Sociological Investigation Of Quality Of Life And Happiness In Lahore City; A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to understand the meaning of quality of life and happiness from individual perspective. Interpretive paradigm was followed to construct the reality through examining personal experiences of respondents. The study of quality of life and happiness have covered both levels (subjective and the objective level). Subjective well-being indicates better socio-economic conditions including profession, income, education, family standard and way of living and life style. While social relationships, social and cultural norms, Physical and spiritual health, social support, social network and relationship develop reciprocity in one's life for satisfaction. The study was conducted in Lahore city, the populous city of the province of Punjab. This study was qualitative into its nature and qualitative research design was used. Personal interviews were conducted and interview guide was used as tool of data collection. Interviews were audio recorded and took filed notes from the field. Data were transcribed and thematic analysis was performed for generating themes from interviews. The study found that living environment plays an important role to promote ultimate happiness and encourage good quality of life, living conditions of urban areas due to good sewerage, roads and business opportunities. However social network and importance of social relationships in one's life because humans are social animal and they depend on each other for the sake of achieving life goals and events, they cannot live alone in society. Positive contribution of societal norms and values can't be neglected as these norms and values guide people for their accepted and expected behaviour as member society. Finally physical, mental and spiritual well-being of individual satisfies one's life.

Keywords: Happiness, Quality of Life, , Subjective Well-being, Living Environment, Sociological Investigation.

Quality of life

The concept of QOL is under study over the last four decades however concept of "good life" has been discussed in the philosophical writings of Aristotle and the Plato. Plato focuses on the reasoning rather than on feelings. Aristotle held an opposite opinion for him life without feeling is useless. Plato's writings are more concerned to the quality of life criteria however the work of Aristotle is on happiness, in the last few decades, these concepts were explained in economic domain with focus on money and assets that people own. After the years there was a shift in explaining and elaborating the concepts through subjective notions (Juozulynas et. al., 2006).

Conditions of life verify a top quality of life, though even a small amendment within the latter conjointly changes the understanding of QOL. It can be explained by various factors: accommodation, occupation, economic well-being, attitudes, social relationships, family, frustration and mental tensions, health, the living environment and the ability to cope, environmental factors and others (Juozulynas et al. 2006).

Personal satisfaction is the discernment that an individual has of his situation in life with regards to the way of life and worth frameworks wherein he lives and in which he is identified with his objectives, assumptions, qualities, and concerns, which incorporate actual wellbeing, emotional well-being, autonomy, social connections, individual convictions, and their relationship to the most striking highlights of the climate. (World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL Group, 1995).

Concept of Happiness

Researchers are more and more curious about subjective wellness of humans that is measured through sense of happiness (it is also outlined as a large proportion of negative and also the positive feelings) and also with how much a person is satisfied with his or life. The sensation of happiness doesn't depend on external factors, it is extremely subjective and, the standard of life depends on the correspondence between the life in past and therefore the principle of being human, which is deep in the organism (Ventegodt, et al. 2003).

In contemporary world Oishi and Westgate (2022) conceptualize the true meaning of happiness in terms of hedonic or eudemonic well-being. Another way of is psychological estimating happiness richness and derives from variety of perspective-changing selfinteresting experience. Self is also related with happiness, self-transcendence and selfenhancement both perceive happiness to benefit for self and society (Haung and Yang 2015). Self develops through belief in just work (BJW) associates with two components of subjective well-being as life satisfaction or positive effect, and causal directions that are not being tested empirically (Correia et al., 2009). So, self-belief is affected by moments of crisis, as these causal attribution and critical events make people happy and therefore. unhappy, socio-economic conditions find unchanged but people from rich framing areas are happy as compared to wheat areas because rich areas are more independent develops relationships by which predict happiness. Happiness belief ultimately loss its strength by sketching the optimising affect as moderate to well-being (Joshanloo et al., 2017) and subjective satisfaction (Ford et al., 2014, Huta and Ryan, 2010).

Rationale of Study

The main purpose of this study was to explore the existing status of happiness and Quality of Life (QOL) from sociological perspective that was based on subjective and objective well-being of people. This study purposefully added in existing literature and guidelines for more comprehensive strategic planning of

development. The concepts QOL and happiness got tremendous response from academia, happiness and QOL are the concepts that deal with well-being of humans from every aspect while living within the society. The study provides basis for understanding the role of social environment for happiness and life satisfaction. The study also indicates the factors that are creating hurdle to achieve a happiness and better quality of life. Previous studies regarding happiness and QOL don't provide the sufficient literature to properly analyze the quality of life and happiness sociologically and produce limited knowledge (Bartram, 2010). This study has extended existing literature and tried to fulfil the gap in knowledge and recommended some suggestions to academicians, scholars and for those who associated with this are phenomenon.

Research Question

Why the study of quality of life and happiness is more important in Pakistani context. How personal experiences describe these both terms. A very careful philosophical and empirical study is necessary to overhaul the issue of working individuals of different fields. How individuals share their perception and views about this phenomena under study for future prospects. Well-being of human and happier life is an ultimate goal of civilized society, so this study contributes the explanation of living a happy life of Pakistani people who are more struggling to find out the best standard of a beautiful life.

Research Objectives

1. What is good social environment for happiness and how a good environment can be created?

- **2.** How different aspects of sociocultural and economy are influential on quality of life and happiness.
- **3.** How these elements creates hurdles in achieving better quality of life and happiness and happiness.
- **4.** To make recommendations to enhance the QOL and happiness.

Literature Review

Andre et al. (2001) explained that although the quality of life is a very popular term in our daily speech there is no agreement on its meaning like welfare, utility and so on. However, there is an agreement that it is a multidimensional concept. In other words, it is a set of dimensions. Moreover, it covers some objective components related with observable living conditions and some subjective components related with perception of individuals about their living conditions.

Fahey et al. (2003) described that numerous academics have referred to subjective or general well-being as quality of life. At this point, it is important to emphasize the concept of well-being, which encompasses not only living conditions but also "management over resources across the full spectrum of life domains and the ways in which people respond to and feel about their lives in those domains."

Anderson (2004) argued that there are several components that make up overall well-being. As a result, he identifies the domains of quality of life and describes the domains of well-being as follows: "Physical "well-being" including fitness, mobility, and health; material "well-being" including possessions, transportation, security, and quality of housing; social "well-being" including family/household life, relatives,

and interpersonal relationships; emotional "well-being" including trust, self-esteem, and development satisfaction; and activity including political freedom, job, education, and economic freedom. Different components to overall well-being identify the domains of quality of life and describe the well-being as follows: Physical well-being, such as good health and mobility, as well as material well-being, such as housing, wealth and resources.

Research Methodology

As the problem was not much clear and variables were not well defined as indicated by (Bartram, 2010) posited that the research on quality of life and happiness contribute limited knowledge on this phenomenon. Study has followed the qualitative research design. This study was conducted in Lahore city to explore the concept of quality of life and happiness, Lahore was considered as the most populace city of the province Punjab. Purposive sampling technique was used for selecting the research participants for collecting the subjective experiences about quality of life and happiness. Qualitative indepth interviews were conducted with 12 participants. In the wake of research participants, two Rich business men, 2 Bureaucrats, 2 Government officials of grade 17, 2 daily wages workers and 2 house wives and 2 people from religious background were approached. Thematic analysis was performed to get data analyzed and for important themes.

Data Collection and Analysis

With the respondents' permission, all research activities were recorded into tape

recorder and made field notes. Audio recording was transcribed verbatim and all the information and data were written in the form of field notes, notes were clearly transcribed into English language. At first stage filed notes were written into clear and readable form to familiarize with the collected data, a cross check of the notes was done by researcher himself and a helper who assisted in the whole study. In second stage, Inductive (collected data) and deductive (available knowledge on topic) coding techniques were used, important text were highlighted and coded (see table below). In third stage, collating codes were converted into important themes (see table below). In fourth stage, themes were reviewed. In next stage, researcher checked the complete description and narrative of the themes with research questions. At last stage, researcher interpreted the findings within data extracts that provides clear and logical description of codes and themes.

In this study two approaches of data analysis were used. These two approaches are very important in qualitative data analysis, first is deductive and second is inductive approach. Deductive approach utilizes a pre-established framework to analyse data, while inductive data may not use of predetermined theories or structure and framework (Burnard et al., 2008). This study used both approaches, inductive and deductive coding framework, in inductive coding, theoretical models and theories were entailed to coding the data, and deductive coding was also performed on the basis of data and transcripts of interviews.

 Table 3.1: Inductive and Deductive Coding from Data of Study

	Inductive Coding	Deductive Coding	Excerpt from Interview
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Living environment Favourable environment for living	Improve quality of life Peaceful Surroundings Clean Environment	I have to face pollution, not having safe drinking water, sewerage problem and load shedding. These all factors are affecting me and all of the conditions are unfavourable for me (ok) (Umm) Environment in our area is not helpful for me to boost my quality of life as my environmental conditions are unfavourable to me.
Socio- Economic Status Family Pattern Social Setting	Parent background knowledge provides to a child Inheritance Influence on child's education Dependence to social class Family pattern Income Nutrition residence type of dwelling	As a govt official I just have to follow rules but in my family I share my decision with my family members and I check pros and cons of my decision through discussion with my family. If there is not any issue they usually accept my decision. I think (I) as a family member, enjoy my rights in my family that develop a good social environment for a happy life Experience regarding low income does not sure a good quality life, because reasonable income source make slightly happy. (Actually) Eating habits may good in time of great income source and also can avail a good resident too Country's economic conditions are not favourable. Inflation rate is high, electricity prices are high and our currency is losing its worth. These all conditions create hurdle for me to fulfil my goals or dreams. (Yes) Good and bad health affects quality of life and happiness. If we are healthy we can enjoy healthy and happy life

Social networks, Reciprocity	Connecting through social networks Social relationships	 (Yes) I have strong bonding with my parents and I enjoy this bonding with my parents. (So) Building a good conversation with other to share our bad and good memories for relaxation, in connecting to others, we make some way to remove bad intention that is not possible alone.
Societal norms Guiding principles Concept of good and bad,	Beneficial for humans Make people active and happy	 (No) it's not difficult to fulfil societal norms. As we have to greet with them, give respect to the people. It's all quite easy. No, I haven't felt it difficult. In my opinion these norms are beneficial for us. These norms are here in our society to make us feel important. (Though) If an individual is left free without in norms, values and rules then it will not be favourable at all. An individual can't feel his importance or worth without these norms. (Well) I didn't feel that. I think these norms keeps man active because if there are not any hurdles or rules and regulations then you will become lazy. You will not put the required energy to fulfill your tasks (ok)

Personality development	Growth,	I always choose to surround myself
Self-respect	Meaning of life Activeness	with those who can positively influence me and grow me strong, efficient and energetic. This works in regards to success as well. (Perhaps) I have significant monumental dreams and ambitions, which define us as human, because human have wishes and desires, and what is life, the element that rectify and support us to be happy is prestige which adequately relief me to adapt a good attitude with other.

Themes and discussions

Living environment

Living environment creates a beautiful interaction with men and it is perhaps most fabricated and important segment of quality of life. Data showed that favorable environment of living improves quality of life and happiness. Some respondents of the study enjoy peaceful living environment that helps them to perform their routine tasks. As the peaceful environment don't create any stress and enable the person to live peacefully without any hurdles. However few of the respondents also face unfavorable environment. Some people have to face different issue regarding the cleanliness of the area and lack of proper maintenance.

One of the respondents stated:

"Environment of my area is overall favourable to me. My surrounding environment provides the opportunity to grow and flourish. There are not any restrictions, I feel free to move. ' Respondent has highlighted that importance of healthy environment as the healthy environment provides the opportunity to gain better quality of life. However other respondents have highlighted the issue regarding their environment and also the effect of environment on the routine life. As the respondents stated that;

"Overall environment is good as well as our neighbours are much cooperated. Only one issue is there, the residential area is not clean".

I have to face pollution, not having safe drinking water, sewerage problem and load shedding. These all factors are affecting me and all of the conditions are unfavourable for me. My environment is not helpful for me to boost my quality of life as my environmental conditions are unfavourable for me.

"Environmental conditions are below average such as pollution, scarcity of trees, sewerage problem are main issues in my area. My environment doesn't help me to boost up quality of life. As it creates stress on me. There should be lack of pollution, seasonal plantation, water supply and good sewerage system, as it will help to enhance the quality of life".

As it can be observed that unhealthy environment is hurdle for most of the people to live their life smoothly. Unfortunately in our country people have to face such issues that are the basic necessities of life. People go through the problems of pollution, unhealthy drinking water, load shedding and cleanliness. Respondents held the opinion that these unhealthy conditions also affect their quality of life. As one respondent stated that "it creates stress for me".

Generally people are only concerned with the material environment. Environment by which they are surrounded by in their routine life but one of the respondent who was widow, has also talked about the attitudes of people. According to her people attitude also affect her quality of life and happiness. As she stated that:

I have good environment, house environment is supportive for me but if we talk about the surrounding area of my house there are maintenance problems such as cleanliness. My house environment helps me to boost up my quality of life but the social settings, as you know this is not at all favourable. I am a widow so people show sympathy towards me as a widow but their sympathy is just outwards to show off. People are not sympathetic in reality. For example if I own some asset or something, I use to face statements from people that what will you do of this? What is the need of this thing? People suppose that widow should not own any asset or anything. As a status of widow there is no need of anything. If my children have something worth able people's attitude are very strange. They question how they got these valuable things. People use to put restrictions on me. They consider that I don't need anything as a widow. I just have to live my days of life.

Brereton et al. (2008) also explored that natural and immediate environment also make influence on the quality of life and the state of being happy or unhappy. As the unsafe and deprived environment can't provide the better quality of life and ultimately people will also be unhappy. The studies provide the evidence regarding the quality of the living environment. Bad air pollution also creates stress and discomfort. Also the place where people live affects the QOL, the people who keep their resident in public house also suffer from unhappiness.

Family's life style and standard of living

Family life style and the house hold environment holds great significance in the favourable life. The and productive environment happiness creates and improvement in the life style. Data of the study indicated that people who experience favourable environment gain progress in life and the people are happy and satisfied. A good socio-economic stature is an ultimate tool of happiness and quality of life as

One of the respondents told that the family has been a lot supportive to him. But still he is looking for more progress and achievements in his life. He stated that

"My family has helped me in my personality development not my friends and colleagues. My family always supported me; they prayed for me and provided me proper ground to get more progress in my life. According to my parent's capacity and their capabilities they have provided me full access and supported me. I am not fully satisfy and happy with the status of my family. I am looking for opportunities in my life".

Another respondent has indicated that family environment has been supportive to her throughout life. She stated that she is happy with her life style, as her family has provided all the facilities and the peaceful environment to her. She stated:

"My family provided me an ideal environment at home, quality schooling and higher education and fulfilled my all needs which helped me a lot in developing a strong personality in society. I am absolutely happy with my life style. I am living an ideal life which has peace, strong family relationship with good economy and have all facilities which everybody wants in his ideal life".

According to Shek (2005) found that sharing pleasures with others is thought to be the first step toward happiness. Cohabitants and spouses can help each other find happiness through individual or shared pleasures by getting to know each other's interests. Clearly, this way to bliss has different structures. While his partner strongly prefers golf, a man may only be interested in eating, drinking, and watching television. Relationships can be put under pressure when people have a wide range of interests and activities, but they don't share many of the same pleasures. However, when one partner's chosen path to happiness (such as the pursuit of knowledge) cannot be shared with the other, such a couple can understand and tolerate each other's approach with relative ease. Couples who live together can also have fun with their children. A good illustration of this would be excited children and parents camping together.

Social network and Importance of social relationships in life

Social networks hold great importance to achieve better quality of life and happiness. As man is social animal so he can't live happy and satisfied being alone. The data has indicated that people feel happy and relaxed when they are with their families. This is an argument that social network release daily stress and health related chronic issues, also reduce the risk of mortality and negatively associated with mental functioning (Achat, et al., 1998) and positive impact of close relation and express of way of happiness (Burt, 1987)

I have strong bonding with my parents. I enjoy company of my sisters and brother. My family has supported me to develop my personality. My family is my everything. My father is my source of strength. I spend my leisure time with my children. I got involve in their activities with them. I prefer to be with my mom and children.

It can be observed that the respondent pays much attention towards being with family. The family has been provided her support, love affection and energy to live her challenging life. As this respondent is widow and she had talked about people attitude towards her (in previous theme). For her family is much important.

Social relations create harmony and community process in society for building a peaceful and happy life. The demand of happiness and quality of life can be understood by accepting the importance of social networks and social relationships. Above said views and experienced shared by the study participants are coincided with the work of Dogan,(2016), that social networking sites build upon communicative relationship through using social media and permitting psychological wellbeing, happiness and life satisfaction prologue

better harmony among member of community. In continuation of this argument (Ahmad, 2010) wrote in a book that dominance of social network concealed on better relations to promote happiness in one's life. Happier life enhances better socioeconomic conditions of people to make a cohesive relation and network by which all utilize leisure time by doing leisure activities for granting a happy life for others (Wei et al., 2016)

Positive Contribution of Norms and Values

Norms and values of society hold great importance in people's life. As a member of a society, people have to follow some norms and values. Sometimes, in modern societies people find these norms and values difficult to follow but most of these norms and values are beneficial for the people and society at large, social change in our society is also continuous process that is taking place and enhancing the importance of following societal norms and values. Norms are our behaviours that are acceptable in society, besides following these norms social order and existing structure of the society disrupts and social functions of society stops. So, value system defines what is important and worthwhile in our lives, our own judgment of what is important for oneself, or what is wrong and right, followed by societal norms impose some restriction on people to maintain societal order to avail a happy and quality life. Quality of life (QOL) as people perception of their position in society in the context of cultural value system (WHOQOL Group 1995), modulate by living condition of personal objective, and as well as level of satisfaction (Urzua and Caqueo-Urizar, 2012).

This study indicated that most of the people consider the norms and values favourable. One of the respondents held the opinion that the norms and values of society keep people active. Without the norms and values society and particularly the individual cannot spend meaningful life. One of the respondents stated that:

"In my opinion these norms are beneficial for us. These norms are here in our society to make us feel important. If an individual is left free without norms, values and rules then it will not be favourable at all. An individual can't feel his importance or worth without these norms. I think these norms keeps man active because if there are not any hurdles or rules and regulations then you will become lazy. You will not put the required energy to fulfil your tasks.

However, some respondents find it not easy to fulfil the norms. They don't consider it that much beneficial. They think some traditional norms and values affect the happiness. As one respondent stated:

To some extent, it's not possible for me to meet every societal norm. Some traditional norms are much rigid and family system affects the quality of life and happiness. To some extent people should fellow societal norms.

In connection to above findings, (Urzua et al., 2012) did a project on the importance of social and cultural values with regard to achieving quality of life, and concluded values that some are individualistic like power, achievement, hedonism and self direction, and some are collectivistic as tradition, conformity, and some are mixed as universalism and security, these values mediator and evaluators of quality of life. In continuation of this argument (Helliwell, 2014) stated that sustainable development use variety of different tools for life satisfaction and happiness. Evidence shows importance of norms with well-being benefits offer a powerful path of sustainability solution of social material problems. Another study conducted by (Nisbet et al., 2009) developed and defined a construct named "nature relatedness" constitute of variety of attitude and norms connecting to deal with interaction between human and physical environment.

Another participant sketched out another burning side of the issue and said that:

"Social norms are important to follow, but sometime state fails to produce the environment where social norms will flourish, and people might receive pressure to fulfil social guidelines to living a peaceful and prosperous life, now the state is liable to make sure good governance for social wellbeing. I always followed the guidelines in performing any task in my life, either it was related to education, health, and job etc. As opposed to my attitude, my family member asked me to adopt news way of life but I think this is good but social system can disrupt".

According to above said sketch. Previous researches limitedly highlight the importance of social norms and its variation in favouring to follow these guidelines differently on dissimilar background of people. The state is responsible for good governance through providing social opportunities including social arrangement for education, health, political and economic needs by which freedom flourishes in terms of economic development (Sen, 1999).

Physical and Spiritual wellbeing

Physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing are important to focus while studying happiness and quality of life. Almost every respondent have focused on these aspects. The data indicated that health is the major aspect to live healthy life and also the connection of people with God or with their religion that boosts up their life. People feel happy and contaminated being close to God. Every respondent held the opinion that every person should pay attention to remain healthy. Without being healthy person can't perform routine tasks actively, that makes people worried.

As one of the respondents has gone through unhealthy phase of her life, she had laid stress upon the importance of being healthy.

"Off course, health is very much important. I have neglected my health in few days back and I have to face many problems due to my bad health. Now if I get ill it takes me towards depression. Good health affects quality of life and happiness. I take care of my health care routine to get my tasks done and for avoiding depression".

Deeg (1989) identified that person who is in good 'physical appearance' and who have a lot of 'energy' also enjoys the higher happiness. Happiness of a person also changes as there is shift in physical health to the good or the bad. Reversely, happiness has also been shown to predict later health status and longevity. The happy people also enjoy good 'mental health'. Among the happy people psychological problems reports are less frequent (though not entirely absent) and they score high on measures of positive mental health, such as psycho-social development and self-actualization

While talking about connection with God and the religion she stated that:

Obviously I feel happy. The strong base with religion and strong bonding with Allah makes you happy. I like the company of religious people. The strong ties with religion will help you to be happy. I like religious people and I enjoy the company of religious people.

I didn't spend meaningless life so I don't find it meaningless. My life is fully active and energize.

While talking about the religion and God she stated that:

"At the death of my husband, first I thought why me why only me? I was very sad and hopeless. Then my friend supported me made me understand why Allah has selected me to this difficult time. By the time of 4months and 10 days I got to know the reasons behind this and it helped me a lot to stable. I was close to Allah. I felt happy by praying".

"I didn't consider my life meaningless. Allah has created for something. I have not achieved that much in my life as I wanted; but still I'm happy with my hard working.

Data indicated that people are more conscious about their health. People give importance to their health as well as they also feel happy and secure while being close to God.

Similarly, in the context of physical and spiritual wellbeing, Dolan et al. (2008) also identified that happiness of individual is affected by good physical health and also by psychological health. The better physical health and psychological health creates positive feelings in a person.

Conclusion:

The study was an attempt to improve the understanding of quality of life and happiness in context of subjective experience and about existing literature. This was very difficult to assess the concept of quality of life and happiness in Pakistani context because of multiple directions of the topic cover

different aspects of quality of life and study happiness. This sociologically understands these concepts in the context of sociological theories and personal life experiences about happiness and wellbeing. Study has concluded that social networks hold great importance to achieve better quality of life and happiness. As man is social animal so he can't live happy and satisfied being alone. The data has indicated that people feel happy and relaxed when they are with their families. Social relations create harmony and community process in society for building a peaceful and happy life. The demand of happiness and quality of life can be understood by accepting the importance of social networks and social relationships. Norms and values of society also hold great importance in people's life. As a member of a society, people have to follow some norms and values. Sometimes, in modern societies people find these norms and values difficult to follow but most of these norms and values are beneficial for the people and society at large, social change in our society is also continuous process that is taking place and enhancing the importance of following societal norms and values. The data indicated that health is the major aspect to live healthy life and also the connection of people with God or with their religion that boosts up their life. People feel happy and contaminated being close to God.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has derived some recommendations to enhance the quality of life and happiness among the people.

• The social security system needs to be improved. Public services like health care, education, transportation, social services, and the state pension system should be updated and improved for the benefit of citizens.

- In order to improve people's quality of life and ensure their happiness, the government must raise people's socioeconomic status.
- Flexible work schedules or part-time employment should be recommended to enhance income
- In order to increase citizen happiness, the government must provide better health facilities.

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