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The role of husband support on the subjective well-being of working mothers

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Nova Nita Anggun Prasiska¹, Hudaiah Hudaiah^{1*}, and Devina Andriany¹

Abstract

A mother who decides to work often experiences role conflict because she cannot divide her time to carry out her roles, both as a mother and worker, which can cause stress and low life satisfaction. This has an impact on her subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is a person's evaluation of their life, including life satisfaction, experienced emotions, and fulfillment. The social support of a spouse or husband is one of the variables that influence it. Therefore, this study aims to determine how much influence the husband's support has on the subjective well-being of working mothers. This study uses a quantitative design with a simple regression analysis calculation method. The number of samples in this study was 140 participants who were actively involved, obtained through the purposive sampling technique. The scale used to measure the husband's support was Receipt of Spousal Support items, while the scale to measure subjective well-being used the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). This study shows that there is an influence of the husband's support on the 3 aspects of subjective well-being in working mothers with the value of $p < 0.01$, $p(1, 138) = 64.11$, $F = 0.317$, $2R < 0.01$. The husband's support also explained a significant proportion of the variation in positive aspect scores, $(138) = 0.027$, $t = 0.217$, $p < 0.01$, $p(1, 138) = 22.71$, $F = 0.275$, $2R < 0.01$. The husband's support also explained a significant proportion of the variation in positive affect scores, $(138) = 0.038$, $t = 27.8$, $p < 0.01$, $p(1, 138) = 71.10$, $F = 3.40$, $2R < 0.01$. The husband's support also explained a significant proportion of the variation in negative affect scores, $(138) = 0.042$, $t = 0.353$. The implication of the findings of this study is that the husband's support is able to balance emotions in a working mother so as to create satisfaction in life, which is an aspect of forming subjective well-being.

Keywords

Social support, subjective well-being, working mothers

Introduction

In the current era of modernization, many women, including mothers, decide to engage in employment. Various factors influence their decision to work, for example, not only for the financial rewards of helping the family economy, but also for more fundamental reasons, namely a sense of self-identity and the challenges that come with their position (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2011). According to data provided by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia (2021), the proportion of women aged 15 years and over who work and are married stands at 69.22%. Based on data sourced from the Central Statistics Agency (2021), the participation rate of working women increased by 66.35% in comparison to the preceding year's rate of 61.26%, demonstrating that the number of working women has increased over the last three years, primarily attributable to the expanding prospects for female integration within the labor market.

Subjective well-being is general satisfaction in one's life, combined with the lack of negative emotions and the number of positive emotions experienced (Cohen & Miller, 2006). Individuals with high subjective well-being, if they feel satisfaction in their lives, often feel joy and rarely unpleasant emotions. Conversely, individuals are said to have low subjective well-being if they are dissatisfied with their

lives, experience little joy and affection, and feel negative emotions more often (Dewar, 2009).

The decision to pursue a role as a housewife or a working mother carries inherent implications. Being a housewife will provide its own happiness for individuals, because with its role as a housewife, it will have more time given to the family so that it will not lose important moments of child growth. On the other hand, stay-at-home mothers often experience emotional difficulties such as a sense of loss including loss of identity, self-esteem, and independence (Ruhin & Wosten, 2007). Working mothers have some positive impacts such as greater financial stability and success (Bennett, 2007; Hirsman, 2006). However, it is essential to acknowledge that working mothers may encounter role conflict through pressure from work and the societal expectations surrounding women in the workforce. The tension arises from the challenge of effectively managing time to fulfill the responsibilities of both


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Introduction

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Subjective well-being is general satisfaction in one's life, combined with the lack of negative emotions and the number of positive emotions experienced (Coon & Mitterer, 2006). Individuals with high subjective well-being, if they feel satisfaction in their lives, often feel joy and rarely unpleasant emotions. Conversely, individuals are said to have low subjective well-being if they are dissatisfied with their

lives, experience little joy and affection, and feel negative emotions more often (Diener, 2009).

The decision to pursue a role as a housewife or a working mother carries inherent implications. Being a housewife will provide its own happiness for individuals, because with its role as a housewife, it will have more time given to the family so that it will not lose important moments of child growth, on the other hand, stay-at-home mothers often experience emotional difficulties such as a sense of loss including loss of identity, self-esteem, and independence (Rubin & Wooten, 2007). Working mothers have some positive impacts such as greater financial stability and success (Bennetts, 2007; Hirshman, 2006), However, it is essential to acknowledge that working mothers may encounter role conflict through pressure from work and the societal expectations surrounding women in the workforce. The tension arises from the challenge of effectively managing time to fulfill the responsibilities of both

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a housewife and a worker, resulting in heightened levels of stress and diminished life satisfaction (Hon & Chan).

Working mothers and housewives have their advantages and disadvantages. Both roles are equally capable of achieving subjective well-being in their lives. However, research conducted by Priya & Ahmad (2021) demonstrates that housewives have better subjective well-being when compared to working women. This can occur due to cultural factors where women are respected as owners of household chores so that they will have more quality time with their families, so the urgency to examine the subjective well-being of working mothers is more significant in this study.

Subjective well-being is an important variable to study not only because it describes a person's quality of life but also because it can have a positive impact on life. One of the advantages of having a high level of subjective well-being is that it promotes health and endurance; happy people tend to be healthier, less susceptible to illness, more likely to live long lives, and more capable of self-control (Diener & Chan, 2011). In addition, the existence of high subjective well-being in a working mother will have a positive impact on both her family and work (Joshi, 2010).

One of the factors that influence subjective well-being is social support. According to Sarafino (2011) social support is comfort, attention, appreciation and assistance received by individuals from other people or groups. Social support not only refers to actions provided by someone but also refers to the perception that the assistance provided can be felt. Working mothers can obtain social support from their spouse or husband. Support from husbands is essential for wives because husbands are people who have a higher closeness than other sources of support, so the support received will be more effective when compared to the support provided by strangers (Cohen & Syme, 1985). With the support of their husbands, mothers will feel more satisfied with their lives and reduce the negative impacts experienced by working mothers such as limited personal time and marital stress (Gager, 1998), maintain family functioning, and offer protective factors that can protect a person from stress and fear experienced (Ilska & Przybyła-Basista, 2017). So that the existence of social support will increase productivity characterized by increased motivation, quality of reasoning, job satisfaction and reduce the impact of job stress, the creation of psychological well-being and self-adjustment, prevention of neuroticism and psychopathology and reduction of distress (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).

The previously mentioned problem serves as the basis for the author's research, which investigates how spousal support influences the subjective well-being of working mothers. The author selected husband support as the focus of this study due to the limited research in the existing literature. Consequently, this study aims to examine the potential impact of husband support, particularly on the subjective well-being of working mothers. Furthermore, this study is expected to provide valuable references and insights on the magnitude of the impact of spousal support on the subjective well-being of employed women who manage household responsibilities. Consequently, this study holds significant potential for advancing scientific knowledge. The distinction between this study and prior research lies in the research subject. Unlike past research, this study does not limit itself

Table 1. Participant Characteristics Data (N=140)

Category	Frequency	%
Age		
20-30	110	78.60
30-40	30	21.40
Occupation		
Formal	105	75.00
Informal	35	15.00
Last Education		
Elementary School	6	4.30
Junior High School	12	8.60
Senior High School	50	35.70
Undergraduate	72	51.40
Age of Child		
0-12 Months	19	13.60
1-2 Year	44	31.40
3-4 Year	42	30.00
5-6 Year	35	25.00
Domicile		
East Java	125	89.30
Central Java	8	5.70
West Java	7	5.00

to the occupation or organization of a worker, hence yielding a more varied dataset.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were working mothers. Working mothers carry out the activities intended. The participants in this study consisted of working mothers who carried out activities to earn income (Poerwadarminta, 2003). The sampling technique used was purposive sampling; the sampling procedure was carried out by considering several conditions, namely: (1) married women who are not in a long-distance relationship, (2) married women who are raising offspring within the age range of 0-6 years old, (3) married women who are managing household needs alone or without the help of assistance to ascertain the extent of husband's support contribution. In this study, the number of subjects obtained was 140 people spread across the island of Java. For more detail on the participant data, see Table 1.

The vast majority of subjects, precisely 110 participants, fall within the age range of 20-30 years. Additionally, a large number of participants, which are 105 individuals, work in the formal sector, such as factory workers, teachers, and office workers. The educational background of 72 participants, primarily holding a diploma 3 or undergraduate degree, accounting for more than half of the samples. The participants mostly have offspring at the ages of 1-2 years (44 people) and 3-4 years (42 people). The participants reside predominantly in East Java (125 people).

Research Instruments

The husband support scale used the Receipt of Spousal Support Items compiled by (Dorio, 2009) based on aspects of social support proposed by (House et al., 1988), which were then adapted by the authors with 20 items with 12 favorable items and 8 unfavorable items. This scale has a reliability

level of 0.934. This measuring instrument is a type of Likert scale, which has five alternative answer choices, namely, (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. Examples of items on this scale are, “My partner often asks about my daily life” and “My partner sometimes doesn’t want to listen to my problems”.

The subjective well-being scale used was developed by Poerwadarminta (2003) in a multidimensional form that measures three aspects of subjective well-being, namely cognitive aspects, positive affect, and negative affect. This Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) scale has five items used to measure cognitive aspects. This scale has a reliability value of 0.879. This measuring instrument has five alternative answers, namely, (1) Very Unsuitable, (2) Unsuitable, (3) Neutral, (4) Suitable, and (5) Very Suitable. An example of the item on this scale is “Overall, my life is almost as I expected”. The highest score on the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) scale indicates that individuals have high life satisfaction. Vice versa, the lowest score indicates that the individual has low life satisfaction. The Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) scale has 20 items combined from 10 positive affect items and 10 negative affect items so that the score calculation is done separately. The Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) scale has a reliability value on positive affect of 0.818 and on negative affect has a reliability level of 0.891. This measuring instrument has five alternative answers, namely, (1) Very Slightly or Not at All, (2) Little, (3) Moderately, (4) Quite a Bit, and (5) Extremely. Examples of items on this scale are “interested”, “depressed”, “happy”, and “excited”. The highest score on the positive affect aspect indicates that the individual experiences high positive emotions. Vice versa, the lowest score indicates that individuals experience low positive emotions, while in the negative affect aspect, the highest score indicates that individuals experience high negative emotions. Likewise, the lowest score indicates that individuals experience low negative emotions.

Data Analysis Technique

Before performing hypothesis testing, the authors conducted assumption tests, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality and linearity tests. Based on the test results, it was determined that the research data exhibited normal distribution and linear characteristics, so the next phase was conducting a hypothesis test using a simple linearity test using SPSS for Windows version 22 to find out how much influence the husband’s support has on the subjective well-being of working mothers. The test results can be seen in Table 3.

Result

According to Table 2, this study examines social support and subjective well-being. A total of 82 participants (58.6%) reported a high level of support from their husbands. In the subjective well-being aspect, precisely the cognitive aspect, most participants, specifically 85 individuals (60.7%), achieved high scores. Similarly, in terms of positive affect, a significant number of participants, totaling 80 individuals (57.1%), also obtained high scores. In contrast, a significant of participants (57.9%) had a modest level of negative affect, with as many as 81 individuals falling into this category.

Table 2. Data Description of Research Variables

Variable	Category	Frequency	%	Mean	
Husband Support	High	83	58.60	67.39	
	Low	58	41.40		
Subjective Well-being	Cognitive Aspect	High	85	60.70	18.99
		Low	55	39.30	
	Positive Affect	High	80	57.10	40.56
		Low	60	42.90	
	Negative Affect	High	59	42.10	26.59
		Low	81	57.90	

Before performing hypothesis testing, the authors conducted assumption tests, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality and linearity tests. Based on the test results, it was determined that the research data exhibited normal distribution and linear characteristics, so the next phase was conducting a hypothesis test using a simple linearity test. The test results can be seen in the following table 3

Based on table 3, concerning the analysis of the effect of the husband’s support on cognitive aspects, it shows that the regression model of the husband’s support is significantly able to predict cognitive aspects with $F(1,138) = 4.377$, $p < 0.01$. The variance in cognitive aspects that the husband’s support can explain is 31.7% ($R^2 = 0.317$) with the regression equation: Cognitive aspects = $4.377 + (0.217 * \text{Husband support})$. For the following analysis, the effect of the husband’s support on positive affect shows that the regression model of the husband’s support is significantly able to predict positive affect with $F(1,138) = 21.792$, $p < 0.01$. The variance of positive affect that the husband’s support can explain is 27.6% ($R^2 = 0.276$) with the regression equation: Positive affect = $21.792 + (0.278 * \text{Husband’s support})$. On the other hand, in the analysis of the effect of the husband’s support on the negative impact, the husband’s support regression model is significantly able to predict the adverse effect with $F(1,138) = 50.407$, $p < 0.01$. The variance of negative affect that the husband’s support can explain is 34% ($R^2 = 0.340$) with the regression equation: Negative affect = $50.407 + (-0.353 * \text{Husband support})$.

In addition to testing the hypothesis, the authors performed supplementary analyses to assess potential variations in subjective well-being based on occupational type and educational background. These analyses involved the utilization of chi-square and cross-tab. The findings are presented in the following table 4

Discussion

The analysis results show that the hypothesis is accepted, i.e., there is an influence of husband support on the three aspects that make up subjective well-being: cognitive elements such as life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. These results show that the higher the husband’s support received by working mothers, the higher the level of subjective well-being. Conversely, the lower the husband’s support received, the lower the subjective well-being.

Based on literature studies, there is a relationship between social support and subjective well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Headey & Wearing, 1990). Social support obtained

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression Test of Husband Support and Subjective Well-Being

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	t	F	R	R ²	p
Positive aspects	4.38	1.84	2.38	64.12	0.56	0.32	<.001
	0.22	0.03	8.01				
Positive effects	21.79	2.61	8.36	52.72	0.53	0.28	<.001
	0.28	0.04	7.26				
Negative effects	50.41	2.85	17.70	71.10	0.58	3.40	<.001
	-0.35	0.04	-8.43				

Table 4. Testing the Relationship between the Type of Work and Level of Education on Subjective Well-Being

	Subjective well-being								
	Positive aspects			Positive Affect			Negative Affect		
	High	Low	p	High	Low	p	High	Low	p
Work									
Formal	63	42	0.764	105	0		43	62	0.621
Informal	22	13		34	1		16	19	
Total	85	55		139	1		81	59	
Education									
Elementary School	3	3	0.056	3	3	0.365	3	3	0.045
Junior High School	4	8		5	7		9	3	
Senior High School	24	26		26	24		23	27	
Undergraduate	54	18		46	26		24	48	
Total	85	55		80	60		59	81	

Note: In the table, the cross-tab results show non-significant results ($p > 0.05$), so it can be concluded that there is no variation in subjective well-being based on occupational type and educational background.

from spouses plays a role in reducing symptoms of depression (Monroe & Steiner, 1986), stress in both work and non-work conflicts (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979), marital stress and family conflict (Roskies & Lazarus, 1980; Beutell & Greenhaus, 1982), so as to improve well-being (Thompson & Heller, 1990) and buffer the relationship between various sources of stress and overall well-being (Parasuraman et al., 1992).

In the first aspect, namely the cognitive aspect, which is related to life satisfaction, individuals can have life satisfaction if what is expected can be achieved and have a favorable view of their life in the future (Diener, 2003). In Table 4, it can be seen that the results of the cognitive aspect, namely life satisfaction in working mothers, are in the high categorization of 60.7%. Based on this categorization, it can be interpreted that working mothers feel satisfaction in their lives; individuals with high life satisfaction will view life more positively. In line with this, Seligman stated that life satisfaction can be achieved if what is expected can be realized or become a reality, as well as satisfaction with the family (Seligman, 2002). Support from the family, especially the husband, is the key to harmony in the household, thus making working mothers feel the happiness that can achieve a wife's life satisfaction (Kozaryn & Valente, 2017). In this study, the husband's support given to working mothers' cognitive aspect or life satisfaction has a 32.1% effect.

Positive and negative affects are related to the mood or emotions experienced by individuals obtained from ongoing reactions to problems, activities, and events in their lives (Diener, 1984). The results of categorizing positive affect in working mothers are in the high category, namely 57.1%. These results can occur because working mothers experience something considered good so that they show

positive emotional reactions such as joy, strength, pride, and enthusiasm (Diener, 2003). Regarding negative affect, the subject was in the low category at 57.9%. This result is because if something terrible happens, the individual will have unpleasant or negative emotional reactions, such as sadness, anger, anxiety, worry, stress, frustration, shame, and guilt (Diener, 2003). People's experiences with positive and negative affect are not solely the result of their judgment; they also depend on the social context. González (2000) stated that positive and negative affects can be caused by social situations. In this case, the existence of perceived social support has the function of reducing the negative effects of disorders and enabling individuals to regain good mental health (Cohen & Syme, 1985). In this study, the husband's support given to the positive affection of working mothers had an effect of 27.6%, while the negative affection was 34%.

Subjective well-being can be high if individuals experience positive emotions more often and rarely experience negative emotions and satisfaction. Vice versa, individuals have low subjective well-being if they experience few positive emotions, experience negative emotions more often and are less or even dissatisfied with their lives (Diener & Chan, 2011). Based on the categorization results, it can be concluded that working mothers have high subjective well-being because they experience higher positive emotions when compared to negative emotions and satisfaction in life.

Various factors, including the degree of social support, influence the variance in an individual's subjective well-being. For women, social support from a spouse is key to the success of a dual-career family; it is not the mother's job alone that affects life satisfaction but also the cooperation with the husband in taking care of household chores (Bernard, 1974).

In addition, social support will also affect healthy habits and behaviors in social relationships and reduce emotional burden so that it will be able to increase subjective well-being in individuals (Sears et al., 2009). Social support itself has a role as a coping mechanism to reduce the negative effects of stress and conflict. Mothers who receive little or no support from their spouses in both childcare and household duties will feel negative emotions such as feelings of pressure due to the dual role (Anderson-Kulman & Paludi, 1986). Husband support is considered necessary because in addition to reducing stress in working mothers, it also contributes to satisfaction in their lives (Scarr et al., 1989).

Mothers associated with domestic roles can now have successful careers in the public sphere. Balancing the roles of a housewife and a worker takes effort. Time-sharing and child-rearing issues are sometimes the main problems that lead to dual role conflict. Success in this dual role will be connected to the support of a husband who is willing to work together and share household roles and responsibilities to lighten his burden. Husband and wife are one family, so they must be able to respect each other and work together. As mentioned in previous studies, findings show that, when receiving support from their partner, working mothers will feel more comfortable, excited in carrying out their dual role, have space to rest, protect from the consequences of stress, and help find a way out of every problem faced (Dahyu et al., 2021). Hence, support of the husband will be able to improve subjective well-being of working mothers.

Another notable finding within this study is the lack of noticeable differences in the subjective well-being across participants based on their occupation or educational background. Individuals who have a sense of enjoyment in their work are likely to exhibit behaviors that indicate contentment, regardless of the nature of their occupation and educational attainment (Munandar, 2008). Workers' subjective well-being can be determined by their level of comfort and satisfaction with their income. Similarly, Diener (2009) asserted that income can influence subjective well-being. The existence of high income has a direct positive impact on subjective well-being, this can occur because income can be used as a potential resource that can provide security and buffer against potential negative events (eg disease), as a means to meet the needs of both goods and services that are fulfillment of needs (Diener et al., 2013; Tay & Diener, 2011).

In addition, it should be noted that subjective well-being in workers can be influenced by various other elements, including acceptance. In previous research conducted by Kowalewska et al. (2020) acceptance is an important factor for individuals because it has the ability to override negative contextual factors by weakening negative beliefs and emotions related to depression. In addition, acceptance will reduce symptoms of illness or psychological distress, thereby improving individual well-being (Simione et al., 2021). Individuals with a strong inclination towards gratitude are likely to have a high level of well-being, pleasure, and contentment, regardless of the diverse circumstances encountered (Mc Cullough et al., 2004). However, confirming these factors was impossible in the present study as additional exploration and investigation were required. This study's

limitation highlights the need for future research to evaluate these issues thoroughly.

Another limitation of this study is that data collection was carried out online by filling out a Google form so that the information obtained could not be explored more deeply, and it could not be ascertained that subjects who were not relevant to the research participated in filling out the Google form. In addition, in the domicile of the subject, there is an imbalance dominated by East Java compared to other regions with an amount that is very far adrift, so the findings in this study cannot represent each region.

Conclusion

The research findings support the hypothesis, indicating a significant impact of husband support on subjective well-being. The obtained results demonstrate that increased support from husbands corresponds to a higher level of subjective well-being among working mothers. Conversely, a decrease in support is associated with lower subjective well-being.

The implication of this study is to illustrate how much influence the husband's support has on the subjective well-being of working mothers. Therefore, husbands are expected to be able to actively provide support to their wives, such as dividing domestic roles, listening to their complaints, and providing support, advice, or suggestions. Because this study proves that the husband's support is able to balance the emotions of working mothers, namely increasing positive emotions and reducing the frequency of negative emotions, satisfaction in life will therefore be created.

Declaration

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Author contributions

The author(s) conducted the study, involving literature studies, data collection, and processing, which had been verified by the Psychology Laboratory of University Muhammadiyah Malang for analysis, reporting, and publication. This study not only focuses on the primary research objectives but also adds other analyses that can contribute to knowledge related to the variables used in this research.

Conflict of interest

There is no competing interest from various parties.

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