



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***LONELINESS, SELF-EFFICACY, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, LIFE  
SATISFACTION AND DEPRESSION AMONG IRANIAN  
UNDERGRADUATES AT A MALYSIAN PRIVATE  
UNIVERSITY***

***MAHSHID MOLOOKI***

**FEM 2015 45**



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**By**

**MAHSHID MOLOOKI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

**April 2015**

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## DEDICATION

*This thesis is dedicated to the people who mean a lot to me*

*My Beloved Father, Mother, and Sister*

*For their love, support and valuable prayers*



Abstract of the thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of Master of Science

**LONELINESS, SELF-EFFICACY, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, LIFE SATISFACTION AND DEPRESSION AMONG IRANIAN UNDERGRADUATES AT A MALAYSIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITY**

By

**MAHSHID MOLOOKI**

**April 2015**

**Chairman : Hanina Halimatusaadiah Hamsan, PhD**  
**Faculty : Human Ecology**

The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between personal background, family background, loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement, life satisfaction and depression among Iranian undergraduates in Malaysia. The study was carried out among 254 Iranian undergraduate students (135 males and 119 females) at Multimedia University, Malaysia. Survey methods under convenient sampling in the collection of data was passing a self-administered questionnaire. Data collection were utilized, i.e. Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) by Beck (1967), Loneliness Scale (UCLA) by Russell (1996), General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) by Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1979), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener (1985). The findings of this study indicated that personal factors such as gender and field of study significantly correlated with depression. The present study has shown that there was a positive significant relationship between loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement and life satisfaction with depression. It shows that the increase of loneliness and academic achievement leads to increase of depression among the students and the increase of self-efficacy and life satisfaction leads to decrease of depression among the students. The Multiple Regression Analysis showed that predictor variables, namely gender, loneliness, self-efficiency and grade point average had significant relationship with depression [ $R^2 = 0.939$ ,  $F(14,239) = 127.024$ ,  $p = .000$ ] and they are the predictors of depression in this study. The universities should encourage workshops and seminars in order to motivate and increase students' abilities to improve their self-efficacy and assist students to handle issues that constitute a source of stress and depression in their psychosocial environment, also, universities should encourage workshops and seminars to guide parent on techniques that train parenting strategies and child-parent communication in university and home in order to train them how to prevent depression of their children or how to behave with their depressed children.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan Master Sains

**KESUNYIAN, EFIKASI KENDIRI, PENCAPAIAN AKADEMIK, KEPUASAN HIDUP DAN KEMURUNGAN DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR PRASISWAZAH IRAN DI UNIVERSITI MULTIMEDIA**

Oleh

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Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti hubungan antara latar belakang personal, latar belakang keluarga, kesunyian, efikasi sendiri, pencapaian akademik, kepuasan hidup dan kemurungan dalam kalangan pelajar prasiswazah Iran di Universiti Multimedia, Malaysia. Kajian telah melibatkan seramai 254 pelajar Iran (135 lelaki dan 119 perempuan). Kaedah persampelan mudah telah digunakan dalam mengumpul data dengan menggunakan soal selidik yang ditadbir sendiri oleh responden. Pengumpulan data menggunakan instrumen *Beck Depression Inventory* (BDI) yang dibentuk oleh Beck (1967), *UCLA Loneliness Scale* yang dibentuk oleh Russell (1996), *General Self-Efficacy Scale* (GSE) dibangunkan oleh Jerusalem dan Schwarzer (1979) dan *Life Satisfaction Scale* yang dibentuk oleh Diener (1985). Hasil kajian menunjukkan, faktor personal iaitu jantina dan bidang pengajian mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan kemurungan. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara kesunyian, efikasi sendiri, pencapaian akademik dan kepuasan hidup dengan kemurungan. Dapatan ini menggambarkan bahawa pelajar yang murung adalah pelajar yang tinggi tahap kesunyian, rendah pencapaian akademik serta mempunyai tahap efikasi sendiri dan kepuasan diri yang rendah. Analisis Regresi Berganda menunjukkan faktor penyumbang unik terhadap kemurungan ialah jantina, kesunyian, efikasi sendiri dan pencapaian akademik (CGPA) [ $R^2 = 0.939$ ,  $F(14,239) = 127.024$ ,  $p = .000$ ]. Kajian ini mencadangkan universiti seharusnya meningkatkan program intervensi dan prevensi dalam meningkatkan keupayaan efikasi sendiri dan membantu pelajar mengendali masalah yang menyebabkan tekanan dan kemurungan dalam persekitaran psikososial.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MMU	Multimedia University
BID	Beck's Depression Inventory
UCLA	University of California Los Angeles
GSE	General Self-Efficacy
GPA	Grade Point Average
SWL	Satisfaction with life
WHO	World Health Organization
N	Population Size
S	Sample Size
F	Female
M	Male
SD	Standard Deviation
P	Pearson Correlation Value

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

College is generally a stressful life period and most freshman college students experience some degree of acute loneliness, isolation and depression (World Health Organization, 2009). Indeed, Cutrona found that 75% of UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) new freshman college students reported feeling lonely during their first two weeks at college (Hosseini & Mousavi, 2004). Research has shown not only that college student loneliness is positively associated with depression but also that students experiencing loneliness often do not possess the social skills or social competence necessary to begin and develop close interpersonal relationships (Meifen, Daniel, Russell, & Robyn, 2005). If the deficits in social competence experienced by lonely freshman college students can be identified, then ways of helping them enhance their social competencies in order to build satisfactory relationships might be developed, thereby decreasing feelings of loneliness and subsequent depression. When individuals under stress have to adopt to novel life circumstances, over an extended period of time, the ones with higher self-efficacy will be able to control challenging environmental demands by taking adapting actions, and deal with certain life stressors like the ones that undergraduate students are facing (Ajzen, 2005). Changing the environment and moving to the university life style may decrease the level of life satisfaction, which is a fulfillment of desires and wants for life and this decrease in life satisfaction will be a reason for depression among undergraduates (Koivumaa-Honkanen et al., 2000). Even students with good grades in high school may possibly experience low academic achievement and even drop out because of the different characteristics of college courses and these failures make students feel depressed (Biabangard, 2005).

A great level of depression is believed to affect the performance of students during their academic life. Efficient methods to decrease the predictors of depression can assist students to return to normal life and result in a reduced risk of depression. The WHO mentions sadness, lowered self-esteem, guilt, thoughts of suicide, and sleep and eating disorders as the most important consequences of depression. These factors are believed to be among the most important reasons of global disability (World Health Organization, 2009). According to Modabber-Nia (2007) 34% (25% male and 39% female students) of undergraduates in Iran are depressed. Studies carried out in Malaysia have revealed that many medical students suffered from depression symptoms during medical training. These studies showed that many medical students had at least a mild degree of depression ranging from five percent to 37.5% (Dyrbye, Thoma, & Shanafelt, 2006; Given & Tjia, 2002). A previous study reported that approximately 14% have suicidal thoughts and six percent had planned to commit suicide during medical training (Hem, Gronvold, Aasland, & Ekeberg, 2000).

The study of the variables related to depression shows the level of impact the factor has on a different level of other problems. For instance, loneliness is the sense of absence



of a preferred extent or excellence of community interaction, which has been recognized as a positive correlate of depression (Cheng & Furnham, 2008). Furthermore, the connection between self-efficacy and depressive symptomatology has been well-proven, in people with greater levels of self-efficacy revealing minor levels of depression (Smith & Betz, 2002; Strojney, 2002).

The connection between psychological factors and self-efficacy has effects on the handling of emotional health matters because it proposes that a growth in self-efficacy can decrease the level of loneliness and depression. The studies which estimate interventions intended to raise the causes of self-efficacy confirmed that when the intervention increases then the perceived efficacy expectations will increase as a result (Andrews & Bonta, 2006).

The important crisis in the education method in most of the Third World countries is the problem of low academic success. Based on Fouladi (2007) education officials focus on low academic success as the central issues of the education system. He said that academic achievement is the main issue in education and that many educators, psychologists and sociologists have given more attention to it. Experts have a variety of views and explanations when investigating the difficulty of academic failure. This problem is associated with the absence of opportunity in educational methods, where students are not able to develop in their education and it increases the level of depression among them (Fouladi, 2007).

Many families, societies and the government of every country like Iran face low academic achievement as the main critical problem of education in the world and Iran like other developing countries, also suffers from these problems associated with low academic achievement. So, this academic problem has to be solved because education is the main agent of progress (Fathi, 2006).

In addition to the huge allocation of funds to education, the Iranian government also tries to elevate the level of academic achievement among undergraduates. This is because the rate of academic achievement among undergraduates has been considerably low. For instance, Ghasemi (2008) found that 32% of undergraduates in Iran suffer from low academic achievement because of causes such as family problems, personal and interpersonal conflicts, financial concerns, time limitation, and so on. According to the Education Organization of Tehran, Iran (2011), 17 % of undergraduate students who study abroad have dropped out. Some studies (Sherina, Lekhraj, & Nadarajan, 2003; Zaid, Chan, & Ho, 2007) carried out locally in Malaysia, show that students with psychological problems experience disruptions in their developmental and educational tasks. As a result, students may not be able to perform well or obtain good academic results in their academic pursuit due to some emotional problems and may experience stress which result from academic workload and extreme pressure for success, making them even more prone to experience mental disturbances (Sherina et al., 2003; Zaid et al., 2007) or psychiatric illnesses such as antisocial and suicidal behavior, substance abuse, depression, anxiety and eating disorders (Dahlin, Joneborg, & Runeson, 2005).

In a society life satisfaction is highly valued. People not only try to have life satisfaction in their own life but also because we consider the life satisfaction of others as well. So, governments should consider helping to provide more life satisfaction for more citizens (Michaud, Murray, & Bloom, 2001). This typical philosophy is more practicable these days and now that scientific investigation offers more assessment on the situations for life satisfaction (Veenhoven & Hagerty, 2006). In general, life satisfaction is usually assumed to mean how much a person likes the life, or the extent to which a person assesses life-as-a-whole definitely. The essential part in this definition is 'liking' life and 'evaluation' of life. In this definition these words explain a psychological state but do not explain the exact nature of this state. Satisfaction with life implies acceptance of the life circumstances, or it means the fulfillment of desires and wants for life in general. Essentially, life satisfaction is a particular estimation of the worth of life since it is a judgment and evaluation of life.

The focus of the present study is to examine the relationship between the above mentioned variables among Iranian undergraduates in Malaysia.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The human stressful experiences in the first years of their adult life could lead to the presence of depression, as the factors which make undergraduate students feel depressed, contains interpersonal stressors, life and role transition stressors, financial concerns, employment problems, and time limitation. (Andrews & Bonta, 2006) and the great influence depression has on one's attitude toward his/her profession, the concern about depression in undergraduate students is fundamental (Furegato, 2008). On the other hand, undergraduate students are prone to have more psychiatric problems including depression (Andrews & Bonta, 2006; Ross, 2005) due to their interpersonal and emotional conflicts as well as economic and academic problems (Modabber-Nia, 2007).

From the time of young adulthood, we begin to share ourselves more intimately with others. We explore relationships leading toward longer term commitments with someone other than a family member. Successful completion can lead to comfortable relationships and a sense of commitment, safety, and care within a relationship. These are in line with Erikson (1994) who maintains that by avoiding intimacy, fearing commitment and relationships can lead to isolation, loneliness, and sometimes depression (Mansour & Dadsetan, 2005).

Going to university is a significant psychological event for people. As Large pointed out, more than any other single event, going to university has come to represent the beginning of independent living (Marshall, 2010). Weiss indicates that in going away to university the individual loses the easy accessibility of social and emotional ties, and is at high-risk to experience depression if adaptation to the new social environment is not made (Moody, 2001). Beck and Young have noticed that undergraduate students practice concurrently all the changeovers that are the main stressors in adulthood: "all at once they lose family, friends, and familiar surroundings, with university providing no ready-made substitutes and coping skills" (Marshall, 2010).

The sociology of depression includes the cultural context in which people live, as well as the social stressors that people meet as a part of life. The sociological aspects of depression are both influenced by and also influence the other biological and psychological aspects of people's lives. Living in a culture for at least 18 years and suddenly facing an environmental change due to studying abroad and being forced to live with people of different culture is a huge stressor for undergraduate students which can lead to depression (Mansour & Dadsetan, 2005).

In accordance with the above undergraduates' problems, it means that depression will lead to many problems for students. Thus, the main assumption of the present study is that loneliness, low self-efficacy, low academic achievement and low life satisfaction will lead to depression. However, the aim of the present study comes from the previous literature on depression, especially among Iranian undergraduate students in Tehran (Sharifi et al., 2001; Daskzan, 2004).

Based on the literature, the rate of mental disorders among Iranian undergraduate students includes 26% of specific developmental disability, 24% of simple phobia, 17% of overanxious disorder, 16% of adjustment disorders, 13% of oppositional disorder, and 10% of them had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder respectively (Assarian, Biqam, & Asqarnejad, 2006). The rate of depression in a study carried out by Modabber-Nia (2006), of 4020 undergraduate students in Iran, was 34% (25% male and 39% female students) (Basirnia et.al, 2009).

Depression creates many problems such as hopelessness and suicidal ideas for the students, and has effects on the psychological well-being of the families and society. Therefore, the present study also attempts to identify the link between loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement, life satisfaction and depression. From the above discussion relating to issues of depression, thus various variables related to students' background, such as, family income, family education, age, and gender in relation to depression need to be studied.

In Iran, according to Hamidian (2005), low family income affects depression and pointed out that high depression is prevalent in low family income groups, while Ghahari (2004) found no significant relationship between family income and depression during his study on Iranian college students. Further study needs to be conducted in order to show the effect of this object on depression of Iranian students abroad.

Misra (2003) suggested that female students experience more depression than their male counterparts. Other studies that examined international students showed that female students had higher emotional, physiological, and behavioral reactions to stressors and also were more likely to feel homesick and lonely than male students (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002). Sumer (2008) found no relation between gender and international students' depression and anxiety levels. Thus, there is a need for more careful investigation of gender differences when evaluating international student adjustment.

### 1.3 Research Questions

According to what was mentioned in the Problem Statement, the subsequent research questions were evolved:

1. What are the relationship between personal (age, gender, field of study, year of study) and family backgrounds (family income, family education) with depression?
2. What are the relationship between loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement, life satisfaction and depression?
3. What are the predictive factors of depression among Iranian undergraduates in Malaysia?

### 1.4 Objectives of the Study

#### *General Objective*

The general objective of this study is to determine the relationships between loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement, life satisfaction and depression among Iranian undergraduates in Malaysian universities.

#### *Specific Objectives*

Specifically, the present study has the following objectives:

1. To identify the levels of depression among the respondents.
2. To determine the relationship between respondents' personal factors (age, gender, field of study and year of study) and family factors (family income) with depression.
3. To determine the relationship between loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement, life satisfaction and depression.
4. To determine the unique predictors of depression.

### 1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between personal factors and depression.

Ho1A: There is no significant relationship between age and depression.

Ho1B: There is no significant relationship between gender and depression.

Ho1C: There is no significant relationship between field of study and depression.

Ho1D: There is no significant relationship between year of study and depression.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between family background and depression.

Ho2A: There is no significant relationship between family income and depression.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between loneliness and depression.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and depression.

Ho5: There is no significant relationship between academic achievement and depression.

Ho6: There is no significant relationship between life satisfaction and depression among Iranian undergraduates.

Ho7: The regression coefficients for all the independent variables are significant when regressed against the depression.

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study relates to the theoretical and practical significance and how the results from the study would be beneficial to society and how they could be used. Marshall and Rossman (2010) argued that a study is significant and should be conducted, if it contributes to knowledge, is useful and meaningful to politicians, and suggests practical implications to practitioners.

Depression can create significant problems and is expected to conceal the second biggest reason of illness problems by 2020 (WHO, 2001), affecting five to 10% of the people and is the third major general cause for primary-care talk (Singleton, 2001). It is connected with important suffering, destruction of performance, trouble to interpersonal contacts and an amplified danger of suicide (Singleton, 2001). So it can cause personal and interpersonal problems as well which will need to be considered. The present study hypothesized that loneliness, low self-efficacy, low academic achievement and low life satisfaction can lead to depression. Therefore, if there is a relationship between these variables, this study definitely can help and directly guide the authorities to take immediate action in fighting the alarming rate of depression among Iranian young adults at MMU by setting up appropriate plans, such as a program on mental health. The advantage of the result from the present study is to minimize depression among Iranian undergraduate students at MMU. The findings will prepare the relevant ways for educational organizations at MMU and also experts who work in the educational areas.

Secondly, as a theoretical significance of the study, the result of the study would give a deeper vision of relations between personal and family backgrounds, loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement, life satisfaction, and depression.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

This section describes the meanings of the variables operationally and conceptually.

### Depression

*Conceptual definition:* Depression is one of the mental disorders which have wide-ranging symptoms including somatic, cognitive, affective, and social processes. The group of consequences of depression consists of low self-efficacy, poor peer relations, behavioral problems, conflict with parents, authority figures, and low self-esteem. Depression also has other criteria such as insomnia, hopelessness, worthlessness, loss of weight (Lemstra et al, 2008).

*Operational definition:* In this study, depression is explained using Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI, 1974) which assesses three categories of depression including mild



depression, moderate depression, and severe depression. Higher score means higher depression (Zarate et al, 2006).

### Loneliness

*Conceptual definition:* Loneliness appears always to be a response to the absence of some particular type of relationship or, more accurately, a response to the absence of some relational provision" (Moody, 2001). The basic dynamics of loneliness are the lack of a sense of belonging and loneliness, which reflects the relationship between two factors, the desired and achieved level of social interaction.

*Operational definition:* In this study, the University of California Los Angeles Scale (UCLA) is used to measure loneliness. The 20 items from the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale assess loneliness based on an individual's satisfaction with his or her interpersonal relationships. Higher scores mean higher level of loneliness (Ashe, 2001).

### Self-efficacy

*Conceptual definition:* Self-efficacy in "one's ability to handle and perform courses of acts that are needed to create given purposes" (Bandura, 1997). These courses may include "behavior, thoughts and feelings (Miller, 2002). Individuals shape their self-efficacy beliefs detailed information primarily from mastery experience, indirect experience, learning or observing, social and verbal insights and physical and emotional states. The self-efficacy influences on human performance through four psychological processes. These mental processes are: (1) cognitive processes, (2) motivational processes, (3) selection processes, and (4) emotional processes "(Bandura, 1997).

*Operational definition:* In this study, self-efficacy is obtained using the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem. The scale was created to assess a general sense of perceived self-efficacy with the aim in mind to predict coping with daily hassles and also adaptation after experiencing all types of stressful life occurrences. The 10 items from the Revised GSE Scale assess self-efficacy based on their satisfaction with his or her interpersonal relationships. Higher scores mean higher level of self-efficacy.

### Academic Achievement

*Conceptual definition:* According to Aronson (2001), academic achievement is defined by the actual execution of class work in the school setting. In addition, Peelo (2002) indicated that low academic achievement can be defined as failure of assessments, failure to progress and also failure to achieve one's potential work performance. Higher scores mean higher level of academic achievement.

*Operational definition:* Academic achievement refers to students' grade point average (GPA). High score means high academic achievement.

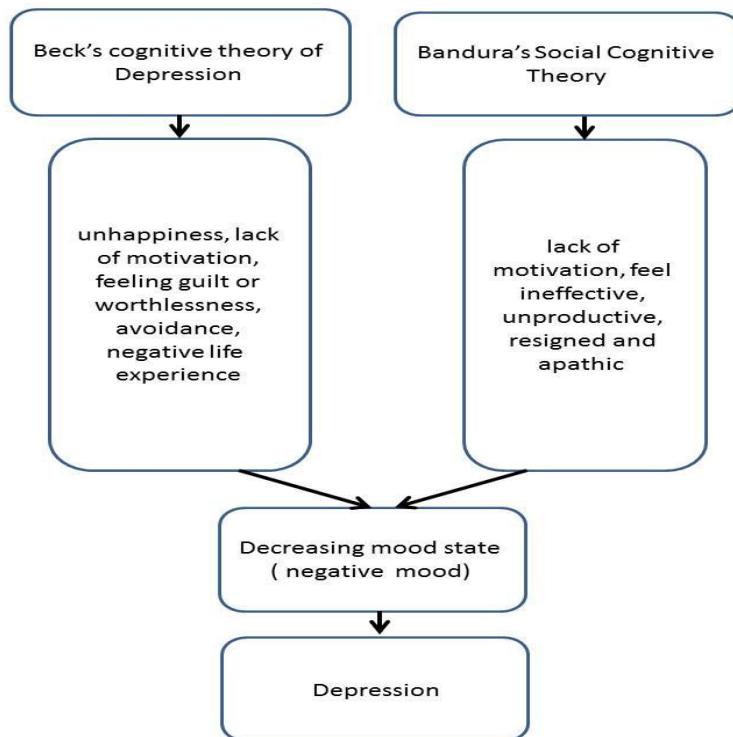
## Life Satisfaction

*Conceptual definition:* Life satisfaction is an overall appraisal of emotional state and treatment about a person's life at a specific time ranging from negative to positive. This is one of the three main signs of being healthy: the life satisfaction, the positive affect, and the negative affect (Koivumaa-Honkanen et al., 2001). Even though satisfaction with present situations of life is frequently evaluated in studies, it also contains: willingness to become different in life; past satisfaction; future satisfaction; and major other's sights of life (Koivumaa-Honkanen et al., 2004).

*Operational definition:* life satisfaction is assessed using the satisfaction with life scale. Diener generated five self-report items related to satisfaction with life, including items assessing positive and negative effects. The five items from the revised life satisfaction Scale assess satisfaction based on their satisfaction with his or her interpersonal relationships. Higher scores mean higher level of life satisfaction.

### 1.8 Theoretical Framework

Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression (1967), and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1977), were adopted in developing the theoretical framework for the present study. In this section, the above theories are discussed in relation to the present study.



**Figure 1. 1: The Theoretical Framework of the Study**

Based on Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression (1974), it showed that negative thought leads to depression. According to Beck's theory feeling unhappiness, lack of motivation, feeling guilt or worthlessness, avoidance, negative life experience lead to depression in people (Halgin, Krauss, & Bourene, 2005). All of these items are similar to the variables of this study as discussed below.

Bandura's Social-Cognitive Theory emphasizes that the lack of motivation, feeling ineffective, unproductive, resigned and apathy affect depression of people. This theory argues that the social origins of behavior in addition to the cognitive thought processes that influence human behavior and functioning. This approach represents a break from traditional theories by proposing that cognitive factors are central to human functioning and that learning can occur in the absence of direct reinforcement. Individuals take a self-system that allows them to apply a level of control on their views, emotions and actions. This self-system houses a person's cognitive and emotional construction and comprises the capacities to signify, learn from others, design other strategies, control one's own behavior, and involved in self-reflection. It also plays an important role in preparing reference mechanisms and a set of sub functions for perceiving, adopting assessing behavior, which results from the interaction between the self-system and external environmental origins of effect like, the self-system helps a self-regulatory function by preparing people with the ability to change their situations and impact on their own achievement (Albert Bandura, 1986). This is the foundation of Albert Bandura's conception of mutual determinism, the opinion that (a) personal factors in the form of cognition, affect, and biological events, (b) behavior, and (c) environmental impacts generate relations that result in a mutuality because special agency is socially entrenched and works within socio-cultural impacts. Individual Social Cognitive Theories are seen both as means and creators of their own atmosphere and of their community systems. Self-efficacy beliefs are constructed from four fundamental sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1997) suggested that performance accomplishments are the most influential source of efficacy information, as they provide the most authentic evidence of an individual's ability to successfully complete a task.

When students experience dropouts during their university life, it makes them feel guilty, because they feel that they are wasting their parents' financial support and this feeling of guilt pushes them through depression (Ghasemi, 2008). Also, dropping outs reduce students' self-efficacy. Bandura (1982) predicted that when belief about abilities is low and attempts exerted toward a task do not lead to the desired results, an individual is likely to feel resigned and loose interest and enthusiasm. Alternatively, when self-efficacy is low but an individual observes others accomplishing a task with success, he or she is likely to feel ineffective and depressed. Other researchers have also observed that when people believe that their efforts are ineffectual, they attribute the cause of their failure to an enduring and generalized quality in themselves, which leads to increased vulnerability to depression (Seligman, Abramson, Semmel & von Baeyer, 1979).

Based on the characteristics of university life, students experience a lower quality of life than they had before, and it makes them dissatisfied with life (Fathi, 2006).



According to Beck (1974) negative thought about their current lifestyle, and negative life experiences lead them to dissatisfaction with life and it pushes them to depression (Gray & McNaughton, 2003).

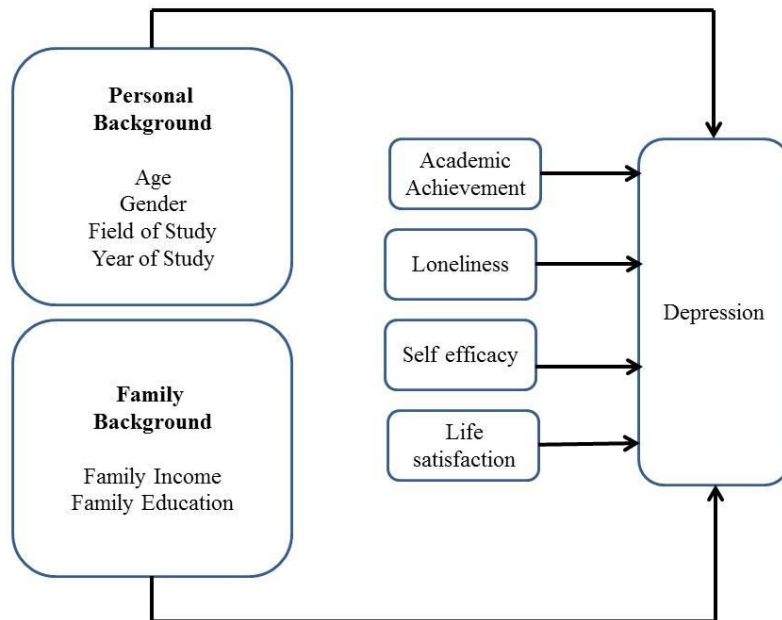
According to Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression, and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, avoidance and lack of personal interactions (loneliness), worthlessness and feelings of guilt (caused by low academic achievement), unhappiness and negative life experiences (low life satisfaction), lack of motivation and feeling ineffective and resigned (because of low self-efficacy) decrease mood state which causes depression.

### **1.9 The Conceptual Framework**

In this study, depression is treated as a dependent variable. Personal and family backgrounds and loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement and satisfaction with life are considered as independent variables, and this is because the researcher wanted to investigate whether variables such as loneliness, self-efficacy and life satisfaction have the potential to affect depression. Based on the current framework, in this study, age, gender, family income, field of study and year of study are mentioned as antecedents.

According to Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression (1967), and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1977), which develop the theoretical framework for the present study, these IV's and AV's will affect the DV which is depression in this study.

Figure 1.2 shows that the personal background including age, gender, field of study and year of study as independent variables effect depression. Also, based on the current framework, family background including family income and family education as independent variables affect depression. In addition, the other four factors (loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement and life satisfaction) as independent variables directly affect depression.



**Figure 1. 2: The Conceptual Framework of the Study**

### 1.10 Limitations of the study

This study has some limitations: Firstly, all the respondents are Iranian students studying in Malaysia and it was not extended to other foreign students. Secondly, limitation was that this study is exclusively for undergraduates aged 18-22 years and should not be extended to the other age ranges. Thirdly, this study has confounding variables and as will be explained in Chapter 3, this is a correlational study in which the confounding variables cannot be controlled. Examples of confounding variables include student's motivation to study, teacher-student relationships, etc. and how they affect depression. These are uncontrollable in this study. Forth limitation was that the present study focused on depression only according to Beck depression inventory.

### 1.11 Summary

This chapter began with the introduction which provides an account of the relationship between loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement, life satisfaction and depression among undergraduates. The problem of depression was discussed as a significant problem in the relative fields and the purpose of the present study was to discuss the relationship between loneliness, self-efficacy, academic achievement and life satisfaction with depression. The objectives, research questions and hypotheses were presented in this chapter. The terms were defined and limitations of the study were stated in detail. Finally, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks in this chapter were developed.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Demographic Questionnaire

Gender	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
Age	..... Years old
Year of study	<input type="radio"/> First <input type="radio"/> Second <input type="radio"/> Third <input type="radio"/> Forth
Field of study	<input type="radio"/> Social science <input type="radio"/> Technical <input type="radio"/> Science
Family income (per month) (mother + father)	..... Rials
Father's education	<input type="radio"/> Elementary school <input type="radio"/> Guidance school <input type="radio"/> High school graduated <input type="radio"/> Associate degree <input type="radio"/> Bachelor's degree <input type="radio"/> Master's degree <input type="radio"/> PhD
Mother's education	<input type="radio"/> Elementary school <input type="radio"/> Guidance school <input type="radio"/> High school graduated <input type="radio"/> Associate degree <input type="radio"/> Bachelor's degree <input type="radio"/> Master's degree <input type="radio"/> PhD
Grade point average (معدل کل دانشگاه از 4)	
Parents marital status	<input type="radio"/> Still married <input type="radio"/> Widowed <input type="radio"/> Separated <input type="radio"/> Divorced <input type="radio"/> One parent dead <input type="radio"/> Both parents dead

## Appendix B

### Beck's Depression Inventory II

Tick the one statement in each group that best describes the way you have been feeling during the past two weeks, including today.

(1 = Not at all true/ 2 = Hardly true/ 3 = Moderately true/ 4 = Exactly true)

<b>Beck's Depression Inventory II</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
1. I am sad all the time				
2. I feel my future is hopeless and will only get worse				
3. As I look back, I see a lot of failures				
4. I can't get any pleasure from the things I used to enjoy				
5. I feel quite guilty most of the time				
6. I feel I am being punished				
7. I am disappointed with myself				
8. I blame myself for everything bad that happens				
9. I would like to kill myself				
10. I feel like crying, but I can't				
11. I am so restless or agitated that it's hard to stay still				
12. It's hard to get interested in anything				
13. I have much greater difficulty in making decisions than I used to				
14. I don't consider myself as worthwhile, as useful as I used to				
15. I don't have enough energy to do very much				
16. I sleep most of the day				
17. I am irritable all the time				
18. My appetite is much greater than usual				
19. I find I can't concentrate on anything				
20. am too tired or fatigued to do a lot of the things I use to do				
21. I have lost interest in sex completely				

## Appendix C

### R-UCLA Loneliness Scale

Directions: Indicate how often you feel the way described in each of the following statements. (1.*Never* /2.*Rarely* /3.*Sometimes* / 4.*Often*) tick one number for each.

<b>R-UCLA Loneliness Scale</b>	1	2	3	4
1. I feel in tune with the people around me.				
2. I lack companionship.				
3. There is no one I can turn to.				
4. I do not feel alone.				
5. I feel part of a group of friends.				
6. I have a lot in common with the people around me.				
7. I am no longer close to anyone.				
8. My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me.				
9. I am an outgoing person.				
10. There are people I feel close to.				
11. I feel left out.				
12. My social relationships are superficial.				
13. No one really knows me well.				
14. I feel isolated from others.				
15. I can find companionship when I want it.				
16. There are people who really understand me.				
17. I am unhappy being so withdrawn.				
18. People are around me but not with me.				
19. There are people I can talk to.				
20. There are people I can turn to.				

## Appendix D

### The General Self- Efficacy Scale (GSE)

Directions: Indicate how often you feel the way described in each of the following statements. (1. *Never* /2. *Rarely* /3. *Sometimes* / 4. *Often*) tick one number for each.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)	1	2	3	4
1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.				
2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.				
3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.				
4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.				
5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.				
6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.				
7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.				
8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.				
9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.				
10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.				

## Appendix E

### The Satisfaction with Life Scale

**DIRECTIONS:** Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree.

Using

The 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by putting a tick for the appropriate number in the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Slightly Disagree

4 = Neither Agree or Disagree

5 = Slightly Agree

6 = Agree

7 = Strongly Agree

<b>The Satisfaction with Life Scale</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.							
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.							
3. I am satisfied with life.							
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.							
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.							

## BIODATA OF STUDENT

Mahshid Molooki was born on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1985, in Iran Tehran. She finished her primary and secondary school education in 2000 and then proceeds for her first degree at Allameh University at 2005 and graduated in 2009 with bachelor degree. She started Mahter of Developmental Psychology at Universiti Putra Malaysia in 2010.







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