

EXPLORING INDICATORS FOR HAPPINESS AND ITS EFFECT TO PEOPLE'S EMOTION USING LEIQ™

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ABSTRACT

Many assumptions were made about people's dissatisfaction with their daily lives, such as debt burden, social problems, unstable economic conditions, health problems, cost of living, lack of job opportunities, lack of educational support, and so on. The positive or negative emotional experience is distinctive between individuals or groups of people who share similar life experiences. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the emotional responses of a specific population to daily obstacles that may be related to the mentioned scenarios. The Lokman's Emotion and Importance Quadrant (LEIQ)TM, which was built on axes of emotion vs. importance, was used in this study to discover the importance of the identified indicators to the people's happiness. The model is based on the idea that accurate strategies to improve people's quality of life can be devised by classifying indicators that contribute to people's emotions and understanding their importance to the people who interact with the stimuli. The findings of this study will eventually enable the identification of indicators that significantly influence people's positive or negative emotional states, which can then be used by stakeholders to devise effective strategies for future improvements.

Keywords: *Emotion; happiness; LEIQTM; quality of life; well-being*

1 INTRODUCTION

Emotion is important because it is heavily associated to the quality of people's experiences in their daily lives. The emotion differs between individuals or groups of people who share common life experiences. The pursuit of personal happiness and a higher quality of life is,

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perhaps, a basic human desire. Hence, people strive for happiness and successful, long-lasting well-being. Happiness, also known as subjective well-being, used to be a prominent focus of research. It has then evolved to the "science of happiness" and is increasingly attracting the attention of many psychologists, economists, politicians, and neuroscientists (Mahadea, 2014). Social scientists and academics investigated happiness by examining the optimization of happiness and the characteristics that contribute to a happy existence. Interpersonal connections, for example, have a significant impact on human well-being. Thus, most scientists examine the influence of friendships, family relationships, and communities on happiness (Ahmad et al., 2021; Khairuddin & Mahmud, 2020; Lokman et al., 2018; Langeland, 2014), whereas economists examine the influence of consumption, wealth, and economic growth on happiness (Dutt & Radcliff, 2009).

Many assumptions were made about people's dissatisfaction with their daily lives, such as debt burdens, social problems, unstable economic conditions, health problems, cost of living, lack of job opportunities, lack of educational support, and so on. However, scientific evidence on the indicators of negative emotions and their significance for a specific population is lacking. Hence, this study was conducted to explore a low-income community's emotional responses and feelings in the face of daily challenges that may be related to the situations mentioned above. The study aims to provide an understanding of the issues this specific population has in their daily lives, and thus become a useful guide to community leaders and other stakeholders to strategize for improvements. The study provides opportunities for the people to express their positive or negative experiences with things they face in their daily lives, describing the causes that affected their feelings and how much they were important to them.

2 LITERATURE BACKGROUND

In psychology, it is widely accepted that people have emotional responses to their immediate surroundings. For example, in marketing, the pervasive influence of emotional response in various contents, such as advertising, product consumption, and shopping, has long been recognized by marketing research (Westbrook, 1987; Batra & Ray, 1986). According to Machleit and Eroglu (2000), in their study on emotional responses to shopping experiences, shoppers come to stores with specific goals and constraints, such as recreation needs, the presence of time constraints, and a budget limit - and affective reactions occur as they work toward meeting such goals. Previous research has shown that store environments can elicit emotional responses in customers (Machleit & Eroglu, 2000; Sherman, Mathur, & Smith, 1997).

Having said that, people's emotional responses are highly subjective. Some psychological scientists and scholars questioned whether feelings simply appear in consciousness, implying that generation is an active process that consumes cognitive resources (Kron, Schul, Cohen, & Hassin, 2010). Such complex cognitions are likely to interact with emotional response, which involves its own set of distinctive thoughts in the future (Leventhal & Shcherer, 1987). Furthermore, a type of emotion that may result in emotional responses strongly and routinely shapes people's decision making. Lerner, Li, Valdesolo, and Kassam (2015), for example, state that a person who is concerned about the potential outcome of a risky choice may opt for a

safer option rather than a potentially more lucrative option. Such effects of emotional responses may eventually operate at both the conscious and unconscious levels.

Emotions play an important role in people's lives, both interpersonally and intrapersonally. As a result, emotional experiences and responses may have a significant impact on people's functioning, both positively and negatively. Causal analyses of past emotional experiences, according to Kassam and Mendes (2013), could have a significant impact on current emotional states. Reflective reasoning of a specific emotion, for example, can mitigate the negative effects of ongoing emotional experiences. As a result, it would have an impact on decisions made in the present and future.

Happiness and the experience of pleasant emotions are components of well-being. Emotional well-being also includes a cognitive assessment of overall life satisfaction (Langeland, 2014; Lamers, Westerhof, Bohlmeijer, Klooster, & Keyes, 2011). Furthermore, according to Langeland (2014), emotional well-being is a collection of indicators that reflect the presence or absence of positive feelings about life. Positive affect, happiness, and life satisfaction are all operationalizations of positive feelings or emotions. Happiness, according to Lokman, Kadir, Noordin, and Shariff (2014), is a mental or emotional state of well-being characterised by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. However, positive emotions are one of the pillars of positive psychology. Positive emotional well-being can be viewed as both the experience of emotions and the regulation of emotions. Furthermore, emotional well-being includes positive subjective experiences of the past, present, and future, as well as contentment and satisfaction related to the past. Positive subjective experiences of the present include happiness, flow, ecstasy, and sensual pleasures (Langeland, 2014).

3 METHOD

Based on previous research on emotion and its impact on decision making, productivity, and well-being, this study employed the Lokman's Emotion Importance Quadrant (LEIQ)TM. LEIQTM is a model developed on the axes of emotion vs. importance to allow classification of emotion, the indicators influencing the emotion, and the importance of the emotion to the people who interact with things in their daily lives. Classifying the indicators that influence the people's emotions and understanding their significance to the people is important so that suitable strategies for improvements can be devised.

This study required respondents to complete two phases of activities: i) Step One - LEIQTM, and ii) Step Two - Well-being Survey. Step One - LEIQTM asked respondents to provide feedback on issues that affect emotions in their daily lives, both negatively and positively. Every respondent was given one LEIQTM quadrant and was asked to quietly brain write the issues onto each quadrant of the empty quadrant, indicating whether the matters make them happy or unhappy. The data obtained from this process were then synthesized into patterns that make sense in related emotion, and then thematically analyzed to discover indicators that affect their happiness in their daily lives, as well as the importance of the indicators to the emotional

responses. This enables the identification of which indicators significantly influence people's positive or negative emotional states.

Subsequently, every respondent was given one well-being Survey template, and they were asked to quietly tick and mark their choices, whether they are happy or not happy with the subject matters. The survey consists of 6 key areas concerning the public, including public transport, infrastructure, cost of living, education, safety, and anti-corruption, which were part of the focus in the country's national key result areas.

The respondents were invited among low-income groups in the country, in which the community of interest were purposively selected by the local government prior to the invitation. Members of the community (n=1793) physically attended the data collection session and were given a token of appreciation to compensate for their time commitment and cooperation.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of LEIQ™: People's Happiness

The LEIQ™ quadrant was used in the study to discover people's emotions towards things they experience in their daily lives. The data was coded according to patterns and thematically analyzed. The resulting themes were then visualized into a word cloud according to each quadrant with four different parts (Figure 1), which are Q1 – Most Important Problems; Q2 – Problems but Less Important; Q3 – Happy and Important; and Q4 – Happy but Less Important. According to the data in Q1, financial, expensive goods, cost of living, money, and GST is among what matters most and bring negative effect to their well-being.

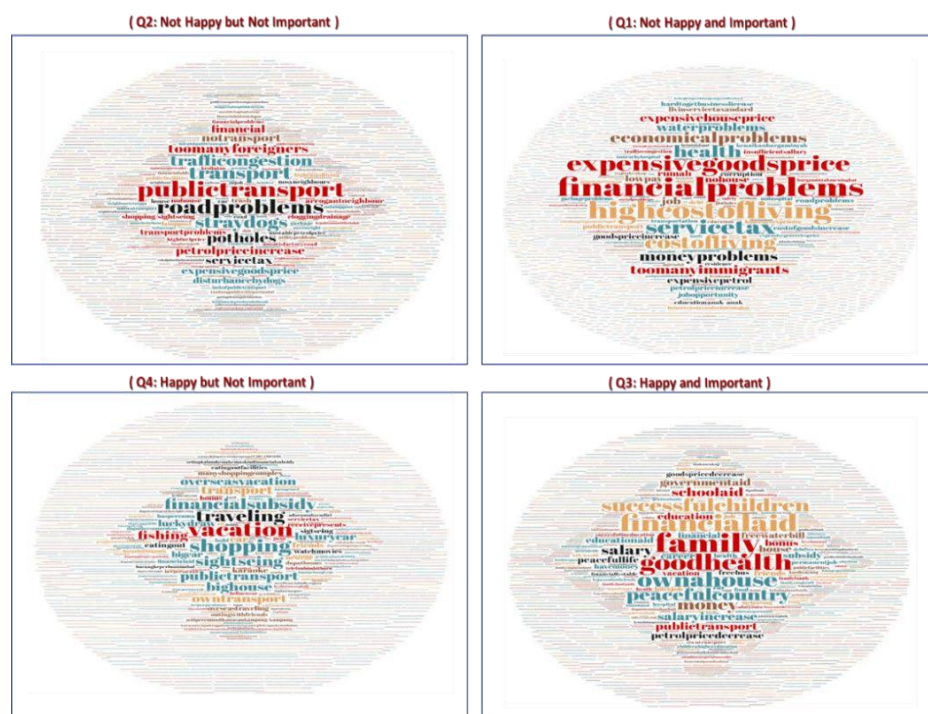


Figure 1. People's Happiness vs. Importance

Meanwhile, as illustrated in Q2, public transports, damaged roads and traffic congestion show or to be the highest concern to the respondents but less crucial as compared to indicators articulated in Q1. On the other hand, as shown in Q3, family, cash incentive, good health and successful children are indicators that profoundly affect their positive well-being in their daily lives, while travel, holiday and cash incentive also have some significance to their happiness, as shown in Q4.

4.2 Analysis of People's Well-being

The survey was based on public concern about public transportation, infrastructure, cost of living, education, safety, and anti-corruption, all of which were emphasized in the country's national key result areas. Descriptive analysis was conducted to understand the level of the people's experience, both positively and negatively, which affects their well-being in relation to these indicators.

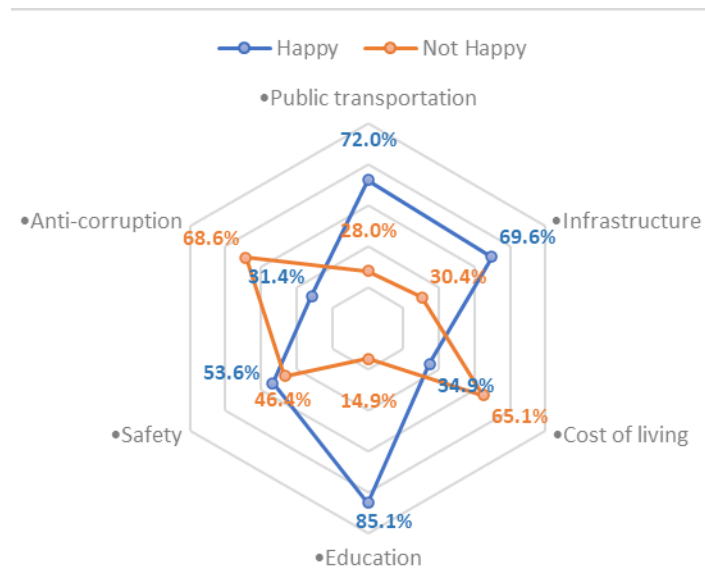


Figure 2. The people's wellbeing based on 6 key-areas.

Figure 2 shows that 68.6 percent of respondents negatively perceive the anti-corruption area, which ranks at the top of the list. On the aspect of the cost of living, 65.1 percent of respondents were negative, and 34.9 percent of respondents were positive. Education, on the other hand, had the highest percentage of positive respondents (85.1 percent) as compared to negative respondents (14.9 percent). When it comes to the public transportation area, there were 72 percent of positive respondents and 28 percent of negative respondents. There were 69.6 percent of positive respondents and 30.4 percent of negative respondents for the infrastructure area, and 53.6 percent of positive respondents and 46.4 percent of negative respondents for the safety area. These results provide insights to the state of the people's well-being and, in which could facilitate stakeholders' strategy for future improvements in each area.

5 CONCLUSION

The study employed the LEIQ™ model to enable the classification of indicators that affect people's emotion, the influence of those indicators to people's positive or negative emotion, and the significance of these indicators to the people's happiness. A case study was done among low-income population to explore their emotional responses towards daily living experience that may be related to their well-being issues.

The LEIQ™ model was adopted with careful attention to cooperative attitude and engagement among respondents and facilitated by moderators. The case study resulted large amounts of opinions and issues, and enabled the research to organize them thematically into their natural patterns, such as environment, welfare, and financial matters. These results could be used as a clue for decision makers to prioritize indicators that significantly influence people's emotion in the effort to elevate well-being and thus increase people's happiness and productivity be it at work or daily lives, and ultimately contribute to positive well-being at large. Further investigation and analysis could be proposed to provide opportunities to extend the findings, in which could contribute to accuracy and effectiveness of clues for future improvement strategies. Comparative research on higher income group is also recommended in order to provide solid foundation for scholarly discussion on similarities and differences of issues and importance, thus facilitate possible generalization of the findings.

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