



CHILD HEALTH; ASSOCIATION BETWEEN CHILDREN'S SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING, AGE AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Adeela Manzoor¹, Dr Aisha Siddique², Dr Kanwal Asghar³, Dr Rizwan Nazir⁴, Dr Sarfraz Hassan⁵

1. Institute of Home Sciences, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad
2. Institute of Home Sciences, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad
3. Department of Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad
4. Department of Civil Engineering, International Islamic University, Islamabad
5. Institute of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad

Correspondence Address:
Dr Aisha Siddique
Institute of Home Sciences,
University of Agriculture, Faisalabad
aisha_riz@yahoo.com

Article received on:
27/01/2015

Accepted for publication:
21/02/2015

Received after proof reading:
09/07/2015

ABSTRACT... Subjective well-Being (SWB) means people's feelings, emotions, inner satisfaction, happiness and their positive or negative thinking towards life events. Higher socio-economic status (SES) is associated with higher levels of SWB. **Objective:** The aim of the present study was to determine the level of SWB in Pakistani children. Furthermore, the impact of age and SES on SWB of children was also investigated. **Study Design:** A random sampling technique was employed. **Setting:** Private and public schools of Faisalabad. **Period:** two months. **Material & Methods:** Two hundred Students (100 girls and 100 boys) between the ages of 9-12 years were taken from the private and public schools of Faisalabad. The data was collected from the participants through face to face interview. A validated and reliable inventory Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS-4) was employed. The collected data was analysed by bivariate correlation and independent t test. **Results:** Results show that most (81.5%) of the children has high level of SWB. Young children (9-10 years) have significantly ($p = 0.005$) higher level of SWB than older children (11-12 years). Furthermore, the study found a significant positive relationship ($p = 0.008$, $r = 0.187$) between SWB and SES. **Conclusions:** It is concluded that the level of SWB in Pakistani children is high and SWB varies with regard to age. SWB and SES are positively associated with each other. When programmes and policies are developed for improvement of human life satisfaction particularly for children, involvement of age and SES factors must be considered.

Key words: Subjective Well-Being; Life Satisfaction; Student Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS-4); Positive Effect; Negative Effect; Socioeconomic Status.

Article Citation: Manzoor A, Siddique A, Asghar K, Nazir R, Hassan S. Child health; aassociation between children's subjective well-being, age and socioeconomic status. Professional Med J 2015;22(7):924-930.

Statement of Novelty

In Pakistan no previous research tries to explore the relationship between subjective well-being (SWB) and Socioeconomic status (SES). Therefore, the present research was formulated to fill this gap and find out the level of SWB of Pakistani children and to scrutinize the association between SES and SWB in children. The present study also tried to explore the impact of age of children on the level of SWB. The study will be useful for researchers, psychologists and social scientists which can change the people's perception about the importance of SWB regarding to SES and age.

INTRODUCTION

Well-being is a condition which motivate the individuals to achieve their goals (personal and social). Well-being is also defined as "a positive and sustainable state that allows individuals,

groups or nations to thrive and flourish".¹ Well-being is verified through happiness, satisfaction, empathy, motivation, interest, physical strength, satisfying social relationships and resilience.² Well-being research was categorized under two approaches these are hedonic and eudaimonic well-being.³ Hedonic well-being refers to feeling good in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance⁴, whereas eudaimonic well-being is characterized by focusing on meaning and level of functioning in life and human potential.⁵

SWB is the emotional and intellectual assessment of person's life and these assessments based on cognitive results from the satisfaction and fulfilment of life event and emotional reaction in different situations.⁶ SWB is generally defined as the optimistic situation of mind that engages all over the life for different practices in daily

routine.⁷ SWB consists of three main elements: the occurrence of many positive experiences (pleasure, awareness), irregular depressing feelings (distressing, fearful) and life satisfaction which is mostly described the standard and pleasure of person's life.⁸

With growing age children become dissatisfied which in turns decrease the level of SWB. This might be due to the ignorance from the society, family, and friends and to some extent financial needs which become higher with the passage of time. In adolescence most of the children have lower levels of SWB than the childhood. Actually, the children level of satisfaction with life declines from age 11 to 16.⁹

SES is a powerful motive that drives much of social behaviour. Social status plays a vital role in the level of SWB. An association between SES and dimensions of SWB including life satisfaction and the experience of positive and negative emotions is reported in literature. Higher SES developed feeling of competition among children. They compete with their fellows to obtain costly materialistic things for satisfaction but their demands increase with the passage of time and their level of satisfaction decrease.¹⁰

In Pakistanno previous research tries to explore the relationship between SWB and SES. Therefore, the present research was formulated to fill this gap and find out the level of SWB in children and to scrutinize the association of SES and SWB in children. The present study also tried to explore the impact of age of children on the level of SWB. This study will be useful for researchers, psychologists and social scientists which can change the people's perception about the importance of SWB regarding to SES and age.

OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the level of subjective well-being in children.
- To determine the relationship between subjective well-being and age.
- To identify the impact of socioeconomic status on level of subjective well-being.

HYPOTHESIS

H1: There will be a significant difference in subjective well-being on the basis of age.

H2: There will be a significant relationship between subjective well-being and socioeconomic status.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

SWB has basically three main components. Those are life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect.¹¹ Life satisfaction is act by the degree to which one's physical requirements and one's psychological needs are fulfilled.¹² Positive affectivity is a characteristic that defines how people practice positive emotions and interact with other people and with their environments.⁴ People with high positive affectivity are usually passionate, active, self-confident, enthusiastic and attentive.^{13,6} Negative affectivity includes a variation of destructive feelings, including anger, sadness, unpleasant, guilt and fear and nervousness.⁴ Low negative affectivity is categorized by common situations of quietness and peacefulness.¹⁴ Diener¹⁵ proposed that SWB deals with an affective component i.e. how a person frequently reports his experiences in positive or negative affect (such as smiling or crying). In contrast, life satisfaction is generally measured in broader way. The satisfaction of people generally evaluated in different areas of life because those areas influenced people's life satisfaction (e.g. health, occupation, money, social situations).

Age is an important predictor of SWB. Age influences SWB however, this effect depends on the part of SWB which is tapped.¹⁶ Diener¹¹ reported no relationship between SWB and age. While, Wilson¹⁸ reported that there is a negative relationship, where the young to be happier than the old. On the other hand, Diener and Suh¹⁶ reported positive thinking and life satisfaction weakened through age but negative affect showed slightly change. Diener *et al.*⁸ reported the age differences and life satisfaction. Life satisfaction seems to stay the same, if not increase with age. They suggest that people become better at adjusting to their conditions as they get older. Holder *et al.*¹⁷ found that childhood is best period of any individual's life

because at this stage children have more leisure time for enjoying their lives and doing indoor and outdoor activities in different ways. Due to this reason children remain happy and satisfied during childhood. Children's SWB might be start to decrease around the age of 10 years when they transit from one stage (childhood) to other stage (adolescence). However, the level of SWB fluctuates throughout the life.

The relationship between SWB and SES level had been a controversial issue. SWB of individuals in developed societies is positively correlated with their SES¹⁹. Graham²⁰ reported no clear relationships among these variables (SES and SWB). A study by Kanhehan and Deaton²¹ found that money has a positive relationship with happiness and satisfaction of life. A study conducted on American children in 2004, provides evidence which supports the link between the level of SES and life satisfaction, where higher level of SES had more happy and satisfied children²². Higher level of satisfaction is also based on availability of opportunities to build and enhances children sense of belongingness, independence, to fulfil their desires according to their choices and understanding with other children. Di Telia *et al.*²³ claimed an association between SES and SWB. Higher incomes, a characteristic of high SES allow people to obtain those things that play an important role in improving their quality of life. Clark *et al.*²⁴ reported that children who belong to higher standard families have higher level of SWB. In their empirical analysis they found that living in higher standard area positively effect life satisfaction of children. Diener *et al.*²⁵ reported an association between children's life satisfaction, age and money. They concluded that life satisfaction gradually decrease with the increasing age. At the age of 10 children have higher level of SWB because they have no negative thinking and have no social status issues. Furthermore, at this stage children are less demanding while when they become adolescent then they have mood swings; they want higher status for fulfilling their desires according to their peer status. During this age children compete themselves with their peers because at this stage they are more attached with

their peers and want to enjoy their social life and need satisfaction according to their desires.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The present study is a descriptive quantitative research, based on survey. It was selected to observe the association of independent variable SWB with other dependent variables i.e. age and SES.

Population and sample

The present study was conducted in the Faisalabad city. The random sampling technique was employed for collecting data from a sample of two hundred participants (100 girls and 100 boys) from selected private and public schools.

Instruments

In order to determine the SWB of children a validated questionnaire, Students' Life Satisfaction Scale SLSS-4 was used²⁶. The questionnaire has five questions related to satisfaction about different areas of life. The style of this format range from (0) completely disagree to (10) completely agree. The number (5) is the neutral point neither agrees nor was disagrees. The advantage of this neutral point is to make clear range for children from positive to negative values. A demographic questionnaire was also employed. Furthermore, SES was determined by the standard of schools in which respondents were studying.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The data was collected from the participants through face to face interview. The information gathered from respondents was analysed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and significant, presentable statistical method such as frequency distribution, percentage analysis, bivariate correlation and independent t test was used.

RESULTS

The table-I indicates that 50.0 percent of the respondents were male and 50.0 percent of the respondents were female. Most of the respondents (55%) were 11- 12 years of age.

The table-II indicates that very small numbers of children (1.5%) have low SWB and most of the children have higher (81.5%) level of SWB .

The table-III shows that young children (9-10 years) have significantly ($p = 0.005$) higher level of SWB as compared to older children (11-12 years). This implies that hypothesis, which states that there will be a significant positive relationship between SWB and age of children is accepted. Therefore, it deduces that age affects the level of SWB.

The table-IV shows a significant and positive bivariate correlation ($p = 0.008$ and $r = 0.187$) between SWB and SES of the children. This implies that hypothesis which states that there will be a significant relationship between SWB and SES of children is accepted. Therefore, it deduces that SES influences the level of SWB of children.

Variables		Frequency*
Gender	Male	100(50%)
	Female	100(50%)
	Total	200(100%)
Age (Years)	9-10	90(45%)
	11-12	110(55%)
	Total	200(100%)

Table-I. Demographic Variables

*(% in parentheses)

Categories	Frequency*
Low	3(1.5%)
Moderate	34(17.0%)
High	163(81.5%)
Total	200(100%)

Table-II. Student's Level of Subjective Well-Being

*(% in parentheses)

Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	p-value
9-10	87	44.9540	7.10537	4.266	0.005
11-12	113	40.0885	8.61742		

Table-III. Association between Age and SWB

Variables	N	SD	r	p-value
SES	200	0.501	0.187**	0.008
SWB	200	0.437		

Table-IV. Association between SES and SWB

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

DISCUSSIONS

The aim of present study is to investigate the level of SWB in Pakistani children. Furthermore, to investigate the impact of age and SES on SWB of children. The study revealed that the level of SWB in Pakistani children is high and age factor has influence on the level of SWB. SWB and SES are positively associated with each other.

With regard to determine the level of SWB the study shows that most of the children have high level of subjective well-being. The present finding is parallel with the findings of (Easterlin²⁷; Manzoor *et al.*⁴). Easterlin²⁷ reported that children belonging to the parents who fulfilled their basic needs (food, shelter, love, affection) according to their desires are more satisfied from their lives and have higher level of SWB. Manzoor *et al.*⁴ also reported higher level of SWB in Pakistani children using a different scale. Family system and intimate relationship play an important role for higher level of children subjective well-being. Parents, who give time to their children, understand their feelings and developed close intimate relationship with them those children become happy and satisfied from their lives and their level of SWB increase.

Pertaining to find out an association between SWB and the age, the study found that young children (9-10 years) have higher level of SWB as compared to older children (11-12 years). This finding is consistent with the findings of (Dweck²⁸; Jette²⁹). Less than 10 year old children have more inner abilities to learn new things. However, they are not aware about the importance of having qualities like self-confidence and self-image due to their limited experiences. They always do what they want to do, always listen inner voice due to which they are satisfied from their lives. Therefore, these children have high level of SWB

at initial stages of their lives²⁸. Jette²⁹ finding also support the present research finding. Younger children have higher level of SWB as compared to older one because young children openly express their inner feelings, desires. On contrary, older children suppress their feelings, wishes and can't openly express to other hence developed negative thinking and feelings of dissatisfaction about their lives.

With respect to the SWB and its association with SES of children, the study found that students who are more satisfied with their lives belong to higher SES and study in high standard schools. This finding is parallel with the findings of Bergman and Scott³⁰; Di Telia *et al.*²³; Diener *et al.*²⁵ Higher status is more important for satisfaction of people's life. However, not all forms of status affect SWB equally but mostly those children who can fulfil their desires according to their needs and choices are more satisfied from their lives. Material things like money also count for life satisfaction because lack of money lead to unfulfill desires which developed the negative thinking and depressed feelings in children.³⁰ High SES allows people to obtain goods and services according to their lifestyle and enjoy quality life which give inner satisfaction to every individual in all areas of their life.²³ Higher SES is strongly related to level of SWB. Those children, who belong to high SES, get high standard education according to their interest and also choose institutions and professions according to their desires. Consequently, they are satisfied from their lives as compared to those children who belong to low SES families where lack of money is a major hurdle to fulfil all desires of children according to their interest.²⁵

CONCLUSIONS

With regard to the first objectives the study clearly provides evidence that most of the children fall in higher level of SWB. The study showed a significant relationship between SWB and age as young children (9-10 years) have higher level of SWB as compared to older (11-12 years). Furthermore, the study revealed a significant positive relationship between SWB and SES.

SUGGESTIONS

The study finds the difference between young and older children with regard to the SWB. Therefore, it is suggested that when programmes and policies are developed for improvement of human life satisfaction particularly for children, involvement of age factor must be considered. With the passage of time world is becoming globalized with new advance technologies and entering into new era of life. Therefore, it is important to understand how SES affects the level of SWB of children and adults. Therefore, more research is required to investigate these issues deeply.

Copyright© 21 Feb, 2015.

REFERENCES

1. Keyes CLM. **Complete mental health: An agenda for the 21st century.** In Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association 2003: 293-12.
2. Huppert FA, Baylis N, Keverne B. **Introduction: Why do we need a science of well-being?** Philosophical Transactions of Royal Society B2004; 359: 1331-32.
3. Ryan RM, Deci EL. **On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being.** Annual Review of Psychology2001; 52: 141-66.
4. Manzoor A, Siddique A, Riaz F, Riaz A. **Determining the impact of subjective well-being on academic achievement of children in District Faisalabad.** Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences 2014; 23 (5): 2673-78.
5. Henderson L, Wand Knight T. **Integrating the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives to more comprehensively understand wellbeing and pathways to wellbeing.** International Journal of Wellbeing2012; 2: 196-21.
6. Snyder CR, Lopez SJ. **Handbook of Positive Psychology.** London: Oxford University Press,2002.
7. Blore JD, Stokes MA, Mellor D, Firth L, Cummins RA. **Comparing multiple discrepancies theory and affective models of subjective wellbeing.** Social Indicators Research 2011; 100 (1): 1-16.
8. Diener E, Carol L, Gohm ES, Oishi S. **Similarity of the Relations between Marital Status and Subjective Well-Being across Cultures.** Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology 2000; 31: 419-36.
9. Huebner ES, Drane W, Valois RF. **Levels and**

- demographic correlates of adolescent life satisfaction reports.** *School Psychology International* 2000; 21(3): 281–92.
10. George LK. **Social factors and illness.** In Binstock R H and George L K (Eds.), *Handbook of aging and the social sciences* (4th Ed.). San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1996: 229-52.
 11. Diener E. **Subjective Well-Being.** *Psychological Bulletin* 1984; 95: 542–75.
 12. Diener E, Seligman MEP. **Very happy people.** *Psychological Science* 2002; 13: 81–84.
 13. Carr A. **Positive psychology: The Science of Happiness and Human Strengths.** East Sussex: Routledge, 2004.
 14. Kail RV, Cavanaugh JC. **Human Development: A life-span view.** Canada: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007.
 15. Diener E. **Assessing subjective well-being: Progress and opportunities.** *Social Indicators Research* 1994; 31: 103–57.
 16. Diener E, Suh EM. **Subjective well-being and age: an international analysis.** *Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics* 1998; 17:304–24.
 17. Holder MD, Coleman B, Wallace JM. **Spirituality, Religiousness and happiness in Children aged 8-12 years.** *Journal of Happiness Studies* 2010; 11(2): 131–50.
 18. Wilson W. **Correlates of avowed happiness.** *Psychological Bulletin* 1967; 67: 294-306.
 19. Diener E, Sandvik E, Seidlitz L, Diener M. **The relationship between income and subjective well-being: Relative or absolute?** *Social Indicators Research* 1993; 28: 195–23.
 20. Graham C. **Does more money make you happier? Why so much debate?** *Applied Research Quality Life* 2011; 6: 219–39.
 21. Kahneman D, Deaton A. **Does money buy happiness.... or just a better life?** Princeton: Princeton University, Mimeo, 2010.
 22. Stutzer A. **The role of income aspirations in individual happiness.** *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organization* 2004; 54: 89–109.
 23. Di Tella R, MacCulloch RJ, Oswald AJ. **The macroeconomics of happiness.** *Review of Economics and Statistics* 2003; 85: 809-27.
 24. Clark AE, Westergård-Nielsen N, Kristensen N. **Economic satisfaction and income rank in small neighbourhoods.** *Journal of the European Economic Association* 2009; 7:519–27.
 25. Diener E, Helliwell JF, Kahneman D. **International differences in well-being.** New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
 26. Huebner ES. **Correlates of life satisfaction in children.** *School Psychology Quarterly* 1991; 6(2): 103–11.
 27. Easterlin RA. **Explaining happiness.** *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2003; 100: 11176-83.
 28. Dweck CS. **The development of ability conceptions.** In A Wigfield and Eccles JS (Eds.), *Development of achievement motivation*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2002: 57-88.
 29. Jette A. **Disability trends and transitions.** In Binstock R.H, George LK (Eds.), *Handbook of aging and the social sciences*(4th edition), San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1996: 94-117.
 30. Bergman MM, Scott J. **Young adolescents' wellbeing and health-risk behaviours: Gender and socio-economic differences.** *Journal of Adolescence* 2001; 24(2): 183–97.

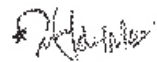





“Learning is increased manifold with love of learning.”

Shuja Tahir



AUTHORSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION DECLARATION

Sr. #	Author-s Full Name	Contribution to the paper	Author=s Signature
1	Adeela Manzoor	Main author	
2	Dr Aisha Siddique	Co-author	
3	Dr Kanwal Asghar	Co-author	
4	Dr Rizwan Nazir	Co-author	
5	Dr Sarfraz Hassan	Co-author	