

The Comparison of Subjective Well-being among Urban and Urban-Rural Fringe Residents of Mashhad Metropolis

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Along with general health indices, policymakers have been increasingly dealing with the Subjective well-being (SWB) of society as a criterion to evaluate their performance. The objective of this study was to investigate urban-outskirts differences in SWB levels of Mashhad dwellers while focusing on different determinants of SWB.

Materials and Methods: This descriptive-cross-sectional study was conducted in the city and outskirts of Mashhad metropolis based on the data obtained from structured interviews according to a designed questionnaire with 300 people. Participants were selected using the stratified two-stage cluster sampling method. Data analysis was performed using 14.2 STATA software using Ordered Probit econometric techniques and presented the results of descriptive data analysis and correlation study between them.

Results: The mean (SD) score of SWB of the outskirts dwellers on a seven-point scale was significantly lower than urban dwellers: 2.9 (0.9) vs. 3.3 (1.0) ($P < 0.1$). The relative financial satisfaction of individuals is one of the most influential variables on the level of SWB, and a unit decrease of it decreases the probability of dissatisfaction of individuals by 6% in the whole sample ($P < 0.01$). Besides, a unit increase in the index of religious beliefs has a significant effect of 2% ($P < 0.1$) on the reduction of the probability of dissatisfaction of city dwellers, while this effect is not significant among the other group.

Conclusion: Living on the outskirts reduces the level of SWB. Being more satisfied with the financial status and that of the family, and having more positive emotions, being a woman and having academic education in the whole sample, having a more religious belief in city dwellers moreover being a woman, living with a partner and owning a property in outskirts dwellers are significant determinants.

Keywords: Subjective well-being; life Satisfaction; Outskirt Dwelling; Mashhad.

Introduction

Welfare is usually considered the ultimate goal in one's life and national policies, and its basic definition is to have a good life. Understanding and trying to increase the well-being of people in society is the leading and essential goal of social sciences. Welfare can be examined from both objective and mental dimensions. Mental well-being is a person's cognitive and emotional evaluation of their life and refers to how people experience the

evaluation of life and health (1). Thus, mental well-being is a broad concept that includes the experience of pleasant emotions, lower levels of negative mood, and greater satisfaction with one's life and mental health (2).

On the other hand, social health, the degree of satisfaction of a person from social status in society, communication system and social relations, material status, and social living conditions (3). Therefore, the social health of society is completely related to the mental

well-being of individuals. In Iran, the concept of marginalization has been defined in different ways, but among these terms, the most accepted term is the word informal settlement. In the world, in recent decades, many migrations from rural areas and small towns to metropolitan areas have taken place due to the search for more job opportunities and better incomes, resulting in increased urbanization and uneven distribution of facilities (4, 5). In fact, the growth of metropolitan areas along with the increase in population, regardless of the cultural, social, and climatic characteristics of cities, has caused damage, including due to high housing costs in metropolitan areas, informal settlements and slums are often formed on the outskirts of metropolitan areas (6). On the other hand, measuring the possible difference in the level of mental well-being of suburban and metropolitan residents can cause the policymaker to pay more attention to the problem of poverty and justice in the distribution of welfare facilities because when the level of inequality in society is high, people tend to read happily (7). The objective of this study was to compare SWB among the residents of urban areas and the urban-rural fringe of Mashhad metropolis while focusing on the determinants of SWB.

Materials and methods

This descriptive-cross-sectional study was conducted in the urban and urban-rural fringe of Mashhad metropolis based on the data obtained from structured interviews according to a designed questionnaire with 300 people. Participants were selected using the stratified two-stage cluster sampling method. Data analysis was performed using STATA 14.2 software using Ordered Probit econometric techniques and presented the results of descriptive data analysis and correlation study between them.

Results

The mean (SD) score of SWB of residents in the urban-rural fringe was significantly lower than urban residents: 2.9 (0.9) vs. 3.3 (1.0), $P < 0.01$. The relative financial satisfaction of individuals is one of the most influential variables on the level of SWB, and a unit decrease of it decreases the probability of

dissatisfaction of individuals by 6% in the whole sample ($P < 0.01$). Besides, a unit increase in the index of religious beliefs has a significant effect of 2% ($P < 0.01$) on reducing the probability of dissatisfaction of city residents. In contrast, this effect is not significant among the other group.

Discussion

The study showed that the level of mental well-being in the suburbs was significantly lower than the residents of Mashhad, consistent with the results of other studies (8, 9, 10). In all proportions, the financial satisfaction index has a strong and significant effect on mental well-being. The greatest impact among the marginalized was that a unit increase in financial satisfaction reduced the likelihood of dissatisfaction by 10%, consistent with another study (10). The results show that, in general, having a university education significantly reduces the likelihood of dissatisfaction by five percent. Religiosity only for Mashhad residents reduces the probability of dissatisfaction by 2%. According to McCullough et al. (12), more religious people are more likely to be associated with mental well-being and positive psychological consequences, including life satisfaction and happiness, and negatively associated with negative consequences such as anxiety and depression to better adaptation to living conditions. About the effect of gender and marital status in this study, in line with Dolan et al. (1), who stated that in most studies, being a woman and being married were associated with a higher level of SWB, gender and marital status in marginalized relationships. Homeownership in this study among marginalized people causes a significant increase of 12% in the likelihood of dissatisfaction, and for urban dwellers has no significant effect.

Conclusion

The study showed that the level of mental well-being of the suburbs of Mashhad is lower than the residents of this metropolis. Relative financial satisfaction of individuals, gender, having a university education, and a higher level of positive emotions in the whole sample, the level of religious beliefs only in

the sample of urbanites and gender, marriage, and homeownership among marginalized are essential factors affecting mental well-being. Assessing the mental well-being of comparison between urban and suburban residents and determining the influential factors in each group using localized indicators to measure individuals' well-being and financial status is a new and innovative aspect of this study.

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Conflict of Interest

None of the authors has any conflict of interest to disclose.

Ethical publication statement

We confirm that we have read the Journal's position on issues involved in ethical publication and affirm that this report is consistent with those guidelines.

Ethical code: IR.MODARES.REC.1398.219.

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