

Subjective Well-Being of Working Mothers: A Photovoice Study

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Abstract. Working mothers are required to take care of household chores, educate children, and complete tasks at work. The dual role will affect the subjective well-being of working mothers. The subjective well-being aspects studied were global life satisfaction and life satisfaction in specific domains, especially the work and family domains. This study aims to identify the subjective well-being of working mothers. This research is a qualitative study that uses the photovoice data collection method. The inclusion criteria are working mothers with permanent jobs, children under 10 years of age, living in Kupang City, and being willing to become research participants. There were 6 participants involved in this study. The results of this study found four main themes related to the subjective well-being of working mothers: social relationships, affective factors, satisfaction in work life, and satisfaction in home life. It is suggested that working mothers develop positive effects in work and home life and that future researchers be able to examine the psychological well-being of working mothers.

Keywords: *Subjective Well-Being; Working Mother*

Abstrak. Ibu bekerja diharuskan mengurus pekerjaan rumah tangga, mendidik anak dan menyelesaikan tugas di tempat kerja. Peran ganda yang dimiliki akan mempengaruhi kondisi subjective well-being dari ibu bekerja. Aspek subjective well-being yang diteliti yaitu kepuasan hidup global dan kepuasan hidup pada domain tertentu khususnya domain pekerjaan dan keluarga. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi subjective well-being ibu bekerja. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif, menggunakan metode pengumpulan data photovoice. Kriteria inklusi yaitu ibu bekerja yang memiliki pekerjaan tetap, memiliki anak usia di bawah 10 tahun, berdomisili di Kota Kupang, bersedia menjadi partisipan penelitian. Partisipan yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 6 orang partisipan. Hasil penelitian ini ditemukan empat tema utama yang berkaitan dengan subjective well-being ibu bekerja yaitu, relasi sosial, faktor afektif, kepuasan dalam kehidupan pekerjaan, dan kepuasan dalam kehidupan rumah tangga. Saran bagi ibu bekerja untuk dapat mengembangkan afek positif dalam kehidupan bekerja dan berumah tangga. Bagi peneliti selanjutnya untuk dapat meneliti psychological well-being dari ibu bekerja.

Kata kunci: *Subjective Well-Being; Ibu Bekerja*

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Introduction

Working mothers today are commonplace and ordinary. Mothers are increasingly trying to develop their abilities in various fields of life. Adequate education supported by good skills makes not a few women struggling in the world of work. Working mothers are still being discussed in various environments, where a mother should stay home and care for the family. The main task of a mother is to take care of the household while educating her children. The mother organizes and is responsible for her husband's home affairs. Nowadays, not only men work to fulfil the family's needs. Women or wives also play a role in improving family welfare by working. The existence of working mothers at this time increases income because of the family's economic demands. Women have several potentials that are also not inferior to men regarding intellect, ability, and skills (Tentama, Situmorang, Fitriyanur, 2021).

Santrock (2013) said that the role carried out by working mothers can cause stress caused by demands for additional time and energy, division of time for children, family, and career, a conflict between work roles and family roles, competitive competition between husband and wife, and an important issue is whether attention to children's needs has been fulfilled well or not. Working mums are often assumed to feel guilty about not having time with their children. This huge time drain impacts the individual's mental and psychological well-being (Tavassoli in Nuriyah, Sela et al., 2021).

The results of interviews conducted by researchers with pre-research interviews with 3 participants found that working mothers try in such a way as to be able to manage their time well and complete the work at hand. However, 2 participants (TM and LP) had negative experiences in living a dual role. Namely, participants tried to complete homework at home, but their children sometimes did

not help complete homework, so they felt emotional with their children at work. Participants sometimes argued during meetings or preparing for office activities, and their opinions often crossed. However, at the time of evaluation, all activities would be resolved and returned to normal, because cross-opinions or tensions occurred only during meetings or when preparing for activities. One participant (RM) tries to enjoy each of her roles, namely preparing children's food for school, preparing clothes, cleaning the house, and doing their homework. Participants leave for the office, and then when they arrive at the office, participants try to complete the work given by their superiors according to the specified time so that office work is not taken home because, for participants, at home is a time to gather with family.

Subjective well-being is a person's cognitive and affective evaluation of their life (Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2003). Subjective well-being influences a person's view of their quality of life. Someone with a level of subjective well-being perceives their life to be of high quality, while someone with a low level of subjective well-being perceives their lives as lacking quality and unpleasant (Diener, 2000; Myers & Diener, 1995)

There are three essential components of subjective well-being, namely: (1) life satisfaction, (2) positive affect, and (3) low unpleasant affect (Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997; Vitterso & Nilsen, 2002). Subjective well-being is organized as these three components form a global factor of interrelated variables. General life satisfaction can be divided into satisfaction in various life domains, such as recreation, love, and friendship. Pleasant effects can be divided into joy, affection, and appreciation. The unpleasant effect can be divided into shame, guilt, sadness, anger, and anxiety (Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997).

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to identify subjective well-being in working mothers in Kupang City. It is hoped that this research can provide benefits for working mothers, especially in work and family.

Method

This type of research is qualitative research that identifies the experiences of working mothers. The research location was in Kupang City, and the implementation time was August 2022. The population of this study was working mothers in Kupang City, and the research participants totalled six people. The criteria for participants are working mothers who have permanent jobs, live in Kupang City, have children aged ten years and under, and are willing to become participants. The sampling technique used in determining participants is purposive sampling. The data collection techniques in this study used photovoice, where participants were asked to take a photo that illustrated subjective well-being. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explain the meaning of the photos taken. Data analysis in this study used a thematic analysis model, which was done manually.

Result

Table 1.
Participant Characteristics

No	Pseudonym	Age	Length of Marriage	Number of Children
1	Mawar	48 years	15 years	4
2	Melati	48 years	13 years	3
3	Anggrek	37 years	6 years	2
4	Alamanda	42 years	8 years	3
5	Matahari	24 years	4 years	1
6	Kamboja	42 years	15 years	2

Table 1 shows that the participants in this study had an age range of 24-48 years, all of whom were working mothers. The participants' marriage length is between 4 and 15 years, with the number of children being 1 to 4.

Based on the research data analysis results, four (4) main themes were found: life satisfaction related to work, life satisfaction related to households, social relations, and affection.

Theme 1 Job-Related Life Satisfaction

Ideal Life Satisfaction

Alamanda's view of her ideal life satisfaction is that she can complete office work so that she does not need to bring office work home. Her boss always gives her tasks to complete at the office so that she does not need to bring office work home when she returns home. According to Mawar, home is a place to gather with family, not a place to bring office work to do at home.

“Working in the office is satisfying when I can complete the office work, not bringing work home because at home it is time with the children so as much as possible finish the work in the office” (Participant Alamanda).



Figure 1. Participant Mawar

Mawar took this photo because she felt satisfied when she could complete all the office work and ensure that all the work went smoothly. The sub-theme of life satisfaction is actually, according to Mawar, life satisfaction related to work that occurs. Sometimes, her work is not completed during working hours, so she has to take it home to continue at home.

“Regarding life satisfaction, we have to be satisfied with our life. But work is not always smooth. So if I do not finish, I have to take it home. When I get home, I will continue to finish” (Participant Mawar).

Theme 2 Household-Related Life Satisfaction

Ideal Life Satisfaction

Alamanda said that the ideal life satisfaction, according to her, is if she can share tasks in the household and fulfil tertiary needs related to the facilities her family needs.

"I think the ideal life satisfaction is to divide (share) tasks with my husband and children at home so that household chores are completed, and each has the responsibility to do them. I also hope that all tertiary needs can be met. So it is not just about eating and drinking."
(Participant Alamanda).



Figure 2. Participant Alamanda.

Alamanda took this photo because this is where she, her husband, and her children share household tasks. If Alamanda cooks, then her husband and children do other household activities.

Melati explained that she is satisfied because, as a housewife, she can take care of her children and prepare their food for school, and the children are always obedient.

"In general, I am satisfied because I, as a housewife at home, take care of the children from the morning before they go to school, eat, and go to school, and they do not resist. So I think I have done my duties at home well according to my ability" (Melati interview).

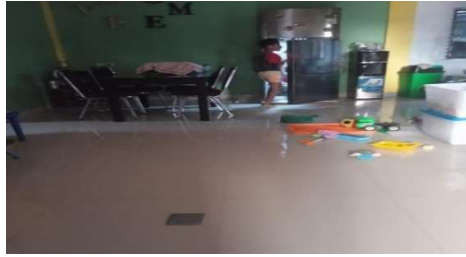


Figure 3. Participant Melati

(Melati chose this photo because it depicts Melati preparing food for her child)

Theme 3 Social relations

Bosses

Matahari explained that social relations with superiors are essential for building relationships well. Matahari said that he is grateful that his boss placed him in a workplace with a work culture that does not apply seniority and works according to the job desk given so that he can establish good relationships with coworkers.

"My relationship with the leadership, I am grateful to be placed in a work culture that does not apply seniority, and I am grateful to be able to build good relationships with coworkers, work according to our respective job desks and passions" (Participant Matahari).

Coworkers

Kamboja explained that his social relationship with his coworkers is helping each other complete work tasks, although some of his colleagues are sometimes late.

"Back again, we are a team, so whatever happens, we must work solidly. We must be a solid team. To be solid, we try to help friends who have not completed their tasks. Sometimes, some friends come late because they still have business outside. But once we arrive at the office, we immediately focus on completing the task together" (Kamboja Participant).



Figure 4. Kamboja participant

Kamboja chose this photo because it illustrates the social relationship between Kamboja and her coworkers.

Husband

In Anggrek's view, social relations with her husband at home help each other in completing work at home both in taking care of children and household chores and understanding each other's work at work.

"I and my husband try to help each other with the work at home. So sometimes, my husband helps me take care of the children by cooking until I set the table or clean the house. If I have work from the office not finished, I have to continue at home, so the husband also ends up helping with work at home" (Participant Anggrek).



Figure 5. Anggrek participant

(Anggrek chose this photo because it depicts her husband sharing the task of taking care of the children)

Alamanda said that her social relationship with her children is good because she teaches them to be more independent and not spoiled. Alamanda

teaches her children to be independent, firm, and disciplined so that they grow up to be independent and not spoiled. Alamanda's way of loving her children is by not hiring a maid so they can do everything themselves.

"I teach them to be independent. So if I love, yes, love, love, but there are limits. There is a limit between affection and strictness. We love it, but we also have to teach independence to the children. The term is not to spoil them like that; that is why I do not use too many helpers at home, because later, the child cannot be independent. Right now, it is the first child because he wants to learn. He wants to learn to cook rice, he wants to. So he makes it but is afraid to plug it in. There are sparks, for example, because they want to fry and test but are afraid of fire. So when they cook, they throw it so they do not get hit by hot oil. So sometimes they want to cook, and I say they can do it alone. And they also want to know. Yes, they learn" (Participant Alamanda)

Theme 4 Affection

Positive Affect

Matahari expresses positive feelings at work when she has an excellent boss and supportive coworkers. The positive feeling experienced by the Matahari is being grateful for these conditions.

"In particular, because things are fine, I have my sense of gratitude. I am placed in a good workplace where the work culture is good, such as superiors and coworkers who support each other so I am grateful to share positive things at work" (Participant Matahari).

According to Anggrek, the positive feeling at home is the figure of her husband, who can control his emotions.

"There are two children at home, and sometimes, when I am angry with my children, my husband calms my anger. So he goes to let him be a mother. He is not always angry with the children. This is the time to be naughty and active, so it should be like that. Sometimes, I am also wrong, so I apologize to the children. Then, of these two children, the younger brother is sometimes more naughty. His younger brother bullies him to cry, and I ask who made him cry. Why are you crying? Then, his brother asks who came first. So both blame each other and finally coax, so do not be like that." (Participant Anggrek)



Figure 6. Anggrek participant

Anggrek used this photo because this is where her children play and fight, which triggers her emotions but is controlled by her husband.

Negative affect

Participant Matahari had an unpleasant experience when work at the office was not finished and had to be continued at home. But when she returned home, it turned out that there was also unfinished housework, so even small things could make Matahari feel irritated.

"I had an unpleasant experience when I came home from work. I was too tired, and there was a lot of unfinished work at home. Everything was a mess. Maybe something small happened at home. When I came home from work, it turned out to be unfinished. That annoyed me because the office work was not finished until the house was the same" (Participant Matahari).

Discussion

According to the participants, life satisfaction is when office work can still be completed well, even if it has to be done outside the office, such as at home.

According to the participants, sharing tasks is one of the life-satisfaction tasks in household work. The household's division of roles and tasks between husband and wife is influenced by the perspective on gender roles (Putri & Lestari, 2015). There is an opinion that husbands have less time to do household chores than wives, so husbands are considered to contribute less to the family. Life satisfaction helps working mothers face challenges and difficulties.

According to Sarwono (2009), life satisfaction is a person's ability to enjoy experiences accompanied by joy. In addition to having good physical health, a person must have good mental health to enjoy every experience at work and home. Following the results of this study, the participants were satisfied with their work and home life even though there were both positive and negative experiences in performing each role.

The social role expected by working mothers is essential in carrying out relationships at work and in the household, where each individual is expected to perform their role according to the skills or traits considered necessary by coworkers and family members. A person conducting social relations needs coworkers or family members who can easily share tasks or responsibilities (Eagly et al., 2009). According to the results of this study, working mothers have good relationships with superiors and coworkers by performing tasks according to job desks and helping each other in completing work. In addition, there is also a division of household duties with husband and children.

The positive effect of the participants can be influenced by the age of marriage, which is generally over eight years old, where the increasing age of marriage results in more positive emotional conditions, per the research of Rulangi & Simanjuntak (2022). Rulangi & Simanjuntak (2022) conducted research on working mothers where emotional conditions will be more positive as the age of marriage increases.

Conclusion

Research on the subjective well-being of working mothers found that the life satisfaction of working mothers is reasonable. They enjoy every life experience at work and at home.

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