are examined together. This issue remains relevant for understanding whether particular personality characteristics have a stronger unique association with life satisfaction than others.

Despite the existing evidence on personality and life satisfaction, it has primarily been established across broader populations, with less focus on Malaysian Gen Z. Within the Malaysian context, studies on the well-being of young people have also examined issues such as academic demands and financial difficulties (Yong et al., 2022). While these external circumstances are important, individuals may respond differently even when they experience similar demands. Examining personality therefore adds an individual-level perspective to the understanding of life satisfaction and may provide a more complete

picture of why some young adults report greater satisfaction with their lives than others. The Malaysian context is also relevant when examining these relationships. Gen Z is entering adulthood within changing educational, employment, economic, and social environments while continuing to experience expectations from family and the wider community. These circumstances may interact with individual characteristics in shaping how young adults evaluate their lives. Findings from other populations may therefore not fully represent the experiences of Malaysian Gen Z. Although the Big Five model has been widely studied internationally, research examining all five personality traits in relation to life satisfaction specifically among Gen Z in Malaysia remains limited. Further evidence from this population is needed to determine whether established patterns between personality and life satisfaction are also observed within the Malaysian setting.

The Malaysian context provides an additional perspective for examining these relationships. Previous studies involving Malaysian young people have highlighted the relevance of external circumstances, including academic demands and financial difficulties, to their well-being (Yong et al., 2022). Nevertheless, individuals experiencing similar circumstances may differ in how they perceive and evaluate their lives. Personality may help explain these differences by influencing how young adults manage responsibilities, maintain social relationships, respond to challenges, and interpret their experiences. Moreover, Malaysian Gen Z is navigating the transition into adulthood within a social environment in which personal aspirations, family expectations, educational opportunities, and employment-related concerns may influence life evaluations. These contextual characteristics are relevant because the expression and implications of personality traits may vary according to the social and cultural environments in which individuals live. For example, traits associated with social relationships, personal responsibility, and emotional adjustment may have different levels of relevance depending on the expectations and experiences of young adults. However, these possibilities require empirical examination rather than assuming that findings established in other populations apply equally to Malaysian Gen Z.

Despite the growing literature on personality and life satisfaction, two issues warrant further investigation. First, although the Big Five traits have been associated with life satisfaction, their relative contributions remain important to examine, particularly when all five traits are considered within the same analytical model. Second, existing findings may not fully capture the experiences of Malaysian Gen Z, whose transition into adulthood occurs within particular social, cultural, and economic circumstances. Therefore, the research gap extends beyond the limited availability of studies involving this population to include the need for a clearer understanding of whether established patterns of personality–life satisfaction relationships are also observed among Malaysian Gen Z. Examining these relationships may help clarify the relative importance of different personality traits within this population and contribute context-specific evidence to the broader literature on personality and subjective well-being.

Accordingly, this study examines the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and life satisfaction among Gen Z individuals aged 18 to 28 in Malaysia. The study aims (i) to determine the level of life satisfaction among Malaysian Gen Z, (ii) to examine the relationship between each of the Big Five personality traits and life satisfaction, and (iii) to

identify which personality trait makes the strongest contribution to life satisfaction among Malaysian Gen Z.

Literature Review

Five-Factor Model of Personality

The Five-Factor Model (FFM), also commonly referred to as the Big Five, provides a trait-based framework for understanding individual differences in personality. The model conceptualises personality through five broad dimensions: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (McCrae & Costa, 1997). These dimensions represent relatively stable patterns in how individuals think, feel, and behave across different situations. The development of the FFM can be traced through several decades of personality research, beginning with early work by Fiske (1949) and subsequently developed through the work of Norman (1967), Smith (1967), Goldberg (1981), and McCrae and Costa (1987). Together, this body of research contributed to the development of a systematic framework for describing and examining individual differences in personality. Although the five dimensions form part of the same personality framework, each represents a different way in which individuals tend to approach themselves, other people, and their environment. Openness to Experience reflects intellectual curiosity, imagination, creativity, and receptiveness to new ideas and experiences (Christensen, 2020; Vuyk et al., 2016; Woo et al., 2015). Individuals higher in Openness are generally more willing to explore unfamiliar ideas and consider alternative perspectives. These characteristics may be particularly relevant during early adulthood, when individuals are frequently exposed to new educational, occupational, and social experiences.

Conscientiousness reflects self-discipline, responsibility, organisation, and persistence in pursuing goals. Within the IPIP-50, this dimension captures tendencies towards being organised, diligent, and dependable (Rusu et al., 2012; Strus et al., 2014). Individuals higher in Conscientiousness are also more likely to demonstrate self-control and goal-directed behaviour (Javaras et al., 2019). These tendencies may influence how young adults manage responsibilities and pursue personal goals, particularly during a period of life involving increasing independence and educational or occupational demands. Meanwhile, Extraversion is characterised by sociability, assertiveness, enthusiasm, and a tendency to engage actively with other people and the surrounding environment (Wilt, 2022). It has also been associated with positive affect and greater engagement in interpersonal experiences. These characteristics make Extraversion particularly relevant when considering well-being, as social interaction and positive emotional experiences may contribute to how individuals evaluate their lives. Previous research has also associated higher Extraversion with greater subjective well-being (Park et al., 2014), suggesting a plausible connection between this personality dimension and life satisfaction. Next, Agreeableness reflects interpersonal tendencies towards empathy, cooperation, trust, and concern for others. Individuals higher in Agreeableness tend to approach interpersonal relationships in a more cooperative and supportive manner. For example, Agreeableness has been associated with constructive approaches to interpersonal conflict and greater attention to relational well-being (Kallianou, 2024). However, its implications may also depend on the social context. Zhu and Su (2023), for instance, showed that highly agreeable individuals may experience less favourable emotional outcomes under certain competitive

conditions. This suggests that the implications of a personality trait cannot always be understood independently of the environment in which it is expressed. Neuroticism differs from the other dimensions in that it reflects a greater tendency to experience negative emotions, worry, emotional instability, and heightened sensitivity to stressful experiences (Yang et al., 2021; Speed et al., 2019). Higher Neuroticism has also been associated with psychological difficulties such as anxiety and depressive symptoms (Aleksandrova et al., 2012). Individuals higher in this trait may therefore be more likely to interpret or respond to challenging experiences negatively. Conversely, lower Neuroticism reflects greater Emotional Stability, which may support more stable emotional responses when dealing with everyday demands.

Taken together, the five personality dimensions provide more than a descriptive classification of individual differences. They represent different tendencies through which individuals engage with experiences, pursue goals, form and maintain relationships, and respond emotionally to challenges. These processes are relevant to life satisfaction because individuals living under similar circumstances may not necessarily perceive or evaluate those circumstances in the same way. For Malaysian Gen Z, who are navigating transitions involving education, employment, relationships, and increasing independence, personality may therefore contribute to differences in how life experiences are interpreted and evaluated. The FFM consequently provides the theoretical basis for examining whether the five personality dimensions are differently associated with life satisfaction in the present study.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction refers to an individual's overall cognitive evaluation of their life according to their own standards and expectations. It forms an important component of subjective well-being (SWB), but the two concepts are not interchangeable. Within Diener's conceptualisation of SWB, well-being comprises three related components: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. While positive and negative affect represent the emotional aspects of well-being, life satisfaction reflects the cognitive judgement individuals make when considering the overall quality of their lives (Diener, 1984; Diener et al., 1985). This distinction is important because a person's evaluation of life is not determined solely by immediate positive or negative emotions. Life satisfaction involves individuals comparing their current life circumstances with what they personally consider desirable or satisfactory. These evaluations may involve important areas of life such as family, work, relationships, and personal achievements, but the overall judgement remains subjective because individuals differ in the standards they use to evaluate their lives. Previous research has therefore treated life satisfaction as an important indicator of subjective well-being and perceived quality of life (Diener et al., 2001; Busseri, 2015; Griffin & Ward, 2016). More recent studies have continued to recognise life satisfaction as the cognitive component of SWB, distinguishing it from emotional experiences while acknowledging that both contribute to an individual's overall sense of well-being (Pretorius & Padmanabhanunni, 2022; Alici et al., 2024). This distinction is particularly relevant to the present study. Gen Z individuals may experience both positive and negative emotions as they manage changes in education, employment, relationships, and increasing independence. However, these emotional experiences do not necessarily represent how satisfied they are with their lives as a whole. Life satisfaction captures a broader evaluation

in which individuals consider their circumstances according to their own expectations, priorities, and experiences. Two individuals facing similar circumstances may therefore evaluate their lives differently, suggesting that life satisfaction may be shaped not only by external conditions but also by individual psychological characteristics.

From this perspective, personality provides a relevant basis for examining differences in life satisfaction. Relatively stable personality traits may influence how individuals interpret their circumstances, respond to challenges, interact with others, and pursue personal goals. Examining life satisfaction within the SWB framework therefore provides the theoretical basis for investigating whether differences in the Big Five personality traits are associated with how Malaysian Gen Z evaluate their lives.

Relationship between Personality Traits and Life Satisfaction

Openness to Experience and Life Satisfaction

Openness to Experience has generally been associated with more positive evaluations of life, although the relationship appears to operate through several psychological and behavioural processes. Zalewska and Zwierzchowska (2022), for example, found that Openness was directly associated with life satisfaction and also indirectly related through self-transcendence values. This suggests that the relationship may not arise from Openness alone, but partly from the values and experiences that individuals who are more open tend to pursue. Other studies provide further insight into how this relationship may develop. Individuals higher in Openness are generally more receptive to new experiences, perspectives, and activities, which may create additional opportunities for meaningful and personally rewarding experiences. Manolika and Jacobsen (2024) found that engagement in receptive and participatory arts activities partially mediated the relationship between Openness and life satisfaction. Similarly, cognitive flexibility has been identified as a relevant mechanism through which openness to different perspectives and changing circumstances may contribute to well-being (Odaci & Çikrikci, 2019). Self-efficacy may also play a role, as Strobel et al. (2011) found evidence of an indirect relationship involving individuals' beliefs in their ability to manage situations effectively. Taken together, these findings suggest that Openness may be associated with life satisfaction because individuals higher in this trait tend to engage more readily with new experiences, adapt to different perspectives, and identify opportunities that are personally meaningful. However, the relationship may depend partly on the contexts and experiences through which Openness is expressed. This is particularly relevant to Gen Z, who are navigating changes in education, employment, relationships, and social environments during early adulthood. Whether greater Openness is similarly associated with life satisfaction among Malaysian Gen Z therefore warrants examination within the present study.

H1a: Openness to experience is significantly related to life satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia

Conscientiousness and Life Satisfaction

Conscientiousness has been positively associated with life satisfaction, particularly among young adults and university students. Filipiak and Tychmanowicz (2022) found that Conscientiousness was positively related to life satisfaction among both Spanish and Polish university freshmen and emerged as a significant predictor in both groups. Similar findings were reported by Abdel-Khalek et al. (2022) among Egyptian college students, where

Conscientiousness was positively associated with life satisfaction and contributed significantly to differences in life satisfaction, particularly among female students. Evidence across these different cultural settings suggests that the relationship between Conscientiousness and life satisfaction may extend beyond a single population. One possible explanation lies in the characteristics associated with Conscientiousness. Individuals higher in this trait tend to be more organised, responsible, self-disciplined, and persistent in pursuing their goals. These characteristics may help young adults manage academic, personal, and emerging work responsibilities more effectively, providing a greater sense of progress and control over their lives. Achieving goals and managing responsibilities successfully may, in turn, contribute to more favourable evaluations of life. This relationship is relevant to Malaysian Gen Z because early adulthood often involves managing several responsibilities simultaneously, including education, employment, personal goals, and increasing independence. Conscientiousness may provide psychological and behavioural resources that help individuals navigate these demands. Nevertheless, the extent to which this pattern applies to Malaysian Gen Z remains an empirical question. The present study therefore examines whether Conscientiousness is significantly associated with life satisfaction within this population.
H1b: Conscientiousness is significantly related to life satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia.

Extraversion and Life Satisfaction

Extraversion has been consistently associated with life satisfaction, particularly because this trait reflects sociability, assertiveness, and a greater tendency to engage with others. Filipiak and Tychmanowicz (2022) found that Extraversion, together with Conscientiousness and Neuroticism, significantly predicted life satisfaction among Spanish and Polish university freshmen. Although some cultural differences were observed, the relationship between personality and life satisfaction was evident across both groups. The positive association between Extraversion and life satisfaction may be understood through the interpersonal and emotional tendencies associated with this trait. Individuals higher in Extraversion are generally more inclined to seek social interaction and participate actively in their social environment. Such tendencies may provide greater opportunities to develop social relationships and experience positive interpersonal exchanges, which can contribute to how individuals evaluate their lives. For Gen Z, these social experiences may be particularly relevant as they navigate changes in friendships, education, employment, and other relationships during early adulthood. The evidence from different cultural groups suggests that Extraversion may be relevant to life satisfaction, but its contribution should also be considered within the social context in which individuals live. Examining this relationship among Malaysian Gen Z can therefore provide further evidence on whether the association observed in other populations is also present within the Malaysian context.
H1c: Extraversion is significantly related to life satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia.

Agreeableness and Life Satisfaction

Agreeableness has been positively associated with life satisfaction, although the strength of this relationship appears to be weaker than that observed for some other personality traits. Connolly and Sevä (2021), for example, found a positive relationship between Agreeableness and life satisfaction, but the association was weaker than that of Extraversion. They also reported that Agreeableness had a relatively limited association with social status, which may partly explain why its relationship with life satisfaction was

less pronounced. The relationship between Agreeableness and life satisfaction may be understood through the interpersonal characteristics associated with this trait. Individuals higher in Agreeableness tend to be more cooperative, trusting, considerate, and supportive in their interactions with others. These tendencies may facilitate positive interpersonal relationships and reduce conflict, both of which can contribute to more favourable evaluations of life. At the same time, being agreeable does not necessarily provide the same level of social engagement or positive emotional experiences associated with Extraversion. This may help explain why Agreeableness shows a positive, but sometimes weaker, relationship with life satisfaction. For Malaysian Gen Z, interpersonal relationships may form an important part of their experiences during early adulthood. Examining Agreeableness in this population therefore provides an opportunity to determine whether its interpersonal characteristics are associated with how young adults evaluate their overall life satisfaction.

H1d: Agreeableness is significantly related to life satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia.

Neuroticism and Life Satisfaction

Neuroticism has generally been associated with lower life satisfaction, reflecting the tendency of individuals higher in this trait to experience greater emotional instability, worry, and negative affect. Da Silva Falcão et al. (2022) found that higher Neuroticism was associated with lower satisfaction across several areas of life, including marriage, friendships, family relationships, and overall life satisfaction among older adults. Their findings suggest that the relationship between Neuroticism and life satisfaction may extend beyond an individual's emotional experiences to how interpersonal relationships and available social support are perceived. A similar pattern has been observed among younger populations. Tang et al. (2023) reported a negative relationship between Neuroticism and life satisfaction among college students. Higher Neuroticism was also associated with greater symptoms of depression and anxiety, which were in turn related to lower life satisfaction. These findings suggest that individuals higher in Neuroticism may be more sensitive to negative experiences and emotional distress, which can shape how they evaluate their lives. This relationship may be particularly relevant during early adulthood, when Gen Z individuals are managing changes and uncertainties across education, employment, relationships, and personal responsibilities. A greater tendency towards emotional instability may make these demands more difficult to manage and contribute to less favourable evaluations of life. Examining this relationship among Malaysian Gen Z can therefore provide further evidence on whether the negative association between Neuroticism and life satisfaction observed in other populations is also evident within the Malaysian context.

H1e: Neuroticism is significantly related to life satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia.

Influence of Personality Traits on Life Satisfaction

The relationships discussed in the preceding sections show that each of the Big Five personality traits may be associated with life satisfaction. However, examining these relationships separately does not indicate which trait contributes most strongly when the other personality dimensions are taken into account. This distinction is important because the five traits represent different, but related, aspects of personality. Sun et al. (2016) showed that personality is associated with differences in subjective well-being and life satisfaction, although the contribution of individual traits is not necessarily equal. Previous

research has often identified Extraversion and Neuroticism as particularly relevant to life satisfaction. Extraversion has been associated with greater life satisfaction, partly because individuals higher in this trait tend to experience more positive emotions and engage more actively with their social environment (Soto, 2014). Neuroticism, in contrast, has been associated with lower life satisfaction and a greater tendency to experience negative emotions and psychological distress (Lahey, 2009). These findings provide some indication of which personality dimensions may be more closely associated with life satisfaction. Nevertheless, the relative importance of the five traits may differ across populations and life circumstances. This issue is relevant to Malaysian Gen Z because young adults are managing changes in education, employment, relationships, and personal responsibilities at the same time. Personality characteristics that are useful in one area of life may not necessarily have the same relevance in another. Rather than assuming that findings from other populations will apply in the same way, the present study examines all five personality traits simultaneously to determine their unique contributions to life satisfaction. Multiple regression is therefore used to identify which personality trait contributes most strongly to differences in life satisfaction among Malaysian Gen Z after the other personality traits are considered.

Research Framework

Based on the Figure 1, the study framework of this illustrates the hypothesized relationships between the Big Five Personality Traits which includes Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness and life satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia. Each personality trait is considered an independent variable, while life satisfaction, conceptualized as a key component of Subjective Well-Being (SWB), serves as the dependent variable. This framework guides the study's analyses, including Pearson correlation to assess the direction and strength of relationships and multiple linear regression to determine the relative influence of each personality trait on life satisfaction.

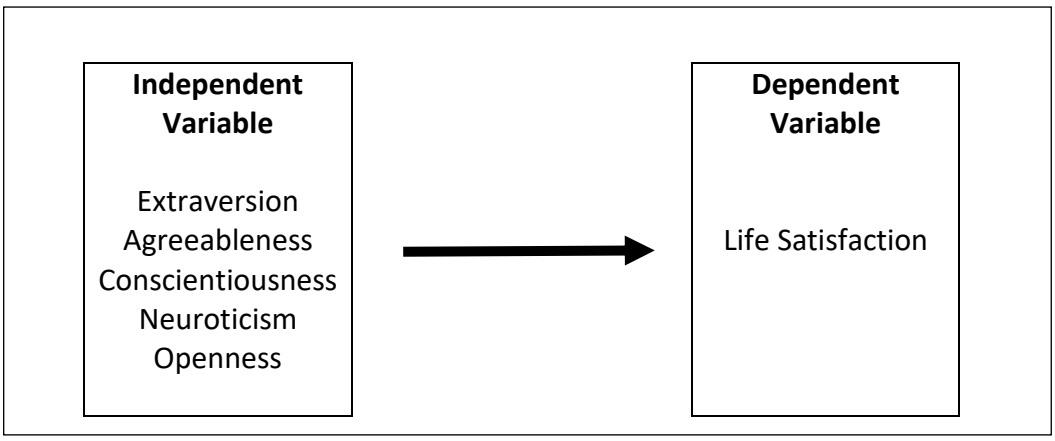


Figure 1: Research Framework

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional design to examine the relationship between personality traits and life satisfaction among Generation Z in Malaysia. Data were collected at a single point in time using an online questionnaire. The Big Five personality traits served as the independent variables, while life satisfaction was the dependent variable. Personality traits were measured using the 50-item International Personality Item Pool (IPIP-

50; Goldberg, 1999), while life satisfaction was assessed using the five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). The cross-sectional design was appropriate for examining the relationships between the study variables and comparing the contribution of the five personality traits to life satisfaction. The target population comprised Generation Z adults in Malaysia aged 18 to 28 years, including individuals from different educational and employment backgrounds. Participants were recruited using non-probability convenience sampling, and data were collected online through Google Forms. This approach facilitated participation from individuals in different locations in Malaysia. However, the use of convenience sampling means that the sample may not fully represent the wider Malaysian Gen Z population, and this limitation was considered when interpreting the findings. An a priori power analysis was conducted to determine the minimum sample size required for the planned statistical analyses. Using a medium effect size, an alpha level of .05, and statistical power of .80, the estimated minimum sample sizes were 91 participants for correlation analysis ($r = .30$) and 59 participants for multiple regression ($f^2 = .15$). A total of 422 valid responses were included in the final analysis, exceeding the minimum sample size required for both statistical analyses.

In this study, data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire consisting of three sections. The first section collected participants' demographic information, including gender, age, current educational or employment status, and highest level of education. These data were used to describe the characteristics of the sample. The Big Five personality traits were measured using the 50-item International Personality Item Pool (IPIP-50; Goldberg et al., 2006). The instrument assesses five personality dimensions: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism, with ten items representing each dimension. Participants rated how accurately each statement described them using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Inaccurate) to 5 (Very Accurate). Responses to the designated reverse-scored items were recoded before the scores for each personality dimension were calculated. In the present study, the Neuroticism dimension was scored and reported as Emotional Stability, such that higher scores represented greater emotional stability or lower Neuroticism. This scoring direction was maintained throughout the statistical analyses to ensure consistency in interpreting the five personality dimensions. Previous research has reported satisfactory psychometric properties for the IPIP-50, including evidence of internal consistency and factorial validity (Socha et al., 2010). Meanwhile, the life satisfaction, was measured using the five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). The SWLS assesses an individual's overall cognitive evaluation of life rather than temporary emotional experiences or satisfaction with specific life domains. Participants responded to each item using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Scores for the five items were summed to produce a total score ranging from 5 to 35, with higher scores indicating greater life satisfaction. The scale contains no reverse-scored items. Previous studies have demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency and reliability of the SWLS across different populations and cultural settings (Pavot & Diener, 2008; Sovet et al., 2016). Both instruments were administered in their original English versions.

Data collected through Google Forms were extracted to Google Sheets, downloaded as an Excel file, and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 30. Both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted in this study to address

the research objectives. Descriptive analysis, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, was employed to summarise the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to determine the level of personality traits and life satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia, in line with the first research objective. Meanwhile, inferential statistical analyses were conducted to examine the relationships and predictive effects among the study variables. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between the Big Five Personality Traits and life satisfaction*, meanwhile, m*ultiple linear regression analysis was applied to determine the influence of each Big Five Personality Traits on life satisfaction and to identify the trait with the strongest influence.

Research Findings

Demographic Analysis

The descriptive analysis provides an overview of the participants' demographic characteristics as well as the levels of life satisfaction and the Big Five Personality Traits. Based on Table 1, a total of 422 Gen Z participants in Malaysia were involved in the study. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 28 years old, with a mean age of 22.7 years and Standard Deviation of 2.55 years. Regarding gender, 62.3% were male and 37.7% were female. The sample included participants from various ethnic groups, with 40% Malay, 19.4% Chinese, and 40.5% Indian. In terms of education level, 23.7% were secondary school students, 23.7% were diploma/matriculation/foundation, 38.2% had completed bachelor's degree and 14.2% were Master's Degree students. On behalf of current status, 31.8% of participants were full-time students (secondary / tertiary), 62.3% were working (full-time/part-time), and 5.9% from the respondents were unemployed or between jobs.

Table 1
Demographic Profiling of the Respondents

Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	263	62.3
	Female	159	37.7
Age	18-21 years old	117	27.7
	21-24 years old	198	46.9
	25-28 years old	107	25.4
Ethnicity	Malay	169	40
	Chinese	82	19.4
	Indian	171	40.5
Education Level	Secondary School	100	23.7
	Diploma/Matriculation/Foundation	100	23.7
	Bachelor's degree	161	38.2
	Master's degree	60	14.2
	Working	1	0.2
Current Status	Student (Secondary / Tertiary)	134	31.8
	Working (Full-time / Part-time)	263	62.3
	Unemployed / Between jobs	25	5.9

Objective 1: Level of Life Satisfaction among gen Z in Malaysia

As presented in Table 2, the mean life satisfaction score among Gen Z respondents was 5.42 (SD = 1.14), indicating a relatively high level of life satisfaction. This finding indicates that, overall, the respondents tended to evaluate their lives positively, although some variation in life satisfaction was observed within the sample.

Table 2
Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Life Satisfaction

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Interpretation
Life Satisfaction	5.4194	1.14344	High

Objective 2: Relationship between Personality Traits and Life Satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and life satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia. As presented in Table 3, all five personality traits were positively and significantly correlated with life satisfaction (p < .001). Conscientiousness showed the strongest correlation with life satisfaction (r = .627, p < .001), followed closely by Extraversion (r = .624, p < .001) and Openness (r = .617, p < .001). Emotional Stability was also positively and significantly correlated with life satisfaction (r = .572, p < .001), as was Agreeableness (r = .562, p < .001). Overall, the findings indicate that higher levels of each personality trait were associated with higher levels of life satisfaction among the respondents. Based on these results, the null hypothesis was rejected, supporting the research hypothesis that the Big Five personality traits are significantly related to life satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia.

Table 3
Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Big Five Models and Life Satisfaction

Personality Traits Variables	**Life Satisfaction**	**p-value**
Openness	.617**	<.001
Emotional Stability	.572**	<.001
Conscientiousness	.627**	<.001
Agreeableness	.562**	<.001
Extraversion	.624**	<.001

Objective 3: Investigate Influence of Big Five Personality Traits toward Life Satisfaction among Gen Z in Malaysia

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the relative contribution of the Big Five personality traits to life satisfaction and to identify the trait that made the strongest unique contribution among Gen Z in Malaysia. As shown in Table 4, the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(5, 416) = 71.02$, p < .001. The model yielded an R value of .679 and an R^2 value of .461, indicating that the five personality traits collectively explained 46.1% of the variance in life satisfaction. The regression coefficients presented in Table 5 show that Extraversion (β = .269, p < .001), Conscientiousness (β = .257, p < .001), and Openness (β = .209, p = .004) made significant positive unique contributions to life satisfaction when all five personality traits were considered simultaneously. In contrast, Agreeableness (β = −.024, p = .735) and Emotional Stability (β = .028, p = .696) did not make statistically significant unique contributions to life satisfaction in the regression model. Among the

significant predictors, Extraversion recorded the largest standardised beta coefficient (β = .269), followed by Conscientiousness (β = .257) and Openness (β = .209). Therefore, Extraversion emerged as the personality trait with the strongest unique contribution to life satisfaction among Gen Z respondents in Malaysia.

Table 4
Anova Analysis

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	253.283	5	50.697	71.020	<.001
Residual	296.957	416	.714		
Total	550.441	421			

Table 5.5
Regression Analysis Big Five Models and Life Satisfaction

Variables	Beta	p-value
Extraversion	.269	<.001
Agreeableness	-.024	.735
Conscientiousness	.257	<.001
Emotional Stability	.028	.696
Openness	.209	.004

Model Summary: R=.679, R^2 =.461, F(5,416) = 71.020, p<.001

Discussion

The findings showed that Generation Z participants in Malaysia reported a high level of life satisfaction (M = 5.42, SD = 1.14). This indicates that, on average, the respondents evaluated their lives positively. Although Generation Z adults may experience various demands associated with education, employment, relationships, and the transition into adulthood, the present findings suggest that these experiences do not necessarily correspond with low life satisfaction. Rather than assuming that such challenges reduce wellbeing, the findings indicate that Malaysian Gen Z respondents in this study generally maintained a positive evaluation of their lives. This finding provides a useful context for understanding the role of individual differences, particularly personality, in life satisfaction.

For the second objective, Pearson correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between all five personality traits and life satisfaction. Conscientiousness showed the strongest relationship (r = .627), followed closely by Extraversion (r = .624) and Openness (r = .617), while Emotional Stability (r = .572) and Agreeableness (r = .562) also showed significant positive relationships with life satisfaction. These findings indicate that respondents with higher levels of these personality characteristics tended to report greater life satisfaction. The positive relationship between Emotional Stability and life satisfaction is also consistent with previous research showing that lower Neuroticism is generally related to greater life satisfaction, as Emotional Stability represents the opposite pole of Neuroticism. Overall, the findings support the relevance of personality in understanding how Malaysian Gen Z adults evaluate their lives.

For the third objective, multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the relative contribution of the Big Five personality traits to life satisfaction. The findings showed that Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness made significant unique contributions to life satisfaction. Extraversion demonstrated the strongest contribution (β = .269), followed by Conscientiousness (β = .257) and Openness (β = .209). The stronger contribution of Extraversion is consistent with previous research linking this trait with greater life satisfaction and wellbeing (Connolly & Sevä, 2021). Individuals higher in Extraversion tend to be more sociable, energetic, and engaged in interpersonal interactions, which may provide greater opportunities for positive social experiences. Similarly, the contribution of Conscientiousness may reflect characteristics such as organisation, responsibility, persistence, and goal-directed behaviour. Previous research has shown that goal orientation and personal control are related to higher life satisfaction and proactive development among Generation Z (López-García et al., 2025).

Openness also made a significant unique contribution to life satisfaction. Individuals higher in Openness tend to be receptive to new ideas and experiences and may demonstrate greater flexibility when responding to changing circumstances. This interpretation is consistent with previous research relating Openness to adaptive psychological functioning and wellbeing (Ahmed et al., 2020). For Gen Z adults navigating changes in education, employment, relationships, and increasing independence, being receptive to different experiences and perspectives may be relevant to how positively they evaluate their lives. In contrast, Agreeableness and Emotional Stability showed significant positive relationships with life satisfaction at the bivariate level but did not make significant unique contributions when all five personality traits were considered simultaneously. This distinction is important because Pearson correlation reflects the relationship between each personality trait and life satisfaction separately, whereas multiple regression estimates the unique contribution of each trait after accounting for the other personality dimensions. Previous research has similarly demonstrated that the strength of the relationships between individual personality traits and subjective wellbeing can differ when the traits are considered together, reflecting the interrelated nature of personality dimensions (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Steel et al., 2008). In the present study, some of the variance related to Agreeableness and Emotional Stability may therefore overlap with variance accounted for by the other personality traits. Their non-significant regression coefficients should not be interpreted as indicating that these traits are unrelated to life satisfaction, particularly as both showed significant positive relationships with life satisfaction in the correlation analysis.

The strength of the relationship between personality traits and wellbeing may also vary across social and cultural contexts. Previous research has shown that these relationships can differ according to interpersonal and cultural conditions (Dyrenforth et al., 2010; Xu et al., 2017). This contextual perspective may be relevant when interpreting the present findings among Malaysian Gen Z adults. However, cultural orientation was not directly measured in this study. Therefore, the present findings cannot establish whether cultural factors explain the non-significant unique contributions of Agreeableness and Emotional Stability. Future research could examine cultural values and social relationships alongside personality to provide a more comprehensive understanding of life satisfaction among Malaysian Gen Z adults. Collectively, the Big Five personality traits explained 46.1% of the variance in life satisfaction (R^2 = .461), indicating that personality accounted for a meaningful proportion of

individual differences in life satisfaction among the respondents. This finding is consistent with broader psychological literature demonstrating the relevance of personality to subjective wellbeing (Mueller et al., 2018). Nevertheless, 53.9% of the variance was not explained by the model, suggesting that personality alone does not account for differences in life satisfaction. Other individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors may also be relevant to how Malaysian Gen Z adults evaluate their lives.

Conclusion

This study provides further understanding of the relationship between personality and life satisfaction among Generation Z in Malaysia. Overall, the findings indicate that personality is relevant to how Gen Z respondents evaluate their lives, although the contribution of individual personality traits differs when the traits are considered simultaneously. Therefore, the study adds to the existing literature by providing evidence from the Malaysian context and demonstrates the importance of considering individual personality traits rather than treating personality as a uniform factor in understanding life satisfaction.

In addition, the findings extend the application of the Big Five framework within a Southeast Asian context. Previous research has demonstrated the applicability of the Big Five across different cultural settings (Nee et al., 2016; Bühler et al., 2023), and the present study contributes further evidence from Generation Z in Malaysia. From a practical perspective, recognising individual differences in personality may assist educators, counsellors, psychologists, and other professionals in developing a more individualised understanding of wellbeing among Generation Z. Accordingly, relevant initiatives may consider opportunities for social connection, purposeful goal setting, personal development, and engagement with new experiences. However, these implications should be approached cautiously, as the findings establish relationships rather than causal effects.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. The cross-sectional design does not allow causal conclusions, while the use of convenience sampling may limit the generalisability of the findings to the broader Generation Z population in Malaysia. Similarly, the reliance on self-report measures may introduce response bias, while demographic and situational factors were not examined as covariates in the present analysis. Consequently, future research could address these limitations through longitudinal designs, more representative sampling approaches, and the inclusion of relevant demographic and contextual variables.

More importantly, personality explains only part of the differences in life satisfaction, indicating that life satisfaction should not be understood solely in terms of personality. Thus, future research could examine personality alongside other individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors, including social support, financial stress, and psychological wellbeing. By integrating these factors, future studies may provide a more comprehensive understanding of life satisfaction among Generation Z in Malaysia and clarify the role of personality within the broader social and life circumstances of this generation.

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