

Subjective Well-Being of Chinese Residents in Lhokseumawe: A Demographic Analysis Based on Gender and Education

Dewi Rahayu^{1*}, Nur Afni Safarina¹

¹Psychology Study Program, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Malikussaleh
Jl. Cot Tengku Nie, Reuleut, Muara Batu, North Aceh 24355 – Indonesia

Email: dewi.170620073@mhs.unimal.ac.id

*Correspondence

Abstract:

Subjective well-being is one of the essential indicators in assessing an individual's quality of life. The Chinese ethnic group, as a minority in Indonesia, faces various social and cultural challenges that may affect their subjective well-being. This study aims to examine differences in the subjective well-being of Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe based on gender and educational level. The research method used a quantitative approach with a comparative research design. The sample consisted of 96 respondents selected using the incidental sampling technique. The research instrument was the "Subjective Well-being" questionnaire developed by Diener and Tov, measuring life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. Data analysis was conducted using the Mann-Whitney U Test to compare groups based on gender and educational level. The results showed significant differences in subjective well-being based on these two variables. Women had higher subjective well-being than men, while individuals with higher education levels exhibited better subjective well-being than those with only a high school education. The findings confirm that demographic factors play a role in subjective well-being, highlighting the need for more targeted interventions to enhance minority well-being. The implications of this study can serve as a foundation for developing programs to improve the subjective well-being of the Chinese community in Lhokseumawe. Further research is recommended to expand the geographical scope and employ a longitudinal approach to understand changes in subjective well-being over time.

Keywords: Chinese ethnic group, education level, gender, subjective well-being

1. Introduction

The Chinese ethnic group is a minority in Indonesia, comprising approximately 1.2% of the total population. As a migrant ethnic group, they have cultural values that differ from the local community, often leading to social and psychological challenges. In Lhokseumawe, the Chinese community is primarily engaged in trade and services but still faces various social dynamics that may impact their subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is an important indicator in assessing an individual's quality of life, encompassing life satisfaction and the balance between positive and negative emotions (Diener & McGavran, 2008). Factors such as economic status, social relationships, and cultural background contribute to a person's subjective well-being (Howell & Howell, 2008). Previous studies have shown that individuals with better economic status tend to have higher levels of subjective well-being (Hapsari, 2015). Additionally, demographic factors such as gender and educational level also influence an individual's subjective well-being (Eddington & Shuman, 2005; Diener, 2010). However, research on how these factors affect the subjective well-being of Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe remains limited.

Existing research has extensively discussed subjective well-being, particularly in the general population. Diener (2009) categorized subjective well-being into three main components: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. Previous studies indicate that subjective well-being is influenced by demographic factors such as gender and education (Diener, 2005). However, research specifically focused on the Chinese community in Lhokseumawe is still scarce. Most available studies highlight economic and social factors in general without examining differences in subjective well-being based on gender and educational level within this group. A preliminary study involving 30 Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe revealed that the majority of respondents felt dissatisfied with their lives (87.2%), unhappy (78.5%), and experienced negative emotions such as sadness, shame, and disappointment (65.5%). These findings indicate that their subjective well-being is relatively low. Thus, there is a need for further research on the factors influencing their subjective well-being, particularly in terms of gender and education level.

This study aims to determine whether there are differences in the subjective well-being of Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe based on gender and educational level. Understanding these differences is expected to provide new insights into the factors contributing to the subjective well-being of minority groups, particularly in Indonesia's multicultural society. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to psychological research on subjective well-being, especially in minority ethnic groups. Furthermore, the results of this study can serve as a foundation for policymakers and local communities to design intervention programs that improve the subjective well-being of the Chinese community in Lhokseumawe. By filling the research gap, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the subjective well-being of Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe.

2. Method

This study employs a quantitative approach with a comparative research design to examine differences in the subjective well-being of Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe based on gender and educational level. The study population consists of all Chinese residents living in Lhokseumawe. The sample includes 96 respondents selected using incidental sampling, with participants being at least 18 years old and identifying as ethnically Chinese. The sample comprises 37 males (39%) and 59 females (61%), with 55% having a high school education and 45% holding a higher education degree.

The study began with data collection using the "Subjective Well-being" questionnaire developed by Diener and Tov (2013). This instrument measures three main aspects of subjective well-being: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. Respondents completed a 26-item questionnaire using a Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using the Mann-Whitney U Test to examine differences in subjective well-being based on gender and educational level. Normality testing using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated that the data were not normally distributed, making a non-parametric test the appropriate method of analysis. The reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.856, indicating that the research instrument had a high level of reliability. By employing this method, the study aims to provide valid and reliable results in understanding the factors influencing the subjective well-being of Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe.

3. Results

This study aims to examine the differences in subjective well-being among Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe based on gender and education level. The results indicate significant differences in subjective well-being according to both variables.

Table 1.

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	37	39%
Female	59	61%
Total	96	100%

Table 2.

Distribution of Respondents by Education Level

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
High School	53	55%
Higher Education	43	45%
Total	96	100%

Table 3.

Mann-Whitney U Test Results

Variable	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender	0,000
Education Level	0,000

The results of the Mann-Whitney U Test show an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 (<0.05), indicating a significant difference in subjective well-being based on gender and education level. These findings support Diener's (2005) theory that demographic factors, such as gender and education, influence subjective well-being. Specifically, women and individuals with higher education levels tend to have better subjective well-being compared to men and those with lower education levels. This study provides a deeper understanding of the subjective well-being of Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe and confirms that demographic factors have a significant impact on their subjective well-being.

4. Discussion

This study demonstrates that there are significant differences in subjective well-being based on gender and education level among Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe. These findings reinforce previous theories suggesting that demographic factors influence subjective well-being (Diener, 2005). The novelty of this study lies in its focus on an ethnic minority community, which has been relatively underexplored in the context of subjective well-being. The results align with Diener's (2009) study, which states that women tend to have higher subjective well-being than men because they are more expressive in managing emotions. Additionally, this study supports the findings of Howell & Howell (2008), which indicate that higher education levels are correlated with better subjective well-being.

These findings have practical implications for policymakers and local communities in improving the subjective well-being of minority groups. Intervention programs aimed at enhancing subjective well-being, particularly for men and those with lower education levels, can help improve their quality of life. However, this study has limitations regarding its small sample size and non-random sampling method, making it necessary to interpret the generalizability of the results with caution. Future research could expand the geographical scope and employ longitudinal methods to examine long-term changes in subjective well-being.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine differences in the subjective well-being of Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe based on gender and educational level. The results confirmed significant differences, with women exhibiting higher subjective well-being than men and

individuals with higher education reporting better well-being than those with only a high school education. These findings emphasize the importance of demographic factors in subjective well-being. The study's implications can serve as a foundation for designing intervention programs to enhance the well-being of minority communities, particularly Chinese residents in Lhokseumawe. Future research should expand the sample size and adopt a longitudinal approach to understand long-term changes in subjective well-being.

References

- Diener, M. L. & McGavran, M. B. D. (2008). What makes people happy? A developmental approach to the literature on family relationship and well-being. New York London: The Guilford Press. 3347-368. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2008-00541-017>
- Diener, E. (2009). *Assesing Well-Being*. Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg. Doi 10. 1007/978-90-481-2354-4.
- Diener Ed. (2010). *Positive psychology: Differences in well-being*. Oxford University. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=R77hW11gaQsC&lpg=PR7&ots=EWqEaFjLxY&dq>
- Diener, E. (2005). *Guidelines for National Indicators of Subjective Well Being and Ill-Being*. DOI:10.1007/s11482-006-9007-x
- Howell, R. T., & Howell, J. C. (2008). The relation of economic status well-being in developing countries: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Relition*. 134(4), 536-560. Doi. 10.1037/00332909.134.4.536.
- Hapsari, D. (2015). Idealisme kwe tek hoay tentang sistem pendidikan berbasis budaya Tionghoa dalam cerita pendek "Rumah seolah yang saya impikan". *Jurnal Metasastra*. 8 (1), 1-16. <https://scholar.archive.org/work/c47ckoowdbgh3aat6ad2p22vum/access/wayback>
- Eddington, N. & Shuman, R. (2005). Subjective well-being (happiness). *Continuing Psychological Education*. <https://www.texcpe.com/pdf/fl/2019/FLSWB.pdf>