



ROLE OF FAMILY IN WOMEN'S LIFE SATISFACTION: A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY WITH EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

The family support and peer relations can play important role in women's life satisfaction through stress management, goal attainment, and social integration. Philosophically, the family is considered a site for moral development, care, and relational autonomy. In this view, family is both a source of support and a relational context in which the capabilities that underlie flourishing are cultivated. The present paper analyses family's role in women's life satisfaction. By combining empirical evidence with philosophical insights, the study argues that supportive family relationships lead to higher life satisfaction. The family plays a key role in happiness and also shapes skills, resilience, and independence.

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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.70096/tssr.260401044>

Keywords: *Family; life satisfaction; mental health; women; Philosophical perspective*

Introduction

The human person is not an isolated, self-enclosed substance but a being whose identity is constituted through lasting relations. In this regard, the family is not a peripheral social institution but an essential ontological environment wherein subjectivity is produced, sustained, and validated. The family is a primary source of emotional, moral, and social support. For women it may be regarded as the primary context in which emotional, moral, and social capabilities are nurtured. The quality of family and peer relations is important to women's stress management, goal attainment, and social integration. Mental health, as a philosophical concept, is more than the absence of distress or the presence of pleasure; it is inextricably bound to the actualization of human potential in ethical, social, and relational terms. From an economic perspective, these relations are considered a part of social capital. Philosophically, the family is considered a site for moral development, care, and relational autonomy. In this view, family is both a source of support and a relational context in which the capabilities that underlie flourishing are cultivated. An understanding of mental health must take into account the ethical and relational aspects of family life, and those social policies promoting a supportive family environment are important for subjective well-being as well as the conditions of human flourishing. Against this background the present paper makes an analysis of a family's role in women's life satisfaction. It also integrates some empirical observations to substantiate the analysis.

Empirical observation and philosophical interpretation

This paper explores the relationship between family's role in terms of moral support extended from member(s) and self-reported life satisfaction. We have surveyed 160 women residing in the villages of Purulia I and Purulia II blocks of Purulia district (West Bengal). Based on Argyle and Hill (2002), we asked the respondents to respond the following statements by choosing any one of 'agree', 'partly agree', or 'disagree':

'Life is very rewarding/ Life is good'.

'I am leading my life the way I have always wanted'

Besides, to evaluate the family support we asked: *'Do you have any family member(s) on whom you can rely on specially during the time you need moral support?'*

The study had also covered few questions on their other socio-economic conditions. The empirical evidences¹ suggest that a positive association between supportive family relations and life satisfaction. The finding that higher quality family support is

associated with higher levels of life satisfaction is best understood not as an individualistic accomplishment; rather it is a triumph of a combination of relational, virtue-ethical, and communitarian approaches.

The association between high levels of familial support and high levels of life satisfaction is more than simply a function of practical support; it is an index of the degree to which a woman experiences herself to be recognized, valued, and firmly situated within a web of mutually supportive relationships. Satisfaction, in this sense, is more than hedonic pleasure; it is the phenomenological correlate of ontological affirmation.

The family plays a key role in happiness and also shapes skills, resilience, and independence. It promotes social, moral, and psychological functions that are vital for thriving. Human well-being depends on relationships because thriving happens in supportive and ethical environments. Policies should promote family unity and support networks among peers as a solid base for mental health. While life satisfaction is useful for research, thriving involves skills, independence, and relationship-building that go beyond just happiness.

From an Aristotelian perspective, the achievement of flourishing (eudaimonia) is not only dependent on the possession of virtues but also on the attainment of “external goods” such as supportive and stable relationships. Family support is one such enabling resource that offers emotional security and moral support for the exercise of virtue and the realization of one’s potential. The care ethic perspective also validates this notion by emphasizing the vulnerability and interdependence of human beings, implying that psychological well-being is attained through secure and reciprocal care. In this respect, the family becomes a significant location of recognition and care, which fosters resilience and a sense of stable identity and self-worth. The communitarian perspective also argues that human beings derive significance from their embeddedness in communities that influence their identities and values. In this respect, the family becomes a fundamental “community of character” that offers narrative coherence and a sense of belonging. Hence, the finding that family support is linked to life satisfaction resonates with the philosophical notion that well-being is necessarily entwined with the quality and stability of one’s relational context.

Philosophically, all traditions come to a similar conclusion regarding the relational constitution of self, and the quality of formative relations as being structurally necessary for flourishing. The survey evidence not only establishes a sociological trend, but also confirms a more fundamental anthropological thesis, that life satisfaction is not merely an individual psychological phenomenon, but rather that it emerges from a relational achievement, or, that it is a reflection of the success with which one is integrated into, sustained by, and recognized within a functional web of familial relations.

Concluding Remarks

Family and peer relationships are crucial to women’s mental health. They improve subjective well-being and create the conditions for personal growth. Survey evidence shows that better family support leads to higher life satisfaction. This paper places these findings within a framework inspired by eudemonic ethics, care theory, and capability-oriented approaches. By combining empirical evidence with philosophical insights, the study argues that supportive family relationships contribute not only to increased subjective well-being but also to the ethical and social roots of flourishing. Philosophically, family helps develop capabilities, autonomy, and resilience. Policies and social programs that strengthen supportive family and peer environments can enhance both the ethical and practical aspects of mental health, further promoting the well-being and flourishing of women.

Acknowledgment: No

Author’s Contribution: Anita Banerjee: Analysis, Drafting, Referencing; Souvik Dasgupta: Data Collection, Methodology, Drafting

Funding: No

Declaration: All the authors have given consent for the publication.

Competing Interest: No

Endnote

¹ The empirical results are derived from an Ordered Logit regression. The detail result (table) is not mentioned here.

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