Happiness Levels and Factors Affect Happiness in Thailand: A Comparative Study of 4 Periods

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Abstract : Research on happiness has been growing in recent decades. In the early stages, scholars were primarily concerned with establishing the validity of happiness measures and with exploring socio-economic correlates of happiness. More recent studies have focused on outcomes of happiness as well as the identification of happiness policies. This research investigates the happiness levels and influences of quality of life in terms of mental health satisfaction, family satisfaction, community satisfaction, and work satisfaction as determinants of happiness in Thailand during 2009-2014. The data collected by the National Statistic Office of Thailand in the project of Socio-economic Survey inclusion of Mental Health Survey in 2009, 2010, and 2012; and in the project of Labor Force Survey inclusion of Mental Health Survey in August 2014 were employed. There was a total of 59,430, 64,720, 54,736, and 9,997 respondents who were at least 15 years old in the survey during 2009-2014. Statistical analyses include both descriptive and inferential statistics. All research hypotheses were tested by means of hierarchical regression analysis. The analysis results reveal that happiness means during the studied period are quite at high levels (in the range of 7.42 to 7.60 from the scale 0-10). And the results indicate that all model variables (i.e., mental health satisfaction, family satisfaction, community satisfaction, and work satisfaction), have positive effects on happiness in Thailand. Additionally, the mental health satisfaction plays the most important role in predicting happiness. Further, our results indicate significant positive relationship between education, and income/expense and happiness, while other socio-economic variables reveal variety relationships during the studied period. Our results not only validate research findings in other countries but also verify the importance of quality of life (in terms of mental health satisfaction, family satisfaction, community satisfaction, and work satisfaction) as important factors of happiness for public policy makers. One conclusion stands firm in our study: happiness can be advanced in many ways. At the society level, greater happiness for people can be achieved by policies that aim to promote good health, an engaged family relationship, a high community as well as work qualities. A contented population is advantaged in many ways over one that is not. Government or policy makers should understand and realize that happiness is a valuable and tangible aspect of the population for which they are responsible. Therefore, they should include happiness issues in their political agenda.