



EFFECTS OF GENDER, LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND STUDENTS' RESIDENCE ON SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS AND QUALITY OF LIFE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Economists often use the term *quality of life* to measure the livability of a given city or nation. It is the general well-being of the society and it should not be confused with the standard of living which is basically based on income. Quality of life is an important concept in the field of economic development, since it allows development to be analyzed on a measure broader than standard of living. Along with the economic factors we should concentrate on the subjective factors for a detailed analysis of the improvement of the quality of life. It is the common belief that people with high socioeconomic status must have better quality of life. But the fact may differ if we concentrate on the qualitative indicators of quality of life along with the quantitative indicators that are considered in socioeconomic status. The present study tried to explore whether socioeconomic status and quality of life does have any influence on gender, education and region. In today's world this study demand a high values for a critical analysis of economic development.

Key words: Socio Economic Status, Quality of Life, Standard of Living, Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

In today's world a country is said to be developed when every section of people in that particular country are well fed, well clothed, could access variety of commodities, could enjoy luxury of some leisure and entertainment and live in a healthy environment, i.e., overall wellbeing of a society or improvement in the quality of life. Better quality of life could be achieved through quantitative and qualitative changes in an existing economy. It is very tempting to suggest that material wellbeing or quantitative changes could be captured very well by the growth of per capita income. However growth in per capita income does not mean the improvement in the quality of life. Improvement in the quality of life involve the development of human

capital, increasing the literacy ratio, improvement of important infrastructure, improvement of health and safety i.e., the qualitative changes have become essential for increasing the general wellbeing of a society. It is the common belief that people with high socioeconomic status must have better quality of life. But many literatures have justified the fact that people with high socioeconomic status are in a worse condition. So higher socioeconomic status does not necessarily mean a better quality of life. This view is very true if we concentrate on the indicators of quality of life and the socioeconomic status. The economic conditions of people are generally characterized by socioeconomic status (SES, hereafter) and this status is evaluated as a combination of factors including income, level of education, and occupation. All the three socioeconomic factors are quantifiable in nature and constitute a subset of quality of life. At this point one could argue that a person with high SES could have a better quality of life. However a critical analysis will reveal the negative part that an individual with high SES could face. For example a working woman in a doubled income family have high SES but her children could suffer from malnutrition or the woman herself is overpressured with her duties. Concentrating only on the women we could say that the quality of life is not very satisfactory. She has taken excess pressure and in a way she is mentally disturbed. From the study, we know that mental illness is one of the health indicators of economic development. Therefore along with the economic factors we should concentrate on the subjective factors for a detailed analysis of the improvement of the quality of life. In today's world this study demand a high values for a critical analysis of economic development.

Numerous studies have documented that quality of life plays an increasingly important role in economic growth and economic development (*Dissartand Deller, Halstead and Deller, Rudzitis*). In a detailed review of the literature, Gottlieb in his paper has suggested that the argument for using amenity attributes as an economic growth tool appears powerful. *Jac C. Heckelman* (2000) by using Granger Causality tests as a tool tried to establish a causal relation between economic freedom and economic growth. The findings of his study are very relevant as he explores the fact that greater economic freedom leads to greater economic growth. *Green* (2001) in his paper has focused primarily on the effects of social and economic restructuring in rural areas. In the study he has explored the characteristics and nature of amenities and their strong relationship with economic development and growth. The author has reviewed many literatures on the effects of amenities on population and employment growth. *Ruut Veenhoven* (2005) in his paper has mentioned that Quality-of-life in nations can be measured if we concentrate on how long and happy people live. This is on subjective enjoyment of life as a whole. In the study he has mentioned that measure of 'apparent' quality-of-life is a good alternative to current indexes of 'assumed' quality-of-life such as the Human Development Index. He has done a cross sectional studies considering 67 nations in 1990s. In the study he has found that the number of Happy – Life – Years varies considerably across nations. Happy lifetime has risen considerably in advanced nations over the last decade. In the study he concluded that people live longer and happier in nations characterised by economic affluence, freedom and justice. Together these three societal qualities explain 66% of the cross-national variance in Happy-Life-Years. Income equality and generous social security do not appear to be required for a long and happy life. *Ruut Veenhoven* (1999) in his paper reports an empirical test that quality of life is poor in individualized society. For the study he has taken 43 nations in the early 1990's. In the paper individualization has been measured by three aspects: 1) moral

appreciation of individualism, 2) opportunity to choose, and 3) capability to choose. Overall individualization in the paper is measured by means of an expert-estimate. Subjective appreciation of life of a citizen in a nation has been considered as a measure of quality of life. After a detailed analysis the author has concluded that more individualized a nation the better the quality of life. Positive correlations appear only among the most knowledgeable and prosperous nations. The relationship appears to be contingent to level of education and economic prosperity.

From the review of various literatures on quality of life we have found that most of them are related to health. Some authors have done cross sectional studies for a given time period. Also we have found some studies which are based on specific regions. However studies at grass root level are very limited in number. In the present paper we have tried to analyze the effects of SES and quality of life on education, gender and the residence of the sample. In the study we have focused on the education sector as this sector is one of the important indicators of SES and quality of life. Education plays a major role in skill sets for acquiring jobs, as well as specific qualities. Higher levels of education are associated with better economic and psychological outcomes (i.e.: more income, more control, and greater social support and networking) and hence better wellbeing.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the socio economics status and quality of life of the students.
- To study the effect of gender, level of education and students residence on socio economics status and quality of life.
- To assess the relationship between socio economics status and quality of life among students.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were framed to achieve the above mentioned objectives.

- H₀1-There will be no difference between boy and girl students in respect to socio economics status.
- H₀2-There will be no difference between boy and girl students in respect to quality of life.
- H₀3-There will be no difference between students studying in urban and semi-urban in respect of socio economics status.
- H₀4- There will be no difference between students studying in urban and semi-urban in respect of quality of life.
- H₀5-There will be no difference among students studying in school, college and university level in respect of socio economics status.
- H₀6- There will be no difference among students studying in school, college and university level in respect of quality of life.
- H₇- There will be positive correlation between scores of socio economic status and quality of life.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research approach by using survey method and 2X2X3 factorial design.

Sample and Population

The sample of the study consisted of 150 students of age group 15- 25 years (75 boys and 75 girls) studying in school, colleges and university level in Kolkata. The sample group comprised student's residence in urban and semi-urban areas. In our study we have considered stratified purposive sampling due to short time period.

Instruments

Kuppuswamy's scale of Socio Economic Status, 2010 was used to find the score of socio economic conditions. The scale has twelve profiles and every profile contained five alternatives. A standardized scale was used to find the score of quality of life. This particular scale was developed and standardized by researchers. The validity and reliability for both the scales were tested through a tetra-choric correlation and test-retest methods.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The descriptive statistics of the two types of variables namely SES and QOL are shown in the Table No. 1.

Table No.-1: Showing the Means and SDs of the scores of QOL and SES

			SES	QOL
Gender	Girls	Mean	40.45	28.23
		N	75	75
		Std. Deviation	4.357	6.783
	Boys	Mean	40.47	27.41
		N	75	75
		Std. Deviation	4.595	6.595
Residence	Urban	Mean	42.18	30.76
		N	45	45
		Std. Deviation	3.459	5.816
	Semi-Urban	Mean	39.72	26.56
		N	105	105
		Std. Deviation	4.652	6.655
Level	School	Mean	41.17	29.38
		N	53	53
		Std. Deviation	3.407	5.749
	College	Mean	40.4	27.93

		N	58	58
		Std. Deviation	4.945	7.31
	University	Mean	39.59	25.54
		N	39	39
		Std. Deviation	4.903	6.39
Total		Mean	40.46	27.82
		N	150	150
		Std. Deviation	4.463	6.68

Table-2: Showing the ANOVA Results of the SES Scores in Respect of Gender, Residence and Qualification

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	354.224 ^a	8	44.278	2.389	0.019
Intercept	104300.2	1	104300.2	5.63E+03	0
Gender	13.501	1	13.501	0.729	0.395
Residence	115.81	1	115.81	6.249	0.014
Qualification	29.249	2	14.624	0.789	0.456
Gender * Residence	2.599	1	2.599	0.14	0.709
Gender * Qualification	21.047	2	10.524	0.568	0.568
Residence * Qualification	9.951	1	9.951	0.537	0.465
Gender * Residence * Qual	0	0	.	.	.
Error	2613.036	141	18.532		
Total	248519	150			
Corrected Total	2967.26	149			
a. R Squared = .119 (Adjusted R Squared = .069)					

From the above table, it can be concluded that SES statistically significant differences were established in SES scores among urban and semi-urban but no such difference was there between students of girls and boys and also three type's qualification. Hence, H₀₃ was rejected and H₀₁ & H₀₅ were accepted.

Table-3: Showing the ANOVA Results of the QOL Scores in Respect of Gender, Residence and Qualification

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	791.466 ^a	8	98.933	2.382	0.019
Intercept	51007.62	1	51007.62	1.23E+03	0
Gender	0.405	1	0.405	0.01	0.922
Residence	170.839	1	170.839	4.113	0.044
Qualification	103.597	2	51.799	1.247	0.29
Gender * Residence	0.623	1	0.623	0.015	0.903
Gender * Qualification	42.978	2	21.489	0.517	0.597
Residence * Qualification	17.57	1	17.57	0.423	0.516
Gender * Residence * Qualification	0	0	.	.	.
Error	5856.674	141	41.537		
Total	122741	150			
Corrected Total	6648.14	149			
a. R Squared = .119 (Adjusted R Squared = .069)					

Table No 3 also depicts the same result. QOL statistically significant differences were established in QOL scores among urban and semi-urban, but no such difference was there between students of girls and boys and also three type's qualification. Hence, H₀₄ was rejected and H₀₂ & H₀₆ were accepted.

Table-4 Showing the Relation between SES Scores and QOL Scores

		Economic	Life
Economic	Pearson Correlation	1	.183*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.025
	N	150	150
Life	Pearson Correlation	.183*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.025	
	N	150	150
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

It may be concluded that significant positive correlation exists between SES score and QOL scores. Thus H₀₇ is accepted.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analysis we have seen that high SES and better quality of life does not necessarily imply that economy is on the path of development. In the study we have seen that a region specific gap still exists in the economy. When a comparison is made between people living in urban and semi urban areas a completely different picture appeared. Though people in semi urban areas have standard life but they felt somewhat insecure in comparison to people living in urban areas. In millennium development goal it has been highlighted that there should not exist such type of gap for inclusive growth. All round development of the economy could only be achieved when every section of population belonging from urban and semi urban could enjoy the fruits of economic development.

With the millennium development goal in mind the policy makers need to consider policies that address urban semi urban inequalities. The policies that have been adopted for economic development by the Government could be revised and reframed in the light of the present perspective. An extensive study thus becomes essential to identify the factors that are widening the gap between regions in the path of economic development.

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