IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY OF LIFE SATISFACTION SURVEY, DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

1. Introduction

The concepts of happiness and life satisfaction have been discussed philosophically from different aspects for a long time worldwide. The concept of happiness has been described in various ways, ranging from the subjective personal appreciation of material and non-material values of individuals throughout years, to the possession of values be appreciated by the society, their combination at various rates, and satisfaction with the living led. However, the predominant understanding about happiness as perceived when discussing happiness today is whether an individual feels happy or not as an output of self-assessment within the individual himself/herself.

Measurement of the level of happiness through collection of field data started in the second half of '40s. For an example of a detailed database about the theoretical and applied studies in this field, see "World Data Base of Happiness"[1]. There is also a periodical named "Journal of Happiness Studies" regarding life satisfaction. The first survey dealing with happiness in Turkey, as an official statistical study, was conducted by Turkish Statistics Agency (TurkStat) under the name "Life Satisfaction Survey" (LSS) in 2003.

LSS is also the first survey of TurkStat with social contents and also subjective elements. The survey measures the general satisfaction of individuals in the areas of happiness, hopes and basic life, as well as their satisfaction with public services in these areas.

2. Objective of the Survey

Life Satisfaction Survey measures the satisfaction of individuals in the areas of subjective perception of happiness, health, social security, formal education, labor life, income, personal security and justice services, and personal development, and follows up the changes in these areas in time.

3. History

The first LSS was conducted in November 2003 as an additional module Household Budget Survey. The survey has been conducted regularly every year since 2003. In 2003, data were collected through face-to-face interviews with 5,304 people in 2,140 households. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews with 6,714 people in 5,867 households 2004; 6,983 people in 2,880 households in 2005, 6,432 people in 2,880 households in 2006; 6,442 people in 2,880 households in 2007; 6,465 people in 2,878 households in 2008; and 7,546 people in 3,561 households in 2009. 2010 Life Satisfaction Survey was conducted through interviews with 7,027 people in 3,440 households, and 2011 Survey through interviews with 7,368 people in 3,551 households.

Prior to the field application in 2004, some modifications were needed in the original questionnaire. After obtaining the 2003 data, it was found that the number of observations was insufficient for some questions to make an assessment. Therefore, many questions in 2003 questionnaire were deleted from the 2004 questionnaire.

Questions regarding municipal services and sub-items relating to existing public services, which could be addressed in the scope of satisfaction with public services but not included in the 2003 questionnaire were added to the questionnaire in 2004. In order to collect comments about Turkey's European Union (EU) membership which was a current discussion subject in 2004, questions covering these subjects were included in the 2004 LSS questionnaire.

As from 2009, questions regarding the issues deemed important by other people in the vicinity, the importance attached by other people in the vicinity to the self-perceptions of individuals, the perception of community pressure, the characteristics deemed to be ensuring prestige in the community, and the interest of individuals in social matters were included in the questionnaire. In 2011, questions regarding satisfaction with transportation services and with the inspection of food production enterprises by municipalities and questions regarding what the three most important issues of the country are were added to the questionnaire.

4. Scope

The survey covers households in all settlement units within the boundaries of Turkey. Individuals in schools, dormitories, hotels, nurseries, old age asylums, hospitals and prisons, which are defined as institutional population, and individuals in military barracks and military guesthouses are not covered by the survey. Furthermore, settlement areas where it is considered that sufficient number of sample households cannot be reached such that the population does not exceed 1 percent of the total population (small villages, nomad camping sites, hamlets, etc.) were also excluded from the survey.

*Population Covered: T*he survey covered household members aged 18 and older, who are living within the boundaries of Republic of Turkey.

Application period and number of households: The survey was conducted in November through interviews with 7,368 people from 3,551 sample households.

5. Methodology

The sampling method of the survey is two-stage cluster sampling. In the first stage, clusters (blocks) consisting of 100 households on average were selected into the sample, and in the second stage, sample addresses were determined from the clusters using a systematic selection method. A total of 398 clusters were selected into the sample, including 145 rural clusters and 253 urban clusters. A total of 4,196 households were selected in to the sample, of which 1,160 households (8 households from each cluster) were from rural settlements, and 3,036 households (12 households from each cluster) were from urban settlements.

Estimation size: The sample size of the survey was calculated such that estimations could be produced at Turkey-Total, Urban Total-Rural Total levels. Substitutes were not used in the survey since non-response rates have been taken into account while calculating the sample size.

Population Weights: Weighting was applied to the dataset obtained as a result of sampling, since selection probabilities were used as a requirement of multi-stage sample design. The final weights to be determined consist of a combination of many factors. Initial weights were calculated by taking the reverse of selection probabilities. Exclusion and non-response adjustments were done. Iterations were done through the Integrated Calibration method which also uses projected population rates, and the projected population (excluding institutional population) that must be estimated and total number of households across Turkey were obtained using the final adjustment coefficient.

5.1 Variables in the questionnaire

1. Household Living Conditions

2. Individual Happiness and Satisfaction

3. Satisfaction with Public Services

4. Expectations, Personal Development and Hopes

5. Values

6. Perspective of EU Membership

5.2 Classifications Used

The main classifications used in the survey are the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE Rev.1) and International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE, 93).

6. Definitions and Concepts

Rural-Urban: Of all the settlement units within the boundaries of Republic of Turkey, those with a population of 20,001 and more were recognized as urban, and those with a population of 20,000 and less have been recognized as rural.

Household: One person or group of persons with or without a family relationship who live in the same house or in the same part of the house, who meet basic requirements together and take part in the facilities and management of the household.

Reference person: One of the household members who usually lives in that house, who is responsible for the income and expenditures of the household and who actually manages the household.

Individual: A human being who constitutes the society with others and who has an independent, own existence and identity although he/she takes on a meaning with the society. For the purposes of the survey, he/she is a member of household who is aged 18 and more.

Happiness: The situation characterized by the absence of sorrow, sadness and suffering, and the presence of joy, pleasure and satisfaction; the general state of satisfaction with life.

Satisfaction: The feeling of satisfaction resulting from the meeting of needs and desires.

Level of Hope: The rating of level of hope by survey respondents, as "very hopeful", "hopeful", "not hopeful" and "not hopeful at all".

Unmarried: An individual who has never married, has divorced, whose spouse has died or who lives apart from his/her spouse.

Individuals covered by social security: Individuals who benefit from the services of Social Security Institution.

Employed: Individuals aged 18 and more who is engaged in an economic activity or whose affiliation with a job continues as of the survey period, as a wage-earner, per diem earner, self-employed, employer or unpaid family worker.

Disposable net household income: The sum of income earned by each income-earning household member, income on capital or property (fees, profit, interest, rental), pensions, widow-orphan salaries and old age salaries, non-refundable education grants and similar transfers.

Income earned on job: The salaries, remunerations, per diems and entrepreneur income earned by individuals as a result of economic activity.

Student Selection Exam (ÖSS): The exam in which graduates of upper secondary education attend to be placed to a higher education program.

Level Determination Exam (SBS): The exam system applied to students beginning from primary education 6th grade to be placed to upper secondary schools (Science and Anatolian Schools, etc.) which admit students by exam.

Private Tutoring Institution: Institutions which offer students paid tutoring service to students outside school.

Perceived Level of Welfare: The level where the individuals surveyed position themselves on a 11-step ladder, where the lowest step is 0 and the highest step is 10.

Referendum: Ballot measure intended to determine the will of public on a constitutional amendment, adoption of laws or other very important matters.

Community pressure: The situation in which an individual feels the pressure of other people as a perspective, attitude, stance, behavior, etc. due to his/her congenial characteristics, his/her acts in line with the traditions and customs of his/her culture, his/her socioeconomic position in the community, his/her preferences, etc.