DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

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AN EXPLORATION OF FACTORS THAT AFFECT LIFE SATISFACTION AND
SELF-ESTEEM ON YOUNG ADULTS IN IRELAND

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore, analyse and report on some of the factors that may or may not impact on the levels of life satisfaction and self-esteem on a population of young adults between the ages of 25 to 45 in Ireland. At the outset, this study will explore the current international literature taking a broad approach and establishing what’s known to be strong predictors of life satisfaction and self-esteem today. Following on from that, this study will focus on localised research, taking a close look on currently reported levels of life satisfaction, well-being and self-esteem in Ireland. In other words; is Ireland a country for young adults? This is the central question that this study addresses, giving at the same time an account to what is currently known about this subject matter. This study will conduct some analysis on five predictable variables in particular; gender, self-esteem, education, and parents and non-parents. In addition, the study will attempt to establish whether or not those variables have an impact on the overall life satisfaction and on doing so comparing gender related possible variance. This study will treat life satisfaction and self-esteem outcomes separately, and will also show if and how both are intrinsically intertwined. The survey results which included 72 participants concurred with the general body of international literature including the latest OECD (2013) report on the subject matter for Ireland in that, this study has found that overall young adults living in Ireland today seem to have both high self-esteem and a good quality of life.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nearly one third of the total Irish population today is between 25 and 44 years of age (CSO, 2011) yet, various studies have established that ‘adulthood as a period of development has had less research devoted to it than childhood, adolescence and older age’ (O’Brien, 2013, p.169). This may be explained by the belief that adulthood is a time of stability and little life change, which has been found not to be true (O’Brien, 2003). Adulthood is a time of making plans and laying the foundation for the developmental capabilities individuals will experience for the rest of their lives (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2013).

1.1 Background

In the UK and Wales, one in every five adults aged between 35 to 44, claims they felt lonely or suffered depression a lot of the time (Relate.org.uk, 2011). Levinson (1986) states that ‘the primary components of life structure are the person's relationships with several others in the external world' (cf. Levinson, 1986, p 6). Boa (2004) illustrates Maslow’s idea that human development is driven by a set of five motivations that are necessary in order to promote happiness and fulfilment. Such needs vary from basic to growth needs and will become stronger the longer they are denied; such as the need for food. Those needs are broken down into five essential requirements starting from the basic needs, such as; food, sex, employment, friendship and health, building all the way up to growth needs such as; family, confidence, self-esteem and respect; meaning that the basic needs must be fulfilled first in order for an individual to desire and pursue the next need and so on, up to reaching the highest level which he called ‘Self-Actualisation’, which is the achievement of morality, creativity, problem solving, lack of prejudice spontaneity and acceptance of facts (Boa, 2004).
Although one can immediately reflect that back in the 1940's things were seen in a very different light, and needs, as described then, have now essentially moved on and could potentially have evolved and changed meaning. However, recent research conducted by Graham (2009) has shown that this is not the case and that needs mean as much now as they it did back then. Her research involved looking at levels of happiness and determinants of happiness in a number of countries across the globe such as Japan, Russia and Nigeria. She was particularly interested in comparing wealthy countries with poor countries and investigating the determinants of happiness. Supporting Maslow's theory, Graham (2009) found that there is a strong relationship between wealth and happiness; however, this relationship only goes as far as a specific threshold and then it declines over time. Some underdeveloped countries such as Nigeria in many cases reach high levels and by way of contrast, wealthy countries such as Japan can reach low levels of happiness (Graham, 2009).

Although life satisfaction and levels of happiness are often associated with financial status and income, it has been proven very inconsistent from a point of view where if that is the case, then all wealthy people should be happy, and all poor, disadvantaged people should be miserable (Graham, 2009). If one removes the financial determinants and allowing for further investigation into other determinants such as age, gender, marital status, health and employment, Graham (2009) found that happiness and age have a ‘U-shaped relationship’ with the lowest point in the mid-to late forties. Unemployed people were very unhappy, and health was reported as a very important factor on being happy (Graham, 2009). After concluding research in various countries and continents, Graham established that levels of happiness and Life Satisfaction are evaluated in a similar way, that is, using the same determinants (age, gender, marital status, education, health, employment status), and that there is a very close correlation between them, ranging from 0.56 to 0.50 (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004; Graham & Pettinato, 2002a). Good health and happiness showed a very strong
relationship. Countries such as Guatemala, Honduras, Nigeria and Pakistan which have extremely low levels of health standards reported significant levels of happiness amongst those who reported high levels of health (Graham, 2009, p 123) Psychological health as opposed to physical health seemed to be of greater importance and thus reported a much stronger relationship with happiness amongst those participants. One determinant that was not included in Graham’s work was the determinant of having children and whether or not children have an impact on the levels of happiness and life satisfaction. This study will aim to address this in the chapters to follow.

Graham’s (2009) study links directly back to Maslow's theory of self-actualization, in that: Self-actualisation is what every human being strives to achieve, and it has been determined that this ego-state, in the majority of cases has a perceived connection with success, and, as a consequence a link with money. By establishing that money only influences happiness up to a certain point and thereafter if becomes unimportant in light of other needs that haven't been satisfied such as health, ageing and marriage it supports Maslow's hierarchy. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs dictates that until the basic needs have been satisfied, the human drive is completely focused on meeting those basic needs first, before moving up in the hierarchy. This also reinforces the fact that poorer countries are in many cases happier than wealthier countries, in that people are happy in their achievements to-date and for those who are still striving to achieve some of the basic needs, the simple fact of having got so far, generates high levels of fulfilment and motivation.
1.2 Aims and Objectives

This research is divided into four main sections; the first is to undertake a key literature review that will identify the strong predictors of life satisfaction. In doing so, the researcher will endeavour to dig a bit deeper and look at such predictors that go beyond the expected and well reported indications of Life Satisfaction, such as income, and discuss the more esoteric factors like, social ageing, self-esteem etc. Secondly this study will present some facts and figures about Ireland by referring to more current and localised research and how trends relating to Life Satisfaction levels are perceived. Thirdly, this study will measure the level of statistical inference that components such as age, gender, education, marital status, children, employment and self-esteem individually present on promoting a good quality of life with young adults in Ireland. Finally, some conclusions will be drawn as to how much of an impact such components have on life satisfaction and self-esteem as a whole, and establish how such findings contribute to furthering and increasing awareness on how young adults feel about life in general and, in particular, about themselves in a socially and challenging Ireland of today.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Maslow, (as cited in Boa, 2004) everyone is capable of achieving self-actualisation however, only one in a hundred reaches the highest point. This is due to failure on satisfying the basic needs, which may be caused by negative life experiences such as divorce or loss of a job. This in turn will lead the individual to fluctuate between the basic needs, not being able to progress to fulfil the next level (Boa, 2004). Self-actualisation refers to an individual's desire for self-fulfilment, specifically, to the inclination for them to become actualized in what he or she is potentially. ‘The specific form that these needs will take will vary greatly with each individual. In one person it could take the form of a desire to be the ideal mother, in another it may be communicated athletically, or it may be communicated in the form of paintings, pictures or in inventions’ (cf. Boa, 2004 p. 382-383).

Levinson (1986) by way of contrast believes that the human development follows ‘seasonal cycles’ from the early years of adulthood until late adulthood shifting from a set of ‘eras’ every five years. This shift from one era to another includes changes that are influenced by an individual’s life structure and social and physical environment which includes family life, work, religion and economic status (Levinson, 1986). According to Levinson (1986) between the ages of 17 to 45 a person enters the ‘Early Adult Transition’ which would peak at two major points; at age 20 and at age 30, consisting of a high level of stress and conflict with oneself in light of the decisions and challenges that lay ahead such as the decision to occupy a place in society, start a family and career aspirations (Levinson, 1986).

Following from Early Adulthood a new ‘era’ begins (40 to 65), and from here individual’s biological capabilities have lessened compared to those of early adulthood. Nonetheless individuals are still energetic and have active personal life affairs, taking care not only of themselves but also others, through various channels; such as families, charities or
community work (Levinson, 1986). Concurring with Levinson, Arnett (1998) highlights the importance of the years between the late teens to late twenties, and describes it as a slow trip to adulthood where one focus on things such as personal development, and finding a place in society in preparation to make more important decisions in the future such as the decision to start a family and settle into an adult role (Arnett as cited in Grusec & Hastings, 2007).

With these early themes in mind, and taking in to account the process of changes and developments individuals undergo in the course of their lives, the researcher will segment literature related to life satisfaction and self-esteem with specific focus on what is known regarding the factors that impact on levels of life satisfaction and self-esteem in young adults today.

2.1 Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction or happiness research often debate the correlation between life satisfaction and how it is affected by financial status. In 1974 Richard Easterlin published one of the first pieces of work challenging the connection between economic growth and happiness showing a non-convergence between individual’s income growth and self-declared happiness, known today as the Easterlin Paradox (Becchetti & Pelloni, 2011). The Easterlin paradox, focuses on demonstrating that the perception that economic growth increases personal life satisfaction is not accurate. High income has a short term correlation with increased income and, over time; high income does not increase levels of life satisfaction (Easterlin, 1974). Upon additional research, Easterlin (1974) found that both, high and low income countries reported on average, positive and strong levels of happiness.

The Easterlin paradox was confirmed by Blanchflower & Oswald (2004) through research done in the US, Great Britain, Belgium and Japan between the 1970’s and the late 1990’s, reporting that the average self-declared happiness remained the same or declined
despite the increasing standard of living. By making use of data available on the World Database of Happiness and on the US Census, Frey & Stutzer (2002b) achieved similar results, supporting Easterlin’s paradox.

In contrast, Diener & Oishi (2000) found an association between high income growth rates and slight increases in self-reported happiness in countries such as Denmark, Germany and Italy from the 1960’s into the 1970’s. After controlling for many concurring factors, Stevenson & Wolfers (2008) documented a significant relationship between income growth and levels of life satisfaction. Some descriptive evidence under study may serve as potential explanation to the paradox validity in predicting life satisfaction in some instances but may not be applicable to others (Becchetti & Pellonni, 2011).

It leaves no doubt up to this point that Income has a strong connection with life satisfaction and that current research has thoroughly dissected the different elements that may influence it positively and negatively such as culture, as seen so far in this review. With that in mind, it can then be summarised that research on the paradox does not state that per capita income increases life satisfaction, instead, it suggests that per capita income has diminishing effects on life satisfaction. It points out why different levels of inequality may explain why it works in some high income countries but not in others. Positive effects of high income may disappear in the long run due to hedonic adaptation and that growth in per capita income accompanies other factors which are important life satisfaction drives such as relational goods such as things in life that cannot be enjoyed alone (Becchetti & Pellonni, 2011).

Furthermore, small improvements in low per capita income levels make a strong impact in terms of average country life satisfaction, while, at high income levels the same changes have insignificant impact (Becchetti & Pellonni, 2011).
2.3 Life Satisfaction and Children

Bowen (1988) presents other factors as strong predictors of life satisfaction such as family life satisfaction. Though ‘A Value Based Approach’ Bowen (1988) examines the impact of union and joint collaboration amongst family members on making decision on important family issues, values and beliefs and how this boosts family life satisfaction. Henry (1994) argues that origins of life satisfaction are different depending on which stage of life one is in. For example, he argues that life satisfaction throughout adolescence is greatly influenced by family dynamics and characteristics as well as family bonding, flexibility and parental support. He goes on to show that adolescents from a single-parent family demonstrated lower levels of Life Satisfaction compared with those living in a two-parent family (Henry, 1994). The term family can also be referred to as a woman’s decision to become a mother or not. Holahan (1983), revealed through her research on ‘childbearing decision and life satisfaction for parents and non-parents’, that childless women have reported much higher levels of Life Satisfaction than reported by those with children.

Holahan’s (1983) research concluded that women who chose not to have children subsequently reported that life satisfaction came from career rather than from becoming a parent. In contrast, those with children reported that source of life satisfaction were those where decisions made were on the basis of having children (Holahan 1983). Children have a higher negative impact on life satisfaction if the economic circumstances are tough, such as in the case of one-parent families (Dolan & Peasgood et al., 2008), divorced mothers, (Schoon & Hansson et al., 2005), poor families (Alesina & Di Tella et al., 2004). According to the momentary effect calculated with daily reconstruction methods, taking care of a child is proven to be one of the less satisfaction-enhancing activities (Kahneman & Krueger et al., 2004).
Research conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau (2006) showed an increase toward childlessness and delayed childbearing in the past few decades. Reports from 1975 showed that 15.6% of women aged 30 – 34 and 10.5% of women aged 35 – 39 were childless. The same research in 2000 showed an increase of 28% and 20%, respectively. A number of psychological research studies took place on this subject since then. Nomaguchi & Mikie (2003) suggests that parents of small children report higher levels of distress than their childless counterparts. In contrast parents of adult children report similar levels of distress and well-being as those who are childless (Everson & Simon, 2005). In turn at midlife, childless women reported no negative psychological associations with childlessness instead the same study reported that it was women who became mothers at an early stage of their lives who reported lower well-being (Koropeckyj-Cox & Pienta et al., 2007).

2.4 Gender Differences in life Satisfaction

Blanchflower & Oswald (2011), conducted research on a number of factors such as age, gender, disability and employment status, to analyse their role on influencing on levels of life satisfaction. It was concluded that with regards to gender, no effect on happiness was found, meaning, that no difference was found between male and female on levels of happiness. Furthermore, it was loosely stated that the determinants of happiness for men and women were almost identical (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2011).
2.5 Self-Esteem

Researchers Judge, Locke & Durham (1998) define ‘self-esteem’ as the basic appraisal people make for themselves. In essence, self-esteem is the most fundamental core value of the self, due to the overall value one places of oneself as an individual (Harter, 1990). According to Maslow (1970), self-esteem is divided in two different forms that are described as the need for self-respect and the need to be respected by others. Maslow’s views are that self-esteem is a basic human need and an integral element of his hierarchy of needs. Maslow explains that respect from others involves recognition, acceptance, status and appreciation and like self-respect or inner self-esteem are necessary needs in order to promote fulfilment and drive individuals to grow and achieve self-actualisation (Maslow, 1970).

Recent theories of self-esteem explore reasons why individuals are motivated to maintain a high self-regard. Mark Leary’s (1995) sociometer theory states that self-esteem serves an important role in an individual’s life which is that of checking one’s level of social acceptance in their specific social group. Other theorists have the view that self-esteem serves as a protective function and reduces anxiety about factors such as life and death (Solomon & Greenberg et al., 1991). The ‘terror management’ theory describes that cultural values are determinants of what an individual sees as meaningful and are the basis for self-esteem, which is described as a personal, subjective measure of how well a person is following to their cultural beliefs (Solomon & Greenberg et al., 1991).

2.6 The Development of Self-Esteem

Life experiences are major sources of self-esteem development on an individual’s life. The positive and negative experiences one has, creates attitudes towards oneself that can be beneficial and develop feelings of self-worth, or can be opposing and develop negative feelings of self-worth (Breckler & Olson et al., 2006). In the early days of a child’s life,
parents are the most important influences on self-esteem and the main source of experiences, both positive and/or negative. Parenting styles and the importance of unconditional love translate into later effects on a child’s self-esteem as they grow older (Breckler & Olson et al., 2006). Erol & Orth (2011) examined the development of self-esteem in adolescents and young adults in a study aimed to establish the course of self-esteem development focusing on when in life it occurs and what direction it takes. It was found that self-esteem moderately increases through adolescence and continues up until young adulthood but at a slower pace. Rogers (1961), emphasizes the individual personal experiences of the world around them and their idea of ‘self’, building awareness around ‘what I am’; meaning, values, concepts and perceptions. This perceived self is the reference point for the individual's perception of the world and consequently how they can adapt to it. According to Rogers (1961) an individual with a strong, positive self-concept will view the world in a different light from those with a weak or negative self-concept.

2.7 Self-Esteem and Intimate relationships

Within regards to the link between self-esteem and romantic relationships not a vast amount is present on the current self-esteem literature (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). Specifically, little is known about its role on predicting relationship durability (Baumeister & Campbell et al., 2003). Some data on love styles and self-esteem supports the concept that over the period of one month, couples with low self-esteem are more likely to break up than those with high self-esteem showing that low self-esteem relates to feelings of manic love, which is marked by extreme feelings of joy and agony over the love object (Campbell, Forster, & Finkel, 2002). High self-esteem in contrast relates to passionate, erotic love, characterised by the escalation of erotic feelings for the love object (Baumeister &
Campebell et al., 2003). Research done by Murray & Rose et al., (2002) found that individuals with low levels of self-esteem tend to be suspect of their partners' expressions of love and care, acting as if they are continuously expecting their partners to reject and abandon them, displaying a range of destructive behaviours. Despite those findings it is not to say that low self-esteem issues will lead to relationship break up in a more likely fashion than those with high self-esteem, as high self-esteem also share their specific set of issues (Baumeister & Campebell et al., 2003).
CHAPTER 3: THE IRISH CONTEXT

3.1 How’s Life?

Eurostat marked the United Nations International Day of Happiness on the 20th March 2014 by publishing a study into quality of life measures in the European Union (Independent.ie, 2014). Irish people reported been more content than most and the high level of life satisfaction they report has not fallen much since a previous survey carried out in 2007 before the country's financial collapse. Eurostat said this was generally the case throughout Europe as overall life satisfaction was only "moderately influenced by present circumstances". Older people – those over 65 – are by far the happiest in Ireland, followed by those aged 18-24, while those in the squeezed middle are far less satisfied with life (Independent.ie, 2014).

The OECD (2014) reveals that Ireland is the 15th happiest place in the world to live - While still gripped in recession and living under the constant threat of austerity budgets, Ireland manages to rank 15th on a list compiled by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD findings show 30.3 per cent of Irish people aged 15-24 face difficulties with employment, a figure almost double the international average of 16.2 per cent. Despite the perceived doom and gloom, the OECD’s report suggests 84 per cent of Irish people have more positive than negative experiences during an average day. According to the survey, the average annual disposal income is around €18,700 in Ireland which is more than a €1,000 above the international average. However, the organisation found there was “considerable gap between the richest and the poorest” in Irish society. The report found the top 20 per cent of the population earns five times more than the bottom 20 per cent.
Happiness or subjective well-being can be measured in terms of life satisfaction, the presence of positive experiences and feelings, and the absence of negative experiences and feelings. Such measures, while subjective, are a useful complement to objective data to compare the quality of life across countries (Oecdbetterlifeindex.org, 2014).

When asked to rate their general satisfaction with life on a scale from 0 to 10, Irish people gave it a 7.0 grade, higher than the OECD average of 6.6. There is little difference in life satisfaction levels between men and women across OECD countries. In Ireland, however, women reported being somewhat happier than men, rating their life at 7.2, compared with a 6.7 average for men. Education levels strongly influence subjective well-being in many OECD countries but in Ireland the difference is relatively small, with people who have only completed primary education reporting a life satisfaction level of 7.3, and people with tertiary education a level of 7.1 (Oecdbetterlifeindex.org, 2014). Happiness, or subjective well-being, is also measured by the presence of positive experiences and feelings, and/or the absence of negative experiences and feelings. In Ireland, 84% of people reported having more positive experiences in an average day (feelings of rest, pride in accomplishment, enjoyment, etc) than negative ones (pain, worry, sadness, boredom, etc). This figure is higher than the OECD average of 80% (Oecdbetterlifeindex.org, 2014).

3.2 Is Ireland a country for young adults?

With reference to Arnett’s (1998) Emerging Adulthood theory, during the first years of the adulthood (late teens to mid-twenties) an individual should be making important decisions in their lives such as the decision to get married and start a family. According to some figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Ireland, released in September 2013, the latest statistics on Marriage and Civil Partnership, which should indicate some key
elements that may give an indication of current ‘decision making timings’ in comparison to
previews research findings.

According to the CSO, in 2011 the average marriages per 1,000 population were 4.3
which is lower than the prior year with 4.5 per 1,000 population. In contrast with other
European countries such as Bulgaria with the lowest score in Europe per 1,000 population
(2.9), Ireland seems to amongst those who preserves the concept of marriage. The highest
score in Europe was Cyprus with an average of 7.3 per 1000 population (CSO, 2013). Within
regard to age of marriage, the average age of a groom was 34.6 which were not too dissimilar
from 2010 with an average age of groom of 34.1. The average age of the bride was 32.5,
slightly higher than prior year, the average age being 32.0. Total marriages in 2011 reached
19,855, of those 5,768 were civil marriages which were lower than in 2010 with 20,594 total
marriages and 5,991 out of those being civil marriages (CSO, 2013).

Since 1961, the average groom age changed from an average of 30.6 in 1961, a low of
26.2 years in 1977 and since then has increased reaching a high of 34.6 years in 2011. (CSO,
2013) For the bride the trend followed a similar path reaching and average of 26.9 years in
1961, a low of 24.0 in 1977, reaching an average high of 32.5 in 2011. (CSO, 2013) A total
of 88% of all marriages in Ireland were first time marriages for both bride and groom. A
count of 2,272 marriages involved at least one divorcee including 447 marriages where both
parties were divorced. (CSO, 2013) This shows a significant relevance to Arnett’s (2004)
theory of Emerging Adulthood, bringing to light some changes in timing reflected in today’s
young adults in Ireland.
CHAPTER 4: METHODS

4.1 Research Design

Quantitative research has been proven to be consistent for the exploration of phenomena by means of numerical data collection and further mathematical based methods, specifically statistics (Froelicher & Shishani, 2009). The rationale for adopting a quantitative research method in the execution of this study lies in the requirement for closed-ended question type for the accurate investigation of participant’s current levels of satisfaction with life and self-esteem. This enables the researcher to account for factors that could have an impact on self-esteem and life satisfactions levels as well as enable comparisons to be made within the different variables categories.

4.2 Participants Sample

The sampling of this research consisted on any individual from the general population who:

a) is between the ages of 25 to 45; and

b) have been living in Ireland for at least 5 years thus, having experienced the important aspects of the Irish culture.

At the outset, the researcher had hoped to survey 100+ participants overall, however owing to a combination of factors including

1. the poor number of respondents on the online version of the survey and

2. a large return of incomplete questionnaires,

resulted in a total of 72 individuals from a snowball sample.

All participants meet the necessary inclusion requirements (of being between the ages of 25 and 45) and have being living in the Republic of Ireland for at least 5 years.
4.3 Recruitment of the Sample

Initial contact with the sample was made via sample of convenience method of sampling (Cook & Campbell, 1979), whereby access was gained through close friends, work colleagues, class mates and some relatives who fitted the inclusion criteria. In the attempt to increase the sample the researcher then adopted the snowballing method of sampling where by the researcher shared the online link through social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook and LinkedIn, asking connections to share the link to the online survey.

4.4 Materials

The method used to collect participant’s data was an anonymous online or paper questionnaire, containing 76 multiple choice questions. Each questionnaire took between 5-10 minutes to be completed.

4.5 Procedure

The measures reported below were administered in the form of a questionnaire designed to measure whether or not variables such as life satisfaction/quality of life and self-esteem is affected by factors such as age, gender, marital status, education, children and employment and to report on the level of strength they may present on the same.

The questionnaire included: Introduction letter (Appendix 1), A consent letter (Appendix 2), Part 1 of the survey containing demographic questions such as age, gender and marital status (Appendix 3), Part 1a, including a set of 33 questions regarding the level of life satisfaction from Ferrans & Powers (1992) Quality of Life Index© Generic Version – III (Appendix 4). This detailed questionnaire is composed of 33 questions regarding levels of satisfaction and
an additional 33 questions regarding the importance of specific aspects of the participant’s life, including health, sex life and support from friends and family.

To account for the self-esteem scores the researcher used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1965), which includes questions such as ‘At times I feel I’m no good at all’ and ‘I feel that I’m a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others’ (reverse scored). The researcher used the full 10 questions scale to all participants (Appendix 5). Participants were asked to select the answer in order of agreement in a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The final page included a detachable ‘Thank you note’ with additional support such as Aware Ireland, and researcher’s contact details (Appendix 6).

4.6 Ethical considerations

In order to preserve participant’s anonymity, owing to the sensitive nature of this research, every effort has been made to ensure, no traceable information is present on either the online questionnaire or the paper questionnaire. Participants used blue and black pens to complete questionnaires and all answers were added to a large envelope upon completion to avoid identification of participants. A consent form (Appendix 2) was included after the introduction page so that participants had the opportunity to read and sign it before agreeing to take part. On the online survey, participants were prompted to click continue if they agreed to take part. The participants were advised that they reserved the right to withdraw at any time before, during or immediately after completing the questionnaire. They were equally advised that once the data is collected it would be no longer possible to withdraw information due to anonymity. The researcher's contact details were included on both the introduction page and the ‘thank you’ page so that participants had the opportunity to raise any concerns,
before and immediately after taking part in the research. This research was also fully approved by the Dublin Business School ethics committee which ensures that safe-guards are in place to protect participant’s integrity.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The survey results show that from the 72 participants, 34 were male (47.2%) and 38 were female (52.8%). The majority of participants were between the ages of 35-39, accounting for 30.6% with the second highest percentage being 26.4% which were participants between the ages of 30-34, followed by 23.6% between the ages of 40-43 and 19.4% which were those between the ages of 25-29. A total of 40.3% of participants reported to be single or otherwise not engaged in a romantic relationship. 38.9% of participants were married, 13.9% reported ‘other’ - this category includes cohabitation and in a long-term relationship. 5.6% were separated and 1.4% were divorced. Education rates reported high levels with 27.8% reporting having completed university level, 16.7% having completed higher education, 13.9% reached diploma level, both further education and graduate level reported the same result reaching 9.7% of participants per category and 11.1% of participants were post-graduates followed by another 11.1% for those who reported having completed secondary school.

From the 72 participants, 31 were parents (43.1%) and 41 were non-parents (56.9%). A large number of participants reported being in full-time employment, showing a total of 63.3%, followed by 13.9% who are self-employed, 11.1% are part-time workers, 6.9% are unemployed, 1.4% are casual workers and 2.8% reported ‘other’ - This category is composed of home-makers and staying home mothers.
5.2 Hypothesis results

Results are described in the following order: Preliminary normative data, test-differences on and self-esteem levels on male and female over 30 years of age, differences between parents and non-parents on levels of life satisfaction, correlations between higher education and self-esteem scores and finally a comparison between male on females over the age of 30 in life satisfaction scores.

Hypothesis 1 - An Independent-sample t-test was performed to indicate differences between male and female on self-esteem levels on an age group of over thirties. There was no significant difference on self-esteem level between male (M=21.33, SD=3.63) and female (M=19.45, SD=5.820) conditions; (t(27)=1.77, p = 0.089).

The result suggests a slight trend indicating that perhaps males over the age of thirty reports higher levels of self-esteem compared to females of the same age group, however, the results shows no significant difference on self-esteem levels between the two groups.

Table 1. Independent Sample t-test table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24.11</td>
<td>7.443</td>
<td>1.767</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19.45</td>
<td>5.820</td>
<td>1.877</td>
<td>25.182</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: p Significant at .05 level.

Hypothesis 2 – An Independent-sample t-test was performed to indicate quality of life differences between parents and non-parents. There was no significant difference in the scores for parent (M=20.70, SD=3.73) and non-parents (M=20.70, SD=3.81) conditions;
These results suggest that both groups reported the exactly the same scores on quality of life, showing that children do not seem to have an impact on quality of life of participants.

**Table 2: Independent Sample t-test table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>Parents 20.70</td>
<td>3.725</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Parents 20.70</td>
<td>3.813</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>62.525</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: p Significant at .05 level.*

Hypothesis 3 – A Person’s r correlation was performed to examine whether there is a relationship between education (M=3.97, SD 1.77) and self-esteem scores (M=19.83, SD=6.06). The results revealed a non-significant and negative correlation (r(72) = -.03, p = .77). The correlation was negative indicating that, the higher the education, the lower the self-esteem scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Hypothesis 4 - An Independent-sample t-test was performed to indicate whether there is a difference in quality of life scores between male and females over the age of thirty. The results indicate that there was no significant difference between males (M=21.3, SD=3.63)
and females (M= 20.2, SD=3.9) conditions $t(56)=1.17$, $p=0.025$. These results suggests that there is a slight indication that females report lower life satisfaction (or quality of life) scores however, it showed no significant difference between the two groups.

**Table 4: Independent Sample t-test table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>21.33</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.168</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>20.21</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.169</td>
<td>55.154</td>
<td>.247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: $p$ Significant at .05 level.*
CHARPTER 6: DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this research was to identify strong predictors of life satisfaction in a population of young adults in Ireland. On doing so, it would take into consideration factors that are currently well known such as income, as a starting point and build from that by giving an account to some other potential determinants such as self-esteem, being a parent or a non-parent, marital status, age and education as possible factors that influence life satisfaction in Ireland today. In particular, this research aimed at providing some indication on the level of strengths (if any) those factors present.

The first hypothesis was that single males would report higher levels of self-esteem than single women. First, the findings revealed that self-esteem is quite high amongst young adults in Ireland with 92% of participants responding either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ to the question ‘I feel I have a number of good qualities’ and 82% responding either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ to the question ‘I take a positive attitude towards myself’. On comparing self-esteem levels between single males and females, results showed no significant difference in gender, however, it showed a slight trend indicating that perhaps single males have higher self-esteem than their single female’s counterpart. The results further suggest that Life Satisfaction is also at a high with 84% of participants responding either ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ to the question ‘As a whole I feel satisfied with myself’. This finding is very similar with the latest OECD (2013) results which show that in Ireland 84% of people reported having more positive than negative experiences daily such as the feeling of pride, rest, accomplishment and enjoyment. This may serve as an explanation for the high self-esteem score based on research by Brecker et al., (2006) which states that the positive and negative experiences individuals have, create attitudes towards themselves that can be beneficial and develop feelings of self-worth or to can be negative and have the opposite effect. This finding also
supports Rogers’s (1961) concept of ‘self’ and how individual’s perception is influenced by the environment around them, including values, ideas and perceptions.

The second hypothesis was that there would be a difference on life satisfaction scores between parents and non-parents. Statistical analysis did not support the hypothesis. It showed no significant difference on their well-being and overall life satisfaction, in fact, results showed that both groups scored exactly the same on life satisfaction, potentially meaning that being a parent does not make you more or less happy than those without children. The results moderately contradict Holahan’s (1983) research which concludes that the childless woman reported higher levels of life satisfaction than those with children. This could be due the fact that Holahan’s (1983) research touched specifically on those women who made the decision not to be a parent rather than not having been able to become a parent.

An important point was made by Dolan et al., (2008) regarding the economic circumstances stating that children would always have a negative impact on life satisfaction if the circumstances are tough, such as those of a one-parent family or divorced mothers. Alesina et al., (2004) supports the same views by reaffirming that poor families will report lower satisfaction with life, due to not been able to provide for their children’s needs.

The third hypothesis refers to level of education and self-esteem. It is hypothesised that the higher the education the higher the self-esteem levels. The results did not support the hypothesis. Findings showed that in fact the effect is rather to the contrary. It showed that the higher the education the lower the self-esteem. The result however, was not significant. This result is supported by the figures released by the latest OECD (2013) survey which indicates that education strongly affects well-being in many countries in Europe, however in Ireland the difference is small and also be the opposite to what would be generally perceived to be the case. The OECD (2013) report shows that people who have only completed primary
school reported a satisfaction level of 7.3, and people with tertiary education reporting a level of 7.1.

The fourth finding refers to possible differences between male and female over the age of 30, on their overall satisfaction with life. It was hypothesised that males would be more satisfied with life than women. The results showed that although males showed a small inclination towards higher satisfaction with life, the difference was not significant and did not support the hypothesis. Taking into consideration the sample size 34 males and 38 females, perhaps, a bigger sample would give more significant results. However, this supports Blanchflower & Oswald’s (2011) international research findings which state that not only there is no significant difference between male and female regardless of age, but the determinants of happiness and well-being are almost identical for both.

Overall, no significant relationship was established through the results and the finding did not fit the hypothesis. This could be due a number of factors, first been the sample size. Perhaps a larger, more varied sample would display some significance. The sample population by definition was also highly educated and mostly in full-time employment and the outcomes may or may not have been affected by the sample demographics including the various socio-economics cohorts. Nevertheless, some important considerations can still be made. Maslow’s (1999) theory of self-actualization may explain some of the overall outcomes such as the high levels of life satisfaction which according to Maslow (1999) can only be achieve once the basic needs have been fulfilled such as the need for food, shelter, love and self-esteem which also reported as been high in this research.

Additionally, taking into account Richard Easterlin’s (1974) paradox, this research may serve as a strong indicator that, as stated in the paradox, money does not increases happiness long term. After the economic downturn in Ireland, there could potentially be a perception of lower levels of Life Satisfaction and self-esteem and in this case, as found in
this study, it is to the contrary. The finding of this study supports the Easterlin paradox as confirmed by Blanchflower & Oswald (2004) through research done in the US, Great Britain, Belgium and Japan between the 1970’s and the late 1990’s, reporting that the average self-declared happiness remained the same or declined despite the increasing standard of living.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In conclusion, this study has found that overall young adults living in Ireland today seem to have both high self-esteem and a good quality of life which reported as a whole satisfying. Although not a vast amount of localised research is available in reference to Ireland, this study has identified that the Irish perceived quality of life in such a population is good and supports other research available in other countries, such as the UK and the U.S. It also makes clear that despite the economic collapse in recent years, the adults and young adults living in Ireland today have in the majority of cases a positive attitude towards themselves and towards society. With these findings in mind and supported by the recent OECD studies that indeed “Ireland is very much a country for young adults”.

7.1 Areas for Future Research

Areas recommended for future research would include first, a segmentation of predictable variables such as education, marital status and parent/non-parent so that more detailed information could be drawn from the participants to account for a more comprehensive understanding of the results achieved to date. For instance, education remains an enigma and to conclude that higher education has a negative impact on self-esteem and that it does not impact on the perceived quality of life. Such outcomes demands for more information to be made available in order to understand how such an important driver of human development does not equate to a higher positive impact on life satisfaction.

Furthermore, based on the current age of marriages in Ireland and how trends have significantly changed over the past few decades, it would be worthwhile investigating those trends more in-depth and account for elements that may be affecting the age of marriage. Is it
simply the case that the 30 year old is the new 20? Finally future research could involve the inclusion of income per capita as a predictable variable, considering the various controversial debates on the topic it would certainly enrich the current knowledge, particularly post the Celtic tiger era, taking into account the austerity times we now live in. It would also capture that unique cohort of young people who have lived their young lives in both the boom and the bust times.

7.2 Strengths and Weaknesses

One of the important elements that possibly limited this research lies within the number of predictable variables it evaluates. Perhaps focusing on a smaller number would allow for more in-depth findings regarding each variable individually. The second learning from conducting this research relates to the choice of questionnaires. The Quality of life Index (Ferrans & Powers, 1992) was used to analyse life satisfaction levels which perhaps could be replaced by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener & Emmons et al., 1985) in order to account for an overall simplified Life Satisfaction score. Thirdly, time constraints mitigated against developing a larger sample and thus, more statistically valid population with all the necessary socio-economic groupings included. This study however provides a solid basis for factors that are important predictors of life satisfaction and on doing so highlights the need for more localised research on such factors which currently are very limited in the Republic of Ireland.
REFERENCES


Independent.ie. (2014). *We're happier with our lot than most Europeans - Independent.ie*. Retrieved March 20, 2014, from: [http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/were-happier-with-our-lot-than-most-europeans-30109082.html](http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/were-happier-with-our-lot-than-most-europeans-30109082.html)


APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Information Letter

Dear Participant,

My name is Denise Da Costa and I am conducting research in the Department of Psychology that investigates various factors that may or may not impact on life satisfaction and self-esteem of young adults. This research is being conducted as part of my studies and will be submitted for examination.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and it is completely anonymous.

You are invited to take part in this study and participation involves completing this anonymous questionnaire. While the questionnaire asks some questions that might cause some minor negative feelings, it has been used widely in research. If any of the questions do raise difficult feelings for you, contact information for support services is included on the final page as well as below and you are welcome to detach this page and take it with you.

Support Available to participants: docs

The Samaritans offers a 24/7 text support service; 365 days a year, for anyone in emotional distress. This service is available nationwide. To receive the service, simply send an SMS text message to 087 260 90 90

Mental Health Ireland/Young Mental Health Ireland
Email: info@mentalhealthireland.ie

Aware helpline: 1890 303302
Supports those who are directly affected by depression. Aware operates a helpline from 10am to 10pm Monday to Wednesday and 10am to 1am Thursday to Sunday. The Aware Helpline is a non-directive listening service for people affected by depression, either as sufferers or as family and friends.

If you have any questions or need any additional information regarding the above services or in relation to the questionnaire, you can contact me directly on

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

Denise Da Costa

Appendix 2: Consent Form
Consent

Participation is completely voluntary and so you are not obliged to take part.

Participation is anonymous and confidential. Thus responses cannot be attributed to any one participant. For this reason, it will not be possible to withdraw from participation after the questionnaire has been collected, however you reserve the right to withdraw from participation at any given moment prior to completion and submission.

The questionnaires will be securely stored and data from the paper questionnaires will be transferred from the paper record to electronic format and stored on a password protected computer.

It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the questionnaire that you are consenting to participate in the study.

Should you require any further information regarding this research, please contact me on

My supervisor can be contacted on

By clicking continue you are agreeing to take part.

Many thanks
Denise da Costa
BA Psychology

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

Denise da Costa
Appendix 3: Demographic Questions

PART 1 - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Age: ______
Gender: ______

Marital Status:
☐ Single
☐ Married
☐ Divorced
☐ Separated
☐ Widow (er)
☐ Other______________________

What level of education have you completed to date?
☐ Secondary Level
☐ Further Education
☐ Higher Education
☐ University Level
☐ Diploma Level
☐ Graduate
☐ Post-Grad
☐ Other______________________

Have you any children?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Employment Status:
Full Time
Part-Time
Unemployed
Casual Worker
Self Employed
Retired
Other:______________________
## Appendix 4: Quality of Life Index

### PART 1 - HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH:

For each of the following, please choose the best answer that best describes how satisfied you are with that area of your life. Please mark your answer by selecting the appropriate number. There are no right or wrong answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Satisfied Are You With:</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Moderately Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Slightly Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Slightly Satisfied</th>
<th>Moderately Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your health?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your health care?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The amount of pain that you have?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The amount of energy you have for everyday activities?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Your ability to take care of yourself without help?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Your ability to get around, go places?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Your ability to do things with your hands and arms?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The amount of control you have over your life?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Your chances of living as long as you would like?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Your family's health?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Your children?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Your family's happiness?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Your sex life?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Your spouse, lover, or partner?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Your friends?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The emotional support you get from your family?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The emotional support you get from people other than your family?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Please Go To Next Page)
### HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH:

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Your ability to take care of family responsibilities?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>How useful you are to others?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The amount of worries in your life?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Your neighbourhood?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Your home, apartment, or place where you live?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Your job (if employed)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Not having a job (if unemployed, retired, or disabled)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Your education?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>How well you can take care of your financial needs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The things you do for fun?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Your chances for a happy future?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Your peace of mind?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Your faith in God?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Your achievement of personal goals?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Your happiness in general?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Your life in general?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Your personal appearance?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Yourself in general?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Please Go To Next Page)
PART 2.
For each of the following, please choose the answer that best describes how important that area of your life is to you. Please mark your answer by circling the number. There are no right or wrong answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW IMPORTANT TO YOU IS:</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
<th>Moderately Unimportant</th>
<th>Moderately Important</th>
<th>Slightly Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your health?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your health care?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Having no pain?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Having enough energy for everyday activities?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Taking care of yourself without help?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Your ability to get around, go places?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Your ability to do things with your hands and arms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Having control over your life?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Living as long as you would like?</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Your family's health?</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>11. Your children?</td>
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<td>12. Your family's happiness?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Your sex life?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Your spouse, lover, or partner?</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>15. Your friends?</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. The emotional support you get from your family?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. The emotional support you get from people other than your family?</td>
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<th>HOW IMPORTANT TO YOU IS:</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Moderately Unimportant</th>
<th>Slightly Unimportant</th>
<th>Slightly Important</th>
<th>Moderately Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
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<tr>
<td>18. Taking care of family responsibilities?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>19. Being useful to others?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>20. Having no worries?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>21. Your neighbourhood?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>22. Your home, apartment, or place where you live?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>23. Your job (if employed)?</td>
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<td>24. Having a job (if unemployed, retired, or disabled)?</td>
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<td>25. Your education?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>26. Being able to take care of your financial needs?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>27. Doing things for fun?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>28. Having a happy future?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>29. Peace of mind?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>30. Your faith in God?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Achieving your personal goals?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<td>32. Your happiness in general?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. Being satisfied with life?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. Your personal appearance?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>35. Are you true to yourself?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
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**Appendix 5: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Questionnaire**

## PART 3 - Self-esteem

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself.

- **If you strongly agree with the statement**, circle **SA**.
- **If you agree with the statement**, circle **A**.
- **If you disagree with the statement**, circle **D**.
- **If you strongly disagree with the statement**, circle **SD**.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. At times, I think I am no good at all.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I certainly feel useless at times.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6: Thank you note and Additional Support to Participants

Completed!

Thank you for taking part on this research!

Support Available to participants:

The Samaritans offers a 24/7 text support service, 365 days a year, for anyone in emotional distress. This service is available nationwide. To receive the service, simply send an SMS text message to 087 260 90 90

Mental Health Ireland/Young Mental Health Ireland
Email: info@mentalhealthireland.ie

Aware helpline: 1890 303302
Supports those who are directly affected by depression. Aware operates a helpline from 10am to 10pm Monday to Wednesday and 10am to 1am Thursday to Sunday. The Aware Helpline is a non-directive listening service for people affected by depression, either as sufferers or as family and friends.

If you have any questions or need any additional information regarding the above services or in relation to the questionnaire, you can contact me directly on

Thank you and Kind Regards

Denise Da Costa
Appendix 7: Scoring Quality of life index