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The Subjective Well-being Policy: Case Studies and Its Relevance in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Objective. This study aims to examine the implementation and optimization of subjective well-being as a constituent of policymaking.

Background. Subjective well-being, frequently considered in policymaking, has not been widely used and optimally implemented in Indonesia. Most of the policymaking processes only consider economic indicators and ignore immaterial aspects.

Study design. This study employed a qualitative and case study approach. It involves the Statistics Indonesia and the Provincial Government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta as the data collection bases. In addition, it investigated the policy implementation and the factual application of subjective well-being.

Measurements. The researchers collected the data through interviews, documentation, and focus group discussion. All the data were validated through triangulation.

Result. The issue of happiness is rarely highlighted in policymaking. In fact, happiness is a component that is able to meet the psychological and spiritual needs of society. At the same time, this is supported by the existence of a GDP indicator that does not really represent the welfare of a region, and even is able to control people's satisfaction through policymaking. The Special Region of Yogyakarta is one of the areas that is suitable for pilots in implementing the issue of happiness in policymaking, although in practice there are still variables that are not in line with the planning process document. This pilot pays attention to immaterial supporting elements such as policymaker agreements, social inclusivity, cultural capital, and social capital. The Special Region of Yogyakarta, which has also implemented considerations on the issue of happiness, has shown positive significance in the aspects of people's lives.

Conclusions. This study concludes that the variables on the happiness index are not affiliated with several planning documents in the Province of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Therefore, studies regarding the happiness aspect, for example, welcoming inclusiveness in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, are essential. In addition, the cultural aspect, especially the society's acceptance of material aspects (life satisfaction), has contributed to the establishment of subjective well-being in the province. This study

recommends further study of obstacles in applying the happiness index and subjective well-being in policy formulation.

Keywords: happiness index; happiness statistic; Indonesia; policymaking; subjective well-being.

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Политика субъективного благополучия в Особом регионе Джокьякарта, Индонезия

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Цель. Изучение путей осуществления политики субъективного благополучия и способов ее оптимизации.

Контекст и актуальность. Во многих странах мира при разработке внутренней политики учитывается фактор субъективного благополучия («индекс счастья»). Но в Индонезии при оценке уровня жизни населения используются только экономические показатели при игнорировании других аспектов жизни людей.

Дизайн исследования. В исследовании применялись качественный анализ и метод кейсов. Использовались базы данных Статистического управления Индонезии и правительства Особого региона Джокьякарта. Кроме того, исследовалась реализация политики субъективного благополучия.

Методы (инструменты). Интервью, анализ документов, фокус-группы. Применен метод триангуляции.

Результат. «Индекс счастья» редко применяется при оценке успешности внутренней политики Индонезии. Уровень жизни людей в основном определяется показателями ВВП, которые на самом деле не отражают реальное благосостояние жителей. Особый регион Джокьякарта является одним из районов, в котором осуществляется пилотный проект по включению «индекса счастья» в число показателей, учет которых необходим при разработке внутренней политики. Это подразумевает такие нематериальные элементы, как соглашения с политиками, социальная инклюзивность, культурный и социальный капитал. Введение «индекса счастья» как одного из критериев успешности реализации внутренней политики в Особом регионе Джокьякарта заметно повлияло на улучшение различных аспектов жизни людей.

Выводы. Показатели субъективного благополучия не учитываются при планировании некоторых направлений внутренней политики в провинции Особого региона Джокьякарта, потому

исследования, касающиеся составляющих «индекса счастья», имеют важное значение. Кроме того, культурный аспект, особенно принятие обществом важности показателя «удовлетворенность жизнью», способствует появлению чувства субъективного благополучия жителей провинции. Необходимо продолжение работы по включению показателя «индекс счастья» как критерия успешности при планировании и реализации внутренней политики.

Ключевые слова: индекс счастья; статистика счастья; Индонезия; выработка политического курса; субъективное благополучие.

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Introduction

In empirical literature studies, most public policy analyses still focus on the institutional and formal aspects of policy formulation and implementation. The problem is that the policymakers only partially explore immaterial activities [2]. This problem occurs since most of the policy's orientation revolves around the formal aspect, such as the measurement of well-being as found in literary studies by Murphy regarding the role of the authority in supporting public favor [25]; Walt and Gilson, and then Almeida and Gomes regarding the technical format of formal policy [1, 51]; and [42] regarding government-oriented public policy issued by the policymakers. Due to the lack of immaterial activities, the policy only covers the fulfillment of limited resources.

Essentially, policymakers have the right to decide whether they are willing to formulate a policy and are bound to the consequences of their policy's pros and cons [6]. Even though 'well-being' frequently appears as a critical word in policymaking, the implementation and targets of the policy are often irrelevant. This paradox demands that a policy covers many aspects with specific standards, integration, and multidimensional reach. Menghwar and Daood stated that a failed policy, often caused by a flawed perspective disregarding societal values, seems popular and beneficial, yet ineffective [24].

Many institutions and policymakers worldwide use the well-being indicator as a basis or a post-evaluation comparative aspect [36]. As a third-world country, Indonesia has adopted developed countries' indicators in formulating policies regarding economics, social, public service, education. health, and many other policies related to well-being. These indicators, such as the data access from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Bloomberg, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and United Nations (UN), are relatively popular and have almost become the standards for research in policy implementation and its performance in Indonesia [7; 11; 29; 53]. In addition, a discourse on the indicator application emerges, especially developing countries' complex well-being indicators, to alter perspectives. It also generates an assumption that policymakers should eliminate material limitations and encourage the use of a more inclusive function of well-being as an alternative measurement in formulating policy.

The indicator of social well-being has transformed into various forms, one of which is subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is a part of the happiness indicators. In China, the authority measures the country's well-being with good environmental governance [13; 20; 21]. Meanwhile, Germany and

America consider satisfaction in kinship regarding the government's policy as the wellbeing standard [26]. In Japan, the authority measured people's well-being by means of communication, networking support, beliefs, and identity among women in the policy of migration case reduction [33]. While England focuses on the early prevention of juvenile misconduct [47], Australia emphasizes occupancy policy as the standard of wellbeing [33]. As many countries consider it part of policymaking, subjective well-being becomes a benchmark in happiness indicators. The Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN) reported that in 2016, Indonesia ranked 79 on the list of the happiest countries on the World Happiness Index and dropped to 81 later in 2017.

In recent years, subjective well-being has become an exciting topic among academicians and policymakers [3; 48]. MacKerron reported that there had been an escalation of academic publications regarding subjective well-being since the early 2000s [22]. In the last 30 years, subjective wellbeing has developed and become measurable individually and nationally [4]. The data on individual and national subjective well-being provides valuable information for policymakers and the government [12; 19; 41]. Furthermore, several studies indicated that subjective well-being is resourceful for many policy fields, including income, the work market, the labor market. housing, public service, urban planning, and public involvement and participation [5; 23]. The study of subjective well-being can measure the level of society's well-being. The authority may use the measurement results to formulate public policy that improves society's well-being. However, public administration academicians and policymakers rarely use the topic in their studies. Okulicz-Kozaryn and Valente reviewed the literature regarding the subjective well-being concept in considering and recommending a policy [32]. As a result, the study of well-being is rarely discussed in Indonesia's journal of public administration.

Methods

Method and Approach. This study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. It was conducted in the Statistics Indonesia and the Provincial Government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta as the bases of data collection. It also investigated the policy implementation and the factual application of subjective well-being.

Data Collection and Analysis. This study comprises three main parts. The first part presents the data from Statistics Indonesia and determines the primary study using subjective well-being data. The data contains the happiness index of Indonesian provinces in 2021. The second part explains the involvement of the policymakers, the Development Planning Board of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, the Social Service Department, and the government bureaucracy in focus group discussions and workshops regarding the functions of well-being in public policy. These activities include assessments and interviews about policymakers' tendency to use the happiness index as a factor for consideration in various programs. The last part investigates the use of the subjective well-being framework for public policy and policy analysis.

Data Validation. To obtain the saturated data, the researchers used triangulation by compiling and reducing the data from the informants' circular study responses.

Results

Issues and Indicators of Happiness: Process Review

Current happiness issues are often associated with poverty, gender equality, wealth inequality, and social problems affecting society's well-being. Eventually, social well-being depends on society's subjective and objective happiness, in which material and non-material happiness will not use economy, social strata, and education as the only factors of happiness. Senik stated that even though the economy and other measured factors may fulfil visible needs, they may not accommodate society's psychological or spiritual needs [45]. Therefore, the government needs to prioritize this issue as a standard of comprehensive well-being.

Generally, a visible and measurable income as the general indicator of both individual and society's well-being can be seen in the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). However, with a comprehensive standard, there are other aspects to consider regarding society's happiness. A study conducted by the Harvard Business Review shows that the policies made solely based on GDP do not fully represent the well-being of a country since there are symptoms of inequality

and climate change threats that should be considered [16]. Another area for improvement in using GDP as a consideration is the inability to measure the income distribution in society, which ends with inequality, dissatisfaction, and polarization in society [16]. In line with these findings, the concept of happiness comprises the following aspects:

- a. Material and non-material well-being;
- b.Mental and physical health, education and knowledge, occupation, and living condition [46];
 - c. Proper self-functioning [27; 40];
- d. Sustainable assessment of well-being attainment based on past and future consideration:
- e. Individual or society's essential experience.

Fig. 1 describes the development of the theoretical framework and happiness instrument study by Indonesia Statistics through the literature study of happiness framework and instrument development.

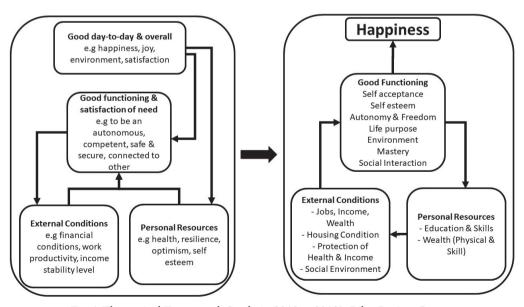


Fig. 1. Theoretical Framework Study in 2012 & 2013's Pilot Project Source: Indonesia Statistics (2020)

The literature study of happiness framework development (2011–2012) was conducted following the Gross National Happiness of Bhutan, the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), the World Value Survey, the Stiglitz Commission, the New Economic Foundation and Office for National Statistics, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The researchers have conducted validity and instrument reliability tests in Depok City and Bogor Regency in Indonesia and studied 11 regencies/municipalities in 7 Indonesian provinces to design the 2012's framework and instrument of happiness. They evaluated the instrument using the EFA (Exploratory Factor Analysis) and the CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis). The results show that, firstly, the respondents found it difficult to rate their happiness level, differentiate between happiness and satisfaction, and tend to understand satisfaction better than happiness. These findings put happiness as part of the evaluation. Secondly, the SPTK (Happiness Measurement Study) in 2013 conducted an instrument test for national estimation level to evaluate the previously-developed instrument. Thirdly, the SPTK in 2014 focused on the survey of confirming indicators and dimensions. Afterwards, the next stage of development by Indonesia Statistics is described in the following scheme.

The next stage is formulating three objective and subjective indicators for ten essential life domains in 2014. As explained in Fig. 2, the details of the indicators are as follows:

a. Objective indicator regarding life domain is measured prior to subjective indicator (satisfaction).

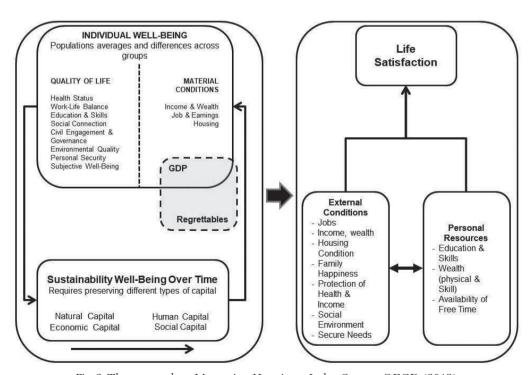


Fig. 2. The approach to Measuring Happiness Index Source: OECD (2013)

b. Indicator of life satisfaction as happiness rate measurement comprises ten life domains: a) health; b) education; c) job/main activity; d) family income; e) environmental quality; f) security; g) social connection; h) family harmony; i) availability of leisure time; j) housing conditions and facilities [30].

c. In OECD, one excluded indicator is democracy. OECD is an international organization based in Paris, France, with members from 36 countries in which only 30 member countries adhere to the principles of representative democracy and free market economy.

Essentially, the subjective and objective indicators of happiness in 2017 SPTK refer to the following substantial points:

a. The 2017 SPTK' objective and subjective indicators expand along with global development.

- b. The evaluation of national development is beyond the GDP (not only based on economic aspect) due to:
- Limited economic indicator in representing well-being;
- The need for greater attention to social aspects in the development;
- The need for happiness index as a social development indicator.
- c. Self-evaluation by society regarding their experience and expectation.

The development of the theoretical framework of happiness of the 2017 SPTK is illustrated as follows:

Fig. 3 illustrates the development of the theoretical framework of happiness measurement in 2017. In the scheme, there are four crucial aspects for SPTK evaluation: happiness, life satisfaction, affection,

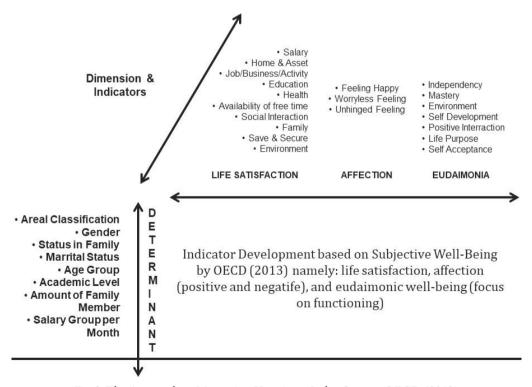


Fig. 3. The Approach to Measuring Happiness Index Source: OECD (2013)

and eudaimonia. Happiness is a result of life's evaluation describing a state of a good and meaningful life. It comprises three interrelated dimensions: life satisfaction, affection, and life's meaning. Life satisfaction evaluates the objective condition of society's ten essential life domains. Development programs can intervene in these domains. Referring to OECD, affection is a whole experience of life's emotions, describing two degrees of hedonism measurement (positive-negative effects) [30; 31]. According to Kahneman et al and OECD, eudaimonia refers to good psychological functioning or flourishing [14; 15; 30]. Positive psychology describes it as life's meaningfulness transcending one's self. This measurement refers to the indicators developed by Ryff and OECD [30; 401. The description of referential and transitional dimensions from 2014 to 2017 is as follows:

Fig. 4 explains the transition and elaboration of happiness index indicators from 2014 to 2017. The subjective indicators regarding life's domains are measured after

the objective indicators. The other subjective indicators are affection and eudaimonic well-being (directing individuals to live according to their true selves). Eudaimonia occurs when individuals engage in activities relevant to their lives and principles. The indicator of life satisfaction as the measurement for happiness index comprises an extended scope of life's domains [30]. The objective and subjective indicators of happiness in 2017 SPTK are described as follows:

Since there is SPTK based on the instrument's survey results, the development of the happiness index in Indonesia from 2014 to 2017 has a significant difference in measurement indicators. In 2014, the SPTK applied ten equally-conversed indicators, while in 2017, it applied three leading indicators separately (life satisfaction, affection, and eudaimonia) to differentiate between satisfaction and happiness. This categorization will give the policymakers better consideration over the target group's life satisfaction, emotion, or happiness.

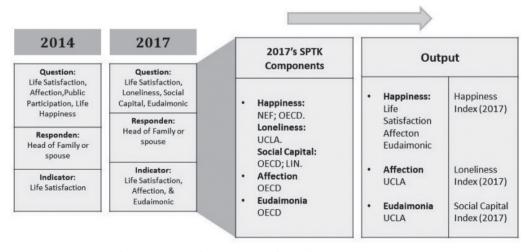


Fig. 4. The Transition of Happiness Index Indicator 2014 to 2017 Source: Indonesia Statistics (2020)

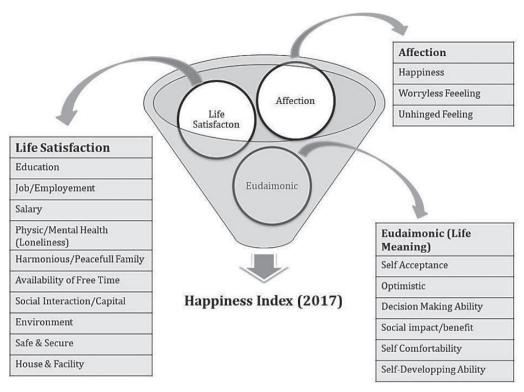


Fig. 5. Elaboration of the Happiness Index in 2017 Source: Indonesia Statistics (2020)

Mainstreaming the Policy of Happiness in the Special Region of Yogyakarta

The concept of happiness is essential in policymaking. As a policymaker, the government has to decide the best policy and guarantee its implementation for society's happiness. In addition, the policymakers of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (the Regional Secretary, Assistant Regional Secretary, Bureau Heads, *Paniradya Pati* (the policymakers of the Special Region of Yogyakarta), the Head of Regional Development Planning Agency, Social Service Department, Regional and Municipal Governments, and other regional apparatuses) need to organize a panel to raise the awareness of policymaking. Specifically, the panel may organize a training or work-

shop for the Policy and Planning Analysts, conduct sustainable joint research regarding happiness issues, planning happiness indicators, and measuring happiness indicators in the province, and monitor the internalization of happiness in the documents of the development plan. This emphasis is basically in line with the sociological culture of the people of Yogyakarta, which has a tendency to be highly inclusive by prioritizing a sense of social concern. This then contributes to the degree of satisfaction not only in private property, but also in collective progress and mutual empowerment within the community. This phenomenon also occurs in other developing countries that have implemented subjective welfare in policy formulation, namely in the Philippines [35]. In practice, the Philippines has succeeded in utilizing (in positive terminology) public trust to provide life satisfaction through the behavior of public institutions such as the police, congress, judiciary, service agencies, to the executive branch. This behavior then produces welfare that is not only material, but immaterial by accommodating the interests and convenience of the community. In addition, in another country, namely Bhutan, the country has succeeded in becoming a model as the happiest country in the world which has implemented various aspects of happiness for its people [7].

The cultural and social capitals in the province, such as cooperation and self-acceptance, are crucial for integrating the happiness issue in developing the province and the country. In addition, an understanding of happiness issues in development, an integration between happiness and documents of planning, such as RPJMD (Medium-Term Development Plan), RAD (Regional Budget Plan), or SDG (Sustainable Development Goals), and dissemination regarding the urgency of happiness issue for development may assist the integration as well. Although not all areas are suitable for this application, the findings of Fabian et al explain that this is a form of respect for policy subjects in the policy planning process, where this pattern results in an objective and impartial policy planning process, encourages the value of participation, and produces inclusive and deliberative policies [7]. This is at the same time an alternative way out in dealing with claims of failure as an indicator of progress and success which is only measured by gross domestic product or GDP figures [50].

In conducting a study regarding happiness in Yogyakarta, researchers may identify the happiness aspects that still need to be integrated into the planning documents, conducting studies at an official institution, namely the Mental Development Bureau. This identification concerns the characteris-

tics and specificity of the province in welcoming inclusivity, as well as conducting research and outreach. In addition, stakeholders are also strongly encouraged to disseminate the results of Bappeda Yogyakarta research on the content of the happiness index, upload them on the institution's social media, and conduct a systematic literature review on the characteristics of the province. This process is important in relation to building the mindset of stakeholders in Yogyakarta which will have an impact on policy makers to better appreciate public aspirations and participation in more inclusive and deliberative policies [35]. This honor certainly exceeds the expectations of economic and fiscal indicators that are unable to overcome the problem of social inequality in Yogyakarta.

In implementing the study, it is essential to ensure that the policymakers, technical executives, and other parties understand the concept of subjective well-being and have a similar perception of the topic. In addition, the dissemination of the materials must be comprehensive, and variables used to assess the subjective well-being must at least comprise the aspects of socio-cultural, economics, facilities and infrastructures. The variables must be classified into several aspects to simplify the identification of problems and solutions.

Subjective Well-Being in the Special Region of Yogyakarta: Empirical Review

In the context of social policy, happiness is an integral part of subjective well-being [49]. In many countries, the concept is significant in formulating a policy. However, only a few regions in Indonesia, including the Special Region of Yogyakarta, apply the concept in policymaking. In 2021, using the satisfaction and happiness index in Yogyakarta's policymaking positively affected the province's education, employment, and income. This province has a high life expectancy with an increased hap-

piness and satisfaction index in these three aspects. Lawrence et al stated that happiness and high socioeconomic status contribute to high life expectancy [18]. Yogyakarta is one of the provinces in Indonesia with an increased life expectancy. Explicitly, society lives with the government's regulation with various policies and programs regarding education, employment, and income. Presumably, when society is unsatisfied and unhappy with the three models, the happiness index or subjective well-being will not achieve a positive value.

Fig. 6 shows that on a national scale, out of 38 provinces in Indonesia, Yogyakarta's happiness index or subjective well-being on education implementation is in the seventh place. The index goes into the first quadrant or the highest 25% of provinces with life satisfaction in education. Yogyakarta is well-known as a student city. Several supporting aspects comprise the level of learning convenience for students from other areas, the number of universities and scholars,

cultural sites and history, and locals' hospitability. In addition, the safety level of Yogyakarta during daytime learning activity reached a score of 80.84, with a low level of crime setting at a score of 30.34 [28].

As an indicator of well-being, education is a significant component in Yogyakarta. Seligman stated that education is one of the foundations for achieving PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment) [43]. In addition, Goodman affirmed this statement by proving that the complex elements and subjective well-being data are relevant to Seligman's hypothesis [9]. The education component covers the Human Development Index, supporting foundations for students in Yogyakarta regarding positive emotions, attachment, and learning output, and how the government create a conducive environment for education access in the province.

Fig. 7 demonstrates that on a national scale, out of 38 provinces in Indonesia, Yog-

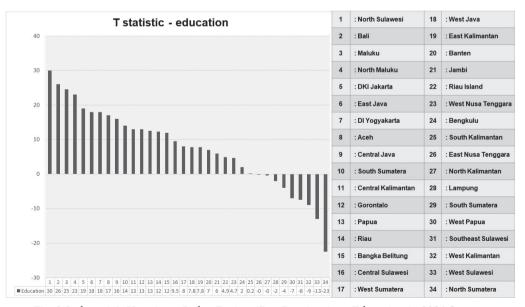


Fig. 6. Indonesia's Happiness Index Rating (Per-Province) on Education in 2021 Source: Indonesia Statistics (2022)

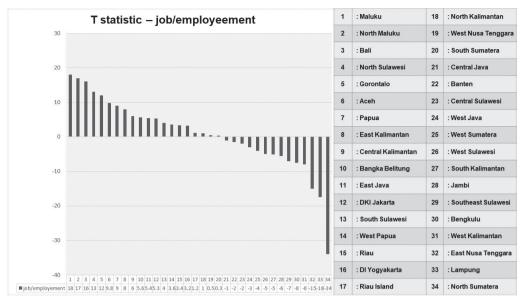


Fig. 7. Indonesia's Happiness Index Rating (Per-Province) on Employment in 2021 Source: Indonesia Statistics (2022)

yakarta's happiness index on employment is in the sixteenth place. The index goes into the second quadrant. Known as one of the cities with desirable tourism destinations after Bali and Raja Ampat, Yogyakarta's tourism has significantly decreased after 2020 due to the pandemic [39]. The decrease in satisfaction rate in positive employment occurred since many people depended on tourism sector jobs, such as transportation, tourism service, tourism products, culinary, home business, medium and large-scale industries, and formal occupation. Consequently, people strived to engage in many new jobs. According to VOA, in 2021, the pandemic affected 30000 tourism workers, 600 formal workers, 1200 travel agent workers, and 2600 tourism transport drivers and crews in Yogyakarta. In addition, tourism workers are vulnerable due to low and informal protection.

The studies on the correlation between employment and subjective well-being conducted in Asia resemble those conducted in Europe. In China, informal workers have lower subjective well-being than formal workers [10]. Huang et al reported that the other factors contributing to the low level of subjective well-being are the vulnerability of informal jobs, economic conditions (income and working hours), human capital, social capital (perceptions of social justice and community attachment), and urban environment [10]. Correspondingly, a study by Karabchuk and Soboleva on 27 European countries showed that informal jobs negatively affected the workers' subjective wellbeing [17]. Moreover, the study reported that the relatively strict EPL (Employment Protection Legislation) had caused dissatisfaction among the informal workers. Both studies by Huang et al, and Karabchuk and Soboleva support the phenomenon of work vulnerability and harmful regulation in Yogyakarta and how they affect the informal worker's subjective well-being [10; 17].

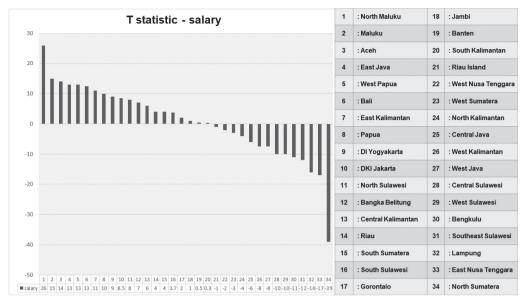


Fig. 8. Indonesia's Happiness Index Rating (Per-Province) on Income/Salary in 2021 Source: Indonesia Statistics (2022)

Occupation highly correlates with society's income. However, in Yogyakarta, low income does not necessarily result in an unsatisfied and unhappy society. Fig. 8 shows that Yogyakarta citizens are satisfied and happy with their income. On a national scale, out of 38 provinces in Indonesia, Yogyakarta's happiness index on income is in the ninth place and goes into the first quadrant. Yogyakarta's living standard is lower than other provinces despite the decrease in employment during the pandemic. In addition, the social and cultural capitals of its citizens are secure. With the traditional principle of "nrimo" (accepting reality as it is), the citizens do not impose materialistic urges on themselves.

Income affects society's subjective wellbeing. However, income rate does not directly proportional to subjective well-being. Studies by Yu and Chen, and Reyes-García et al reported contradictions in the economic paradigm, which considers that the economic rate determines society's quality of life [38; 52]. Yu and Chen found that subjective well-being will positively associate with income insofar as the social quality of the citizens is high enough to suppress negative emotions [52]. In addition, Reyes-García et al reported that the subjective well-being rate of rural society with relatively low income is similar to the one with absolute income in a country with a well-established economy [38]. They also stated that social comparison affects the subjective well-being rate in rural societies with relatively low incomes.

Conclusions

Eventually, beyond GDP proves that the GDP factor is only partially credible in measuring society's well-being and this shows weakness through claims of failure in the context of fulfilling policy aspirations (this is especially in the process of accommodating public interests and participation). This condition is no exception in Yogyakarta Province with different values from several other

provinces in Indonesia. This fact generates several assumptions. The first assumption is that the economic indicator has limited reach in representing well-being. Second, greater attention to social aspects in development occurs. Third, the happiness index represents the need for a progressive society indicator. People have various ways of interpreting happiness. They do not stick to specific conditions regardless of their Material possessions of GDP. The indicators used by each tribe, race, religion, and group in interpreting happiness are heterogeneous.

In conclusion, based on the variations of happiness meaning and theories, the measurement of happiness has three characteristics: objective, subjective, and psychological. The objective nature of happiness may refer to the objective list theory [37]. Meanwhile, Sen's most famous measurement is the capability approach [44]. In addition, subjective measurement is developed through a subjective assessment approach regarding the experienced situation, while psychological measurement adopts the theory-based approach regarding happiness pioneered

by Carol Ryff. The theory proposes three domains in measuring happiness: personal growth, life span development perspective, and positive mental health. In other practice, Martin Seligman developed the concept of Positive Psychology.

Furthermore, based on SPTK (Happiness Level Measurement Survey) data in 2014 and 2017 regarding the role of domain satisfaction in predicting happiness in Indonesia, the variables negatively affecting happiness are men, age, singlehood, low level of education, rural living, and low family income. On the contrary, the variables positively affecting happiness are women, high level of education, urban living, high family income, social relations, and satisfaction domains. In conducting studies regarding happiness in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, it is vital to identify aspects that still need to be integrated with the planning documents. Additionally, it is essential to conduct studies regarding the province's specialty on happiness, e.g., the studies of the Mental Development Bureau of the Special Region of Yogyakarta in welcoming inclusiveness.

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