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Assessment of perception of subjective wellbeing (SWB) by urban families belonging to expanding stage of family life cycle in Udaipur city

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Abstract

The study was undertaken to assess the perception of Subjective well-being (SWB) by urban families belonging to expanding stage of family life cycle in Udaipur city. The study was based upon the sample of 400 respondents (200 husbands and 200 wives) belonging to middle socio economic status selected purposively from Udaipur city. Data was collected through a subjective well-being scale developed by an investigator and was standardized by calculating validity and Reliability of the scale. Percent distribution of urban respondents revealed that the majority (88.25%) of respondents had high levels of perceived subjective well-being whereas only 10.75 per cent of respondents had a moderate level of perception for SWB. Only 0.50 per cent respondents who had a low level of perception for SWB.

Keywords: Perception, Subjective Well Being, Urban Families, Expanding Stage of Family Life Cycle

1. Introduction

According to Wilkinson (1991) [13], well-being is a concept meant to "recognize the social, cultural and psychological needs of people, their family, institutions and communities. Wellbeing is not explicitly defined but is implied by the description of five dimensions – material wellbeing, health, education, literacy and participation in the productive and social spheres (Bell *et al.*, 2006) [2]. Well-being is a broad concept ranging from subjective accounts of individuals happiness to fulfillment or satisfaction of a given list of capabilities, functioning or needs. Two traditions have collected those apparently opposing approaches under the labels of Subjective Well-Being (SWB) and Objective Well-Being (OWB) studies. Scholars in both areas have pointed out the problems faced when trying to find the link between objective and individuals perceptions of well-being (Gasper, 2004) [7].

Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to how people experience the quality of their lives and includes both emotional reactions and cognitive judgments. Psychologists have defined happiness as a combination of life satisfaction and the relative frequency of positive and negative affect. SWB therefore encompasses moods and emotions as well as evaluations of one's satisfaction with general and specific areas of one's life. Concepts encompassed by SWB include positive and negative affect, happiness, and life satisfaction. The Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report (2009) states: Subjective well-being encompasses different aspects such as cognitive evaluations of one's life, happiness, satisfaction, positive emotions such as joy and pride, and negative emotions such as pain and worry etc (Hicks, 2011) [9].

2. Methodology

The present study was conducted within the municipal limits of Udaipur city. The total sample for the present study consisted of 200 urban families (i.e. 200 husbands and 200 wives) having monthly income ranging from Rs. 15001 – 45000 per capita (Urban Improvement Trust, Udaipur 2007). Data of 200 families were classified on the bases of family structure i.e. 100 families (100 husbands and 100 wives) were selected from joint families and 100 families (100 husbands and 100 wives) were selected from nuclear families. Total of 400 preliminary samples were distributed personally to families selected from different zones, from which 332 was received back and 68 of families were discarded as they

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did not fulfill the criteria for the sample selection. Thus the total eligible families were 229. Out of 229, 200 families were selected on the basis of convenience of the researchers to contact them and families assurance of cooperation in data collection.

3. Scale for measuring Subjective Well Being (SWB)

In order to assess the perception of Subjective Well Being by urban families, a scale was developed by an investigator and was standardized by calculating validity and Reliability of the scale. Items related to four dimension areas namely personal, financial physical, socio-emotional were formulated. The final version of the inventory constituted 45 items. On the basis of scoring, three level criteria namely agree (3), partial agree (2) and disagree (1) were formulated which was used for analyses of the data. So, the score range of SWB is 45 and 135 where the minimum score is 45 and the maximum score is 135. The reliability score of the overall measuring SWB of urban families is 0.944. Dimension wise reliability score for personal (0.84), financial (0.867), physical (0.822), socio-emotional (0.71) were calculated. The validity score of the overall measuring SWB of urban families is 2.60. For the standardization of the scale, the scale was given to a panel of 6 experts from the field of Human Development and Family Studies, Psychology, sociology, Foods and Nutrition, Family Resource Management, home science extension and communication management to evaluate the suitability and relevance of the items for assessment of perception of family well-being by adults families.

4. Result and Discussion

The non-economic aspects of the well-being such as care, satisfaction, quality of life, achievement etc are as important as many economic measures and can be interconnected with economic indicators. Together, both economic and non-economic indicators can provide an enhanced comprehensive description of the well-being of individual and society as well as measuring progress over time (Gasper 2005)^[8].

The table clearly shows that the majority (88.25%) of respondents had high levels of perceived Subjective well-being whereas only 10.75 per cent of respondents had a moderate level of perceived SWB. Only 0.50 per cent respondents who had a low level of perception for SWB. The present findings could be substantiated with the study of Diner *et al.*, (2008)^[5] who asserted that there are universal human needs and subjective appreciation of life depends on both living conditions. It was argued that objective conditions affect subjective perceptions indirectly through comparisons with other possible alternatives.

Table 1: Dimension wise per cent distribution of urban families for their level of perceived subjective well-being (SWB) (N=400)

| Dimensions of SWB | Levels of perceived SWB | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------|------|
| | High | Moderate | Low |
| Personal Well Being | 83.5 | 16.25 | 0.25 |
| Financial Well Being | 79.25 | 18.25 | 2.50 |
| Physical Well Being | 89 | 10.25 | 0.75 |
| Socio-Emotional Well Being | 83.25 | 16.50 | 0.25 |
| Overall SWB | 88.25 | 10.75 | 0.50 |

Dimension wise per cent distribution reveals that, 83.5 per cent respondents had high levels of perceived personal well being followed by 16.25 per cent respondents had a moderate level of perceived personal well-being. Very small per cent of respondents i.e. 0.25 per cent had low level of perceived personal well-being. Individual well-being can be measured by using people's subjective evaluation of themselves, based on their feeling loved, having a sense of self-worth. Thus, personal well-being might be measured in terms of how happy or satisfied people are with their life or with aspects of their life like job, health, housing facilities, community services etc (King 2007)^[10].

Data in the table elucidates that, the majority (79.25%) of the respondents had high level of subjective perception for financial well-being whereas 18.25 per cent of respondents reported moderate level of subjective perception for financial well-being. Only 2.5 per cent of respondents had low level of subjective perception for financial well-being. OECD (2011) argues that income and wealth are essential components of individual well-being. Generally, in a given society at a given time, income is positively related to reported subjective well-being, so that individuals with a higher income tend to report higher subjective well-being than those with a lower income. OECD (2011) argues that income and wealth are essential components of individual well-being. Income refers to the flow of economic resources that an individual or household receives over time. It includes wages and salaries and money earned through self-employment as well as resources received from other sources such as property, pensions and social transfers. Dunn *et al.*, (2010)^[6] argue that the way in which individuals spend their money can influence the satisfaction they receive from their spending.

In case of subjective perception for physical well-being, data illustrate that 89 per cent of the respondents had a high level of perception for physical well-being, whereas 10.25 per cent and 0.75 per cent of respondents had a moderate and low level of subjective perception for physical well-being respectively. One indirect route from happiness to health is that individuals who are high in subjective well-being are more likely to practice good health behaviors and practices. Blanchflower *et al.* (2012)^[3] found that happier individuals have a healthier diet, eating more fruits and vegetables. Pettay (2008)^[12] found that college students high in life satisfaction were more likely to be a healthy weight, exercise, and eat healthy foods.

Subjective perception of socio-emotional well-being throw a light on existing data and reveals that the majority (83.25%) of respondents had a higher level of Subjective perception for socio-emotional well-being followed by 16.5 per cent respondents had a moderate level of perception and only 0.25 per cent respondents from the total sample, who had a low level of Subjective perception for socio-emotional well-being. These results are in concordance with Acock and Demo (1994)^[1] highlight a number of important family process variables implicated in family wellbeing. On the positive side are happiness, stability, equity, and closeness in parent-child relationships. Negative aspects include poor parenting quality and conflict between parents and between parents and their children.

5. Conclusion

It was concluded from above study that a person who has a high level of satisfaction with their life, and who

experiences a greater positive affect and little or less negative affect, would be deemed to have a high level of SWB (or in simpler terms, be very happy). They have more pro-social behavior, satisfied with their lives and contribute more to society and nation. overall it can suggested that SWB is used as an umbrella term referring to separable components: life satisfaction and satisfaction with life domains such as marriage, work, income, housing and leisure: feeling positive affect (pleasant emotions and moods) most of the time: experiencing infrequent feelings of negative affect (such as depression, stress and anger) and judging one's life to be fulfilling and meaningful. (Diener, 2002) [4]

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