

Measuring the Social Determinants of Subjective Well-being of Working Women with special reference to Balangoda Divisional Secretariat

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Introduction

Subjective well-being (SWB) is widely considered an essential ingredient of the good life, and represents a hedonic concept with roots in the mid-seventies, when Andrews and Whitey (1976) introduced a well-being structure consisting of three factors such as cognitive evaluation, negative effect and positive effect. According to Diener (1984), subjective well-being covers two main components: affective, including negative and positive emotions; and cognitive, pertaining to satisfaction with life. Negative emotions and satisfaction with life are distinct measures and although positive emotions are related to the latter (Diener et al, 1999). Therefore, subjective well-being can be defined in terms of high levels of positive emotion and satisfaction with life, and low levels of negative emotion.

When people describe what they most want out of life, happiness is almost always on the list. Scientists rely primarily on surveys to assess happiness in individuals, but must take into account the fact that people's levels of subjective well-being are influenced by both internal factors such as personality and outlook, and external factors such as the society in which they live. In recent years, cultural differences in subjective well-being have been explored, following the realisation that there are profound differences in what makes people happy (Diener & Suh, 2000).

A growing numbers of scholars have attempted to study the subjective well-being of women, because role of the women in the society and their contribution for the family and economy is very important and significant. A woman can be considered as a predominant character in any society. She plays an important role in the family by encouraging the husband, children and other family members. Women also provide great service in strengthening the household economies and enhancing the welfare of family members.

Objectives

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The main objective of this study is to measure the social determinants of subjective well-being for the selected group. Identifying the variation among social determinants and subjective well-being for the selected area of social determinants is a supplementary objective.

Methodology

The study is based on a sample of 187 married, employed women aged 19-60 years, selected from 3 *Grama Niladhari* Divisions in the Balangoda Divisional Secretariat which represents the urban (Balangoda Town), rural (Rassagala) and estate (Pettigala estate) sectors, through cluster sampling and convenience sampling methods, using a structured questionnaire. Weighted Principal components analysis (WPCA) is performed on variables for the indicators of Subjective Well-Being under three varieties as community contribution, family and working place. Under this method, the loading from the first component of PCA are used as weights for the respective indicators. Finally the social determinants of subjective well-being so constructed are classified into three categories as ‘happy’, ‘moderately happy’, and ‘unhappy’ using cluster analysis.

Results

PCA on Community Contribution

One component solution is chosen as a component in the community contribution dimension. This suggested that just under 61 per cent of the variance in the five variables is represented in the first component.

Table 01: PCA on Community Contribution

	Component
	1
Time for social activities	0.998
Relationship with friends	0.003
Relationship with neighbors	-0.077
Organising social activities	-0.029
Participation in recreational activities	0.603
% of total variance	60.9

Source: Sample Survey, 2015

PCA on family

PCA applied to the five family measures suggested one component solution with the component representing around 98 per cent of the variance in the five indicators.

Table 02: PCA on Family

	Component
	1
Contribution of family members	0.114
Attention of family members	0.164
Decision making within the family	-0.008
Time spend with family members	13.6258
Structure of the family	-0.038
% of total variance	97.7

Source: Sample Survey, 2015

PCA on Workplace

The workplace was categorised as a place in which social relations determine the satisfaction of the workers. Contribution to trade union, thrift societies, attending and organising events and the nature of the job are identified as variables under this section. PCA generated one component with Eigen values greater than 1.0. This components accounted for 98% of the variance in the dataset.

Table 03: PCA on Workplace

	Component
	1
Work environment	-1.193
Work hours per week	-12.313
Social validity	0.397
Organising events	0.15
Trade union participation	-0.35
Nature of the job	0.237
% of total variance	98.2

Source: Sample Survey, 2015

Final index

First principal component of the social dimensions of subjective well-being is the linear compound;

$$SWB = 0.107 \text{ Social} - 185.009 \text{ family} + 28.311 \text{ working}$$

and results from the first principal component for SWB are recorded as their associated Eigen value is 1.489, accounting for 61% of the variation in the original data. Social and working variables are weighted as positively on SWB.

K-means clustering classified 187 individuals as 65 low, 80 moderate and 42 high satisfied group. Cluster 2 is the largest grouping with just half the cases while the smallest group is cluster 3.

Conclusions

Indicators for community relationships are especially related to association and interaction with society, which ways positively impact happiness while association with neighbours leads to less happiness among women in the selected area.

Family and the family members are important social determinants of subjective well-being since the family is identified as a small cluster. When special decisions are made, this relationship may grow more complex.

Work hours per week, work environment and trade union participation lead to less satisfaction while social validity, organising events and nature of the job lead to high satisfaction.

The increase in social working environment results in an enhancement of subjective well-being, but subject to limitations imposed by the lack of family assistance.

Key Words: Social, Subjective Well-Being, Employed Women, WPCA

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