

Investigation of Life Satisfaction and Effective Factors affecting on it Among Citizens of Iran

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Abstract

This article investigates life satisfaction and factors affecting it. Statistical population of this research includes citizens of Tehran (2007), that a number of 600 people were selected as a sample size on the basis of cluster sampling and with regard to regions. Theoretical framework and field findings of present texture shows that there is a high correlation with amount (0/60) between feeling of security and life satisfaction. Results of path analysis show that security feeling variable has effect on life satisfaction with path coefficient 0/45. Therefore, we can refer to considerable contribution of organizations such as police, disciplinary force and welfare organizations in creation and establishment of security among people. But after security feeling variable, other variables respectively including feeling of deprivation with coefficient 0/14, trust to efficiency of practitioners with coefficient 0/11, fulfillment of needs with coefficient 0/11 and social trust with coefficient 0/10 have effect on social satisfaction. Meanwhile, comparison of variables shows that all variables, except for feeling of relative deprivation, have increasing effect on life satisfaction and it means that with increasing each of them, rate of satisfaction feeling is also increased. On the contrary, if feeling of relative deprivation among people is increased, rate of life satisfaction will be decreased. Amount of determination coefficient (R^2) or estimated variance by above variables on life satisfaction is equal to 0/53 that shows all of these variables have been able to explain more than half of life satisfaction variance.

Introduction of the Institution

Faragostar Rahbord Danesh Institution, as a NGO, after receiving of train and investigation certificate in 2005, registered No.2218, have done a lot of training and pertaining to research activities in management and social sciences. This institution held several training courses in the field of management and social sciences (including manager training course), and it is working as an associate institution with Rahbord Peimayesh institution in the field of investigation plans.

Explanation of the Present Conditions

Firstly, some definitions of life satisfaction are given as follows:

In his book, "Cultural Development in Modern Industrialized Countries", Inglehart defined satisfaction feeling which is the reflection of balance between personal desires and personal actual situation (Inglehart, 1994: 241).

Human is an objective creature always evaluating his life situation. He will feel no satisfaction until he attains his goals. Perhaps it can be said that the final aspiration of every human being is to attain his goals and desires (It is worth noting that desired goals and desires have their root in the situation a person reaches to as a result of his interaction with others and his immediate situation) Thus, today, all developed countries care about their citizens to be satisfaction since it became clear that life-satisfaction has a high correlation with social and economic development (Inglehart, 1994: 33).

In fact; satisfaction helps us much in coping with our difficulties .We, all, are inevitable to face with difficulties, accept new responsibilities and adapt ourselves to the changes happening around

us .Even strong characters are under its pressure .The ability to achieve satisfaction makes an individual powerful to cope with his difficulties.(Safdari,1995: 7).

Maslow as a psychologist believed that human needs as a kind of instincts, especial to human beings and not found in any other animals. Maslow’s opinions about human needs and hierarchy of needs are of high importance, although most psychologists have already addressed the subject of human needs. For this purpose we will, firstly, discuss Maslow’s opinions in the following.

According to Maslow’s theory, human needs are divided into the five following groups:

- 1- Physiological Needs
- 2- Safety needs
- 3- Social Needs
- 4- Esteem Needs
- 5- Self Actualization Needs

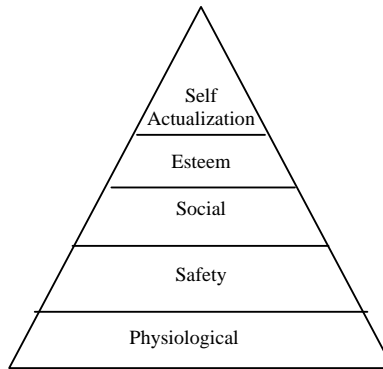


Figure (1) Hierarchy of Needs

In his theory and throughout his book “Stimulation and Personality”, Maslow introduced the concept of “satisfaction” equal to needs satisfaction which includes states as awareness, strength, quickness, joy and reward.

Physiological needs includes needs such as food, clothing, dwelling, health, all of which human being has to meet in order to continue his life. All of them can individually be examined In social studies for the assessment of individuals current situations. Compared with upper level needs, physiological needs are more limited, concrete, conscious and evident. Maslow knew those needs as the most important ones and put them at the top of hierarchy. He believed that most human activities would be met and enable his body system to work. It is only in this case that other human activities will give him stimulation.

After that one level of needs were met, needs of other levels will become significant. They are these latter needs which dominate the individual behavior until we reach to the lowest level of hierarchy.

Another theory about life satisfaction is “Relative Deprivation”. The theory believes that an individual generally compares himself with others .Thus whenever he feels poverty and injustice, he will show severe emotional reactions such as job changes, disobedience, suicide...etc. When this feeling reaches high, it will lead to serious social conflict.

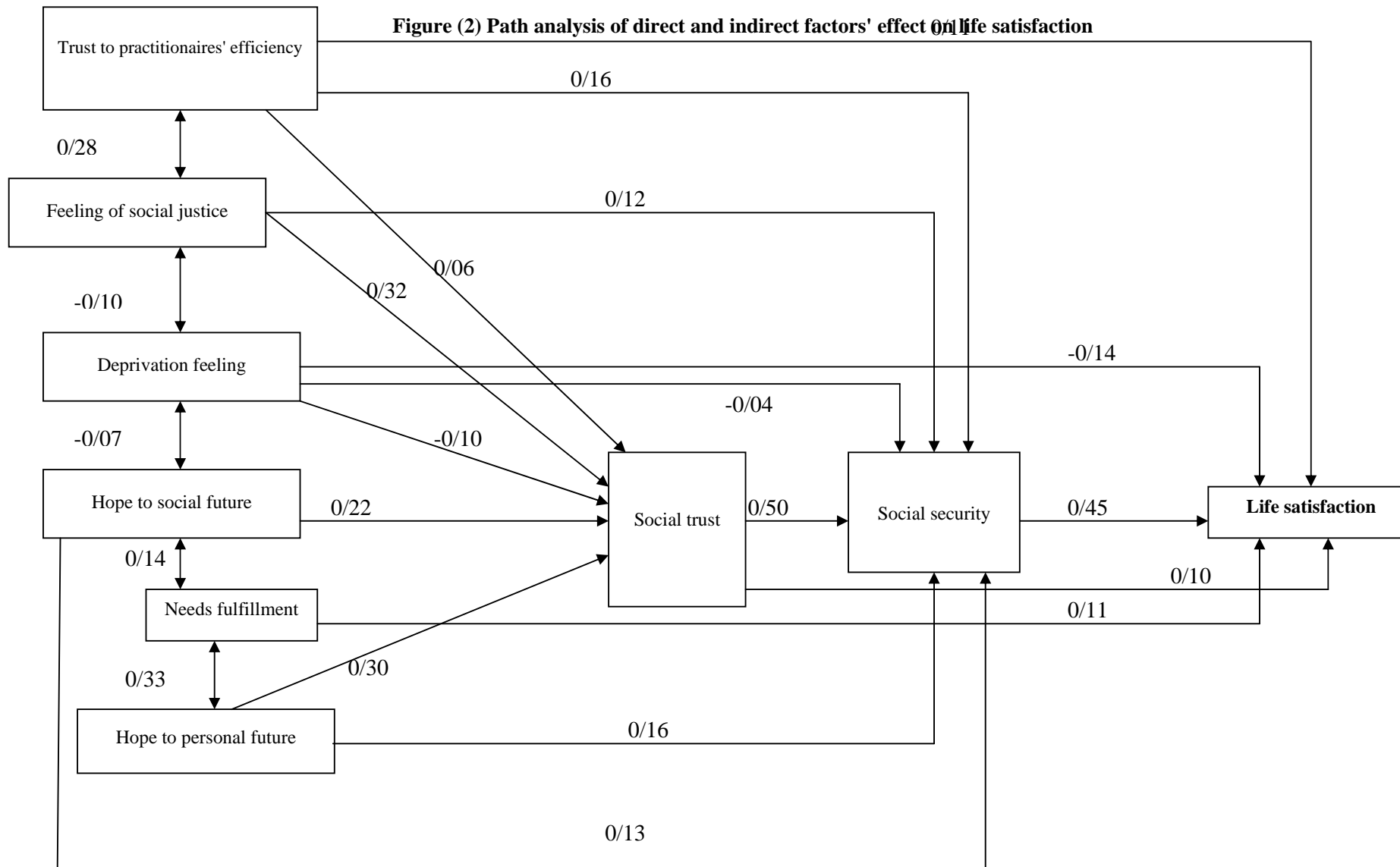
In general, according to the theory, an individual compares himself with others and reference group. He likes to have similar conditions as others .If he perceives, as the result of comparison, that his rewards and situation, according to his efforts and money spent, is unfair and injustice, he will feel relative deprivation .This will lead to personal and social dissatisfaction

The present section deals with existing situation in form of diagram of path analysis. The consequences of this diagram show that in order to increase rate of satisfaction from life, The must pay attention to following Cases:

- 1- Feeling of social security (security & safety in the fields of public environment of society, physical and financial)
- 2- Hopefulness about social future (clear outlook among people about the future of society or hopeful to improve situations in different spheres.
- 3- Being hopeful for future in individual level (hopefulness for improving individual conditions such as situation of occupation, revenue.
- 4- Social trust (in first level, trust to relatives and close friends and in second level to individuals of society)
- 5- Political trust or trust to efficiency of practitioners (trust to capability of practitioners regarding to given responsibilities)
- 6- Feeling of social justice (feeling of distributive justice in the field of facilities and positions among people)
- 7- Rate of needs fulfillment (including initial and secondary needs such as eating, clothing to self-esteem and self-actualization among people)
- 8- Feeling of relative deprivation in comparison with others in the field of material and non-material facilities and self role and position in society
- 9- Rate of commitment to religious beliefs (the rate of beliefs to religious instructions and observance of religious rites)

Of course, interpretation of path analysis diagram has been presented in appendix 1.

Figure (2) Path analysis of direct and indirect factors' effect on life satisfaction



Methodology

This research is from the kind of correlational investigations that test relationship between variables and survey method was used in performance of present research. It is necessary to explain that used technique in field section is questionnaire method. Population of this research including people whose age is higher than 20 in Tehran city But sample size of research is 600 persons which was obtained Qochran formula. In the case of sampling method, it must be noted that regarding to existing differences and inequalities in Tehran city, it was tried in present research to divide the city in five territories and then one municipality region has been selected for each territory, meant by in north territory (third region), south territory (nineteen region), east territory (eighth region), west territory (twenty second region) and center territory (tenth region). In this research, satisfaction in two macro dimensions: 1) individual (individual and family dimensions) and 2) super individual or social (such as satisfaction from environment of public moral principles of society, political satisfaction and economic satisfaction were considered.

Challenging and obstacles

Generally, I.R. of Iran's Constitutional Law has special considerations on peoples' satisfaction and rights. So, present research investigates this issue among people. Obtained results from mean satisfaction score which it's range from 0 to 5 varies shows that rate of satisfaction from individual circumstances (with mean score 3/6) is more than rate of satisfaction in social domain with mean score 2/72) and totally rate of satisfaction in country is higher than medium level and but results of national researches and surveys show that rate of social satisfaction is decreasing and in other words, people try to do planning for their personal future and with regard to increasing rate of education, attention to health situation and etc, enhance the rate of their individual satisfaction. Of course, compensation theory confirms the same topic. Because on the basis of this theory, if people feel dissatisfied or deprived in one domain, they try to enhance their own circumstance with effort in another domain. As a result, it's purpose not to have so much interval between existing and desirable situation in the field of satisfaction from life.

Recommendations

According to results of path analysis, it was determined that variable of security feeling has high effect on social satisfaction (Appendix 2). Therefore, creation of security in society and among public people must be studied as key variable.

Feeling of security among people can have considerable influence on enhancing social satisfaction and participation. As a result, it was proposed that military organizations (especially security force and 110 police) must continue their activities seriously in this field. Because if insecurity feeling among some people (or even in some fields) is created, insecurity feeling among all people in the form of geometrical ascending will be immediately spreaded out and as a result, it will be widespread in all society.

Another recommendation of this research emphasizes on attention of practitioners and organizations to people's needs and desires. In this field, we must say that efficiency of each organization is the most important factor in absorption of people's trust to organization, because result of studies shows that continuation of organizations life depends on all people's satisfaction from them. Therefore, organizations must respect to people's needs and do activity to achieve collective purposes.

Results and Viewpoint

Regarding to results, it was observed that rate of individual satisfaction has increasing trend and as a whole rate of satisfaction in this domain is more than dissatisfaction but in relation to super individual domain (social field)life satisfaction has descending trend. Of course, in this field so much analysis in the book has been done including workshop analysis survey of Iranian values and

approaches and satisfaction from life and the social assessment which is very important because it was mentioned in this analysis that in Iran some measurements cause to increase human development indicators such as increase and spreading out of education and higher training spreading out of possibility in social and classified mobility and adoption of policies that is led to expanding of middle class practically and it causes to increase individual satisfaction but in addition to numerous change and increase of cultural and social organized structures and incompatibility with countries managerial organization with social and cultural changes have been caused that public environment of society needs to have so much favorable condition and in other words increase of city population boosts unfavorable environment every day at course in addition to above cases .It has been emphasized on becoming media of public environment (influence of media and framework of increasing expectation among people that all of the factors show that rate of social satisfaction has been had conversed direction with individual satisfaction) so its essential to create logical proportion between individual and social satisfaction considering above cases and in the future we can see increase rate of satisfaction in 2 fields.

Appendix 1: findings based on path analysis

The fundamental & final dependent variable of this research is 'life satisfaction'. This section deals with the results of testing path analysis for factors affect on satisfaction. Before expressing of these results, it must be noted that independent variables affect on life satisfaction (as a dependent variable) by three different methods: (A) purely direct effect, (B) purely indirect effect, and (C) both direct & indirect effects as well as with different beta coefficients. In following paragraphs, relative contribution of each independent variable in these methods has been studied.

A) Variables directly affect satisfaction.

3 variables among independent variables directly affect life satisfaction that their quality & effect rate are as following:

1. Social security variable is the first one with 0/45 path coefficient which has the most influence on satisfaction. It shows that the rate of satisfaction increases regarding the increase of social security in society, and vice versa. It is necessary to say that this variable immediately appears in regression equation as the medium dependent variable following satisfaction variable. The effect of other variables on social security variable was studied; as a result social security has no indirect effect on satisfaction. In general, social security is the most important variable affects satisfaction variable variance.

B) Variables indirectly affect satisfaction.

Considering research finding on factors affecting satisfaction, five variables among all of the independent variables purely affect satisfaction indirectly. (due to other Variables such as social trust & security)

1. Social justice feeling variable affects satisfaction with 0/12 path coefficient through social security variable as well as 0/32 path coefficient through social trust. It shows that security & trust feeling increase as the people have positive attitudes towards justice trend in a society. In addition, along with increasing these two variables, the satisfaction rate would be more in comparison with the situation that they feel justice and trust in lower level.

2. Hope for social future variable with 0/22 path coefficient through trust variable has an increasing effect on peoples satisfaction. It shows that life satisfaction increases as the rate of hope for social future and trust feeling improves. As a result, the people who lose their hope for future have less satisfaction.

3. Hope for personal future variable with 0/30 path coefficient through trust variable and having 0/16 path coefficient with regard to social security variable has increasing effect on people satisfaction. This result shows that satisfaction rate increases as the rate of hope for personal future, feeling of trust and security improves among people.

3. Variables affect satisfaction both directly & indirectly.

In addition to variables mentioned above, there are other variables affect on life satisfaction both directly & indirectly .The quality of these variables affect the basis of their rate are as following:

1. The deprivation feeling variable directly has decreasing effect on life satisfaction (0/14 path coefficient) while this variable through security feeling variable (with -0/04 path coefficient) and trust variable (with -0/10 path coefficient) has decreasing effect on life satisfaction. It shows that as the rate of deprivation feeling increases in a society, security feeling and trust and finally satisfaction rate are expected to decrease.

2. Trust in efficiency of practitioners with 0/11 path coefficient directly affects life satisfaction. However, this variable through feeling of security (with 0/16 path coefficient) and social trust (with 0/06 path coefficient) has increasing effect on life satisfaction. This effect shows that as the rate of trust in practitioners increases in a society, satisfaction rate is expected to increase.

3. The result of needs fulfillment in a direct way with 0/11 path coefficient & through security feeling variable with 0/08 path coefficient indicated that the rate of security & life satisfaction increases as the society highly satisfies the needs of all members.

Appendix 2: It must be noted that the research was made in 1974 by Asadi, under the support of The Research Centre of Social Sciences and Iran's Development. The research had been accomplished in 23 cities and 52 villages. In 1995, a research was carried out on awareness, attitudes and cultural-social behaviors in Iran by Dr. Manouchehr Mohseni, under the support of the council of Public culture. It was conducted in 15 cities of Iran. Making the survey of Iranian values and attitudes was officially approved by Islamic Council Majlis in 1999. The survey is going to be made every two years by National Projects Office of Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance. Hitherto, two waves of the project were made.

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