

ASSOCIATION OF AGE, MARITAL STATUS AND OTHER FACTORS WITH THE PERCEPTION OF QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) AMONG YOUNG FEMALES IN KARACHI

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ABSTRACT

Karachi is a modern and multicultural city of Pakistan that also faces a variety of problems including frequent suicides due to family problems. Assessment of satisfaction with quality of life of people is important to understand and improve the situation. This small study is an attempt to explore one aspect of this very gigantic issue and has tried to identify factors associated with the perceptions of a selected group of young females with their quality of life. Higher Age, married status and perceived need for money were associated lower perception of quality of life.

Keywords: *Pakistan, Karachi, Quality of Life.*

INTRODUCTION:

Nearly half of Pakistani children are undernourished (Baig-Ansari, Rahbar, Bhutta, & Quality of Life (QOL) is a crucial indicator of sustainable development. It is suggested to be one of the key concepts in relation to education for sustainable development (Young 2008) Quality of life could be defined as a sense of well-being and social justice, not feeling deprived or allowing others to be so. It results in:

1. Living comfortably and in good health to satisfy basic needs; and allowing others to do so now and in the future,
2. Ensuring fair shares, opportunities and rewards for all
3. Looking after the health of the individual and the wider community
4. Fulfilling one's potential
5. Being respected and showing respect for others and the wider world

Thus it seems appropriate to make attempts to monitor changes in quality of life people and their satisfaction with their perceived quality of life.

QOL measures are designed to capture the totality of life experiences, both positive and negative (Hagerty & Cummins et al 2002). The subjective dimension of QOL is measured by questions concerning "satisfaction". It is widely considered that the perception of QOL is a result of multiple comparative processes. These processes compute the "gap" or discrepancy between one's perceived current circumstance and imagined other circumstances that may refer to other people, the

past, etc. The response to questions in terms of satisfaction are considered the most practical measure of such discrepancies and therefore of QOL.

Karachi is the most developed city of Pakistan offering numerous educational and vocational opportunities to its young people. However the city faces several problems because of unplanned expansion and in migration e.g. overcrowding, unrest, pollution etc. Young people particularly are influenced by these conditions but the extent to which these conditions are affecting their thinking about quality of life and their perceptions of their own quality of life. This study is planned to assess the perceptions about quality of life of people living in Karachi. A pilot study was conducted among students of Raana Liaqat Ali Khan Government College of Home Economics Karachi and this paper describes the results of the pilot study.

Objectives:

1. To assess the young and older female adults' level of satisfaction with life
2. To identify the they considered important for quality of life
3. To identify factors associated with females perception of their quality of life

METHODS

Data was collected from a random sample of students Raana Liaqat Ali Khan Government College of Home Economics Karachi through a specifically designed self administered questionnaire. The questionnaire has one question

to assess perception of overall quality of life, one for assessing the factors considered important for good QOL and one for assessing perceived need for improvement in certain areas so as to improve the respondent's QOL. Students of randomly selected sections of classes were given questionnaires to be filled in classes. Questions were given to a sub sample of students for getting filled by their mothers and older sisters (above 25 years of age). Data was entered and analyzed on SPSS 15 for analysis.

RESULTS:

Data was collected from a total of 360 females aged 18-52 that included 309 students aged 18-22 and 51 older adult females aged 23 to 52. None of the students and 65% of older females was married.

Around 55% of females aged 18-35 rated their quality of life as satisfactory (good, very good or excellent) whereas only 32% of females aged more than 35 rated their life as satisfactory. Similarly a higher percentage of unmarried females rated their life as satisfactory (55%) as compared to married females (45.5%)

Factors considered important for good quality of life

All the respondents were asked to mention the extent to which (not at all, important or very important) any of the specific factors (Money, Health, Independence, Honor, Education, Relaxation, Conveniences, Good Family Relationships) important for good quality of life. Responses were scored as 0 for not important 1 for important and 2 for very important thus higher score indicated higher level of importance given by the respondent. Means of scores given by any group were calculated and compared in relation to relative importance of various factors and differences between younger and older females.

Mean of scores given by all females was highest for education (1.58), followed by relaxation (1.46), honor (1.40) and health (1.35). For education, honor and relaxation there was no significant difference between older and younger females whereas all other factors were considered important to a higher degree by older females.

Factors considered needed for improving the quality of life of respondents

All the respondents were asked to mention the extent to which (not at all, needed or needed to a great extent) any of the specific factors (Money, Health, Independence, Honor, Education, Relaxation, Conveniences, Good Family Relationships) for improving their quality of life. Responses were scored as 0 for not needed 1 for needed and 2 for needed to a great extent thus higher score indicated higher level of need felt by the respondent. Means of scores given by any group were calculated and compared in relation to degree to which need was felt for various factors and differences between younger and older females.

Mean of scores given by all females was highest and equal for health honor and education (1.83), followed by relaxation (1.76), good family relationships (1.62) and money (1.35). Convenience and Independence were given least importance but were considered needed to a relatively higher degree by older females.

Association of Perception of Need for Certain Determinants with Quality Of Life

Though money did not emerge as perceived to be an important factor in relation to views of its importance or need but in terms of association with perceived overall quality of life money was the only factor that had significant negative correlation (Pearson's $r=0.163$ $P=0.002$) with respondents perception of quality life.

DISCUSSION:

This study revealed that factors considered to be important or needed by subjects were different from the factor having any potential of predicting Satisfaction with quality of life. For example money was not the most frequently mentioned factor considered important by respondents for their quality of life but the ones who mentioned need for money were more dissatisfied with their quality of life. Associations of financial, friend, and family satisfactions with life satisfaction and with self-esteem vary across nations (Diener, & Diener 1995)

Table 1: Respondents' perception of Quality of Life according to Age

Perception of QOL	Age Groups			Total
	18-22	23-35	35-50	
	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
Less than Good	44.3% (137)	43.8% (14)	68.4% (13)	45.6% (164)
Good Very Good or Excellent	55.7% (172)	56.3% (18)	31.6%(6)	54.4% (196)
Total	100.0%(309)	100.0%(32)	100.0%(19)	100.0% (360)

Table 2: Respondents' Perception of Quality of Life according to Marital Status

Perception of QOL	Marital Status		Total
	Married	Unmarried	
	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
Less than Good	54.5% (18)	44.6% (146)	45.6% (164)
Good Very Good or Excellent	45.5% (15)	55.4% (181)	54.4% (196)
Total	100.0% (33)	100.0% (327)	100.0% (360)

Table 3: Factors considered important for Good QOL by younger and older females

Factors considered important for Good QOL	Young Students		Older Females		Total		Sign. P Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Education	1.60	0.63	1.47	0.73	1.58	0.64	0.198
Relaxation	1.43	0.71	1.61	0.57	1.46	0.69	0.097
Honor	1.37	0.76	1.59	0.64	1.40	0.75	0.053
Health	1.28	0.74	1.73	0.49	1.35	0.72	0.000
Conveniences	1.11	0.64	1.49	0.54	1.16	0.64	0.000
Money	1.03	0.63	1.31	0.58	1.07	0.63	0.003
Independence	0.80	0.72	1.22	0.76	0.86	0.74	0.000
Good Family Relationships	0.53	0.79	1.10	0.85	0.61	0.82	0.000

Table 4: Factors considered needed for Good QOL by younger and older females

Needed for improving respondents' own QOL	Young Students		Older Females		Total		Sign. P Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Health	1.82	0.53	1.84	0.50	1.83	0.52	0.789
Honor	1.82	0.54	1.88	0.38	1.83	0.52	0.420
Education	1.85	0.49	1.75	0.59	1.83	0.51	0.180
Relaxation	1.75	0.58	1.76	0.59	1.76	0.58	0.904
Good Family Relationships	1.61	0.67	1.69	0.55	1.62	0.66	0.453
Money	1.33	0.64	1.45	0.58	1.35	0.63	0.206
Conveniences	1.24	0.64	1.41	0.64	1.26	0.64	0.074
Independence	1.18	0.60	1.41	0.64	1.21	0.61	0.012

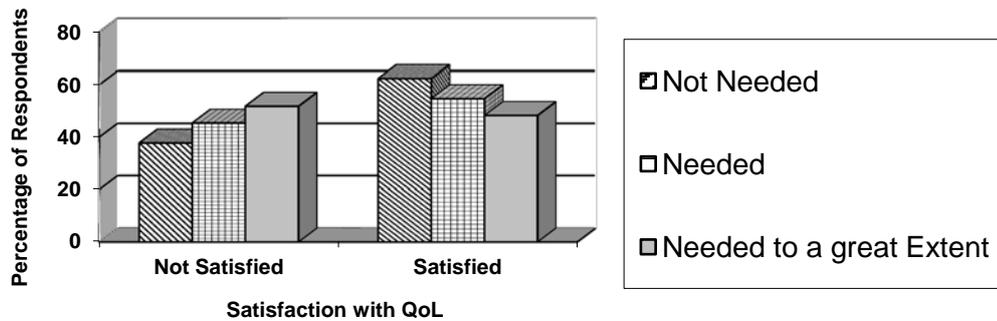


Fig. 1: Degree to which need for money was felt by Respondents who were satisfied or dissatisfied with their QOL

In USA researchers found that perceived financial situation and control over life completely mediated the association between measures of actual wealth and life satisfaction and financial resources appeared to protect life satisfaction from environmental shocks. Diener and Fujita have found that health variables are more important for psychological well being while social circumstances are more significant for satisfaction with life (Hutchinson, Simeon, Bain, , Wyatt, Tucker & Lefrance 2004) . In another group subjects Life satisfaction was more closely related to resources than was affective well-being and that social and personal resources were in general more strongly related to SWB than were material resources (Diener, & Fujita, 1995)). On the other hand, Hutchinson *et al* postulated that Positive thinking may indeed play a significant role in life satisfaction (Hutchinson *et al* 2004)

Thus association of various factors with life satisfaction is not universally the same. This small study does not provide any definite answers but demonstrates the possibility the factors perceived to be important may not be necessarily be the actual determinants of satisfaction with life. The level of satisfaction of young females with life in spite of living in a city facing several civic problems

and uncertainties indicate role of other factors in developing sense of wellbeing and satisfaction.

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