

Subjective Well-Being among Female Migrant Workers: the Role of Social Support, Self-Efficacy and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

This study focused on the influences of social support (SS), self-efficacy (SE) and organizational commitment (OC) on subjective well-being (SWB) among female migrant workers in Taiwan. A questionnaire survey was conducted with 247 samples of Filipinos working in Taiwan. The findings empirically revealed that SS, SE and OC can positively affect SWB separately. It was found that OC is an important factor in improving SWB, because it plays a partial mediating role between SS and SWB, and between SE and SWB. SE was found to be a key factor in improving OC and SWB as it plays a complete mediating role between SS and OC, and between SS and SWB. In case when SS, SE and OC are considered simultaneously, SWB could be affected by SS indirectly via SE and OC. The findings provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological processes of factors affecting SWB among female migrant workers.

Keywords: Migrant Worker, Social Support, Self-Efficacy, Organizational Commitment, Subjective Well-Being

1. Introduction

Nowadays many countries and regions are facing the challenge of population aging. Higher levels of medical development can increase people's life expectancy, which means that the number of elderly people, over 65 years old, is increasing. Declining fertility rate yields an increasing proportion of elder people. The proportion of elder people is commonly applied to measure the level of population aging. World Health Organization defined the proportion of elder people exceeding 7% as the "aging society", the proportion of elder people exceeding 14% as the "aged society", and the proportion of elder people exceeding 20% as the "super-aged society". Population aging may have some negative effects on social and economic development. Declining working-age population is one negative effect of aging population. It is known that the more developed the country, the more elderly population will be. A way to solve out the problem of workforce decline is to encourage international laborers migrate from some countries with younger populations.

International labor migration has become a common feature in the world. As in some developing countries, especially in rural areas, one of the main reasons of labor migration is financial consideration, such as poverty, lack of employed opportunities, lower local wages comparing to migration destinations, and so on (Li, 1999; King & Skeldon, 2010; Bélanger & Haemmerli, 2019). People work abroad to make money to improve their quality of life. Laborers migrate by themselves for overseas employment and have to separate their family members for a period of time after signing employment contracts. Such a behavior is a compromise, especially for women living in the Asia-Pacific region. Traditionally, women play an important role in undertaking homework and providing personal care for their children and parents (Hugo, 2002; Aminuddin *et al.*, 2019). It is trivial that the impact of international female labor migration on left-behind family members is an important issue for research. It was found that remittances from migrant women contribute in economic conditions of their family (Adams & Cuenca, 2010; Antman, 2010; Graham *et al.*, 2012; Aminuddin *et al.*, 2019). Potential negative impacts on the care of the left-behind members of their families have also been addressed (Graham, Jordan & Yeoh, 2015; Noveria, 2015; Aminuddin *et al.*, 2019; Pratikto, Yazid & Dewi, 2020). Researchers have paid some attention in the social and economic impacts of female labor migrants, but few studies have explored the perspectives on subjective well-being (SWB) of migrant women themselves, even left-behind parents care about the safety and well-being of their daughters while working abroad. This gave rise to the motivation of the present study to examine how international female labor migrants feel about their SWB. This study also considered three important explanatory variables, including social support (SS), self-efficacy (SE), and organizational commitment (OC). An attempt was made to examine the causal relationships between the four variables.

At the end of 2019, the fertility rate for Taiwan was 1.050, and the corresponding proportion of elder people was 15.28% (Department of Household Registration, 2021). National Development Council (2020) reported that one-fifth Taiwanese will be over 65 years old in 2025, implying that Taiwan will become a super-aged society. Coupled with the new southbound policy promoted by Taiwan government, many international labor migrants came from Southeast Asia, including the Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. In this regard, the research population

of this study was chosen to be Filipino female migrant workers to investigate the relationships between SS, SE, OC and SWB.

2. Literature Review

SWB refers to how an individual assesses his or her current situation of life. The assessment includes personal feelings of life satisfaction, positive and negative affect (Diener *et al.*, 2017; Diener *et al.*, 2018). As labor migrants leave their family to work abroad, it is necessary to evaluate their SWB. Scientific researchers generally suggest that external and internal factors should be considered while predicting SWB (Diener *et al.*, 1999). External factors depend on others and cannot be influenced or directed by the individual. SS is one of the external factors and is known as an important predictor of SWB. SS refers to the perception that support is available from other people, and the actually received support (Harandi, Taghinasab & Nayeri, 2017; Uchino *et al.*, 2018). SS and SWB have a positive and significant causal relationship (DashtBozorgi & Homaei, 2018; Ji *et al.*, 2019). What has the most impact over SWB of labor migrants are internal factors such as SE and OC. SE is concerned with an individual's belief in his or her ability to complete a task (Bandura, 1986). More specifically, labor migrants' SE is concerned with labor migrants' beliefs in their ability to achieve the desired job objectives. SE is positively associated with SWB (Briki, 2018; Liu, Zeng & Quan, 2018). OC is composed of three components: affective, continuance and normative commitments, which refers to the positive feeling of employees staying and participating in organizational activities, the intention of employees to stay in the organization due to high turnover costs, and the feeling that employees are obligated to continue working in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019). Labor migrants with higher OC will feel more comfortable participating in work. There is a significantly positive relationship between OC and SWB (Clarence, 2017; Schulz, Martin & Meyer, 2017).

Turning to the relationships between SS, SE and OC, it is found that the pairwise relationships are all causality. According to a two-stage cluster sample of 401 Iranian nurses, Chegini *et al.* (2019) found that OC has a significant positive relationship with SE. On the basis of a cluster sample of 321 teachers from 33 middle schools, Demir (2020) showed that SE has a positive impact on OC directly. Based on a sample of 420 fitness employees in the United States, Woo, Lang and Lee (2017) observed that SS is positively related to OC. In line with a purposive sample of 300 married career woman in Medan, Rahmayati and Khairunnida (2020) indicated that SS has a positive impact on OC. Kim, Seo and Shin (2019) conducted a survey of 130 emergency room nurses, and the results showed that SE and SS are positively correlated. Conducting a survey with 146 Saudi nurses, Azim and Al-Halawani (2020) indicated that SS positively affect employees' SE. On the basis of the literature review, it can be seen that all possible pairwise combinations of SS, SE, OC and SWB have positive causality. Noted that few researches have considered the relationships among the four variables simultaneously. This study intended to identify these causal relationships to provide some suggestions to labor migrants and some related managers.

3. Research Design

The purpose of this study was to clarify the relationships among SS, SE, OC and SWB. The hypothetical model was constructed, where SS was treated as an independent variable, SWB was the dependent variable, and SE and OC were the mediating variables. Statistical analyses were carried out in an effort to find how the SWB would be influenced by other variables.

3.1 Research Framework and Hypotheses

In line with the research purpose and literature reviews, a research framework can be figured out as that given in Figure 1, where the ten hypotheses were listed as follows:

- H1: SS has a positive impact on SE.
- H2: SS has a positive impact on OC.
- H3: SS has a positive impact on SWB.
- H4: SE has a positive impact on OC.
- H5: SE has a positive impact on SWB.
- H6: OC has a positive impact on SWB.
- H7: SE plays a mediating role between SS and OC.
- H8: SE plays a mediating role between SS and SWB.
- H9: OC plays a mediating role between SS and SWB.
- H10: OC plays a mediating role between SE and SWB.

These hypotheses would be verified empirically according to the results from the follow-up data analysis.

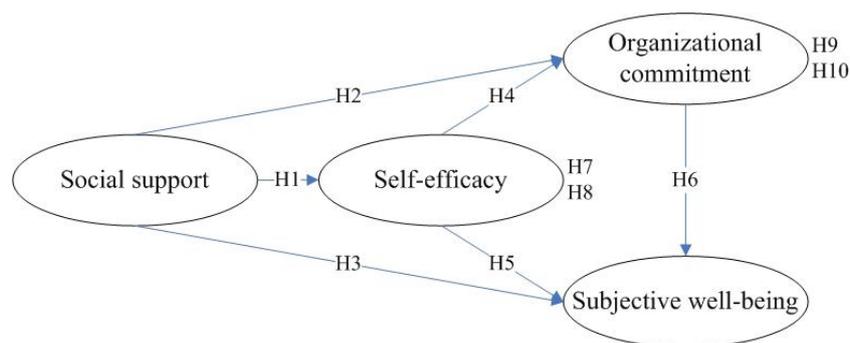


Figure 1: Research framework

Each respondent was provided with a self-administered questionnaire, which consisting of 80 items to measure SS, SE, OC and SWB. 12 questionnaire items for SS were adapted from Freeman, Coffee and Rees (2011), and Lin (2016). 25 questionnaire items for SE were adapted from Riggs *et al.* (1994), Zhang and Schwarzer (1995), and Mosley *et al.* (2008). 18 questionnaire items for OC were adapted from Allen and Meyer (1990), and Mayer, Allen and Smith (1993). 25 questionnaire items for SWB were adapted from Kim (2014), and Li *et al.* (2017). By using a seven-point Likert-type scale, all items were rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). In addition to these, some demographic characteristics were measured by nominal scale, which including marital status, number of children, age, education level, and years of work experience.

3.2 Sample

The present study analyzed quantitatively the survey data with the support of software package SPSS 18.0. Purposive sampling approach was applied to draw a sample of migrant employees working in Taichung City. Data collection was conducted from April to June 2020 by a self-administered questionnaire survey. Participants were female Filipinos who came Taiwan for work. 6 out of 253 collected responses were invalid so that 247 samples can be used in the following statistical analysis. Among the 247 valid Filipino migrant workers, 47.8% ($n=118$) of them were married. As for the number of children, 30.0% ($n=74$) of the respondents have one child, followed by no child (29.1%, $n=72$), and then two children (19.8%, $n=49$). 48.6% ($n=120$) of the respondents were belonged to the age of 21~30 years old, followed by 31~40 years old, comprising 40.1% ($n=99$). The majority respondents hold bachelor's degrees, accounted for 52.6% ($n=130$), and 40.5% ($n=100$) of the respondents were with education level below senior high school. Regarding to years of work experience, the majority respondents worked between 4~6 years for 51.0% ($n=126$), 26.3% ($n=65$) of the respondents were below 3 years, and the minority were above 10 years, comprising 9.1% ($n=20$).

4. Results

First of all, factor analysis with principal component method was conducted to confirm the validity of constructs. Factors were extracted according to the rule of eigenvalue-greater-than-one, and varimax method was applied for component rotations. Following Kaiser (1974) recommendation, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value should be higher than 0.7, and Bartlett's test of sphericity should be significant. From Table 1, the KMO values of SS, SE, OC and SWB were respectively given by 0.895, 0.889, 0.884 and 0.884, and the four Bartlett's tests were all significant, implying that the research scales were suitable for factor analysis. Factor loadings were ranged from 0.551 to 0.936, and the cumulative variance extractions were belonged to 76.338%~85.360%, showing that the construct validities were all acceptable.

Table 1: Summary of factor analysis

Construct	KMO value	Bartlett test of sphericity		Factor loading	% of variance
		Chi-square	df		
SS	0.895	3338.898***	66	0.632~0.922	85.360
SE	0.889	6261.565***	300	0.551~0.913	78.028
OC	0.884	4483.257***	153	0.555~0.893	77.532
SWB	0.884	5957.699***	300	0.602~0.936	76.338

Note: * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

Table 2 presented the means, standard deviations (SD), Cronbach's alphas, and Pearson's correlation coefficients. The values listed in parentheses on the diagonal of Table 2 were Cronbach's alphas, which was applied to evaluate the internal consistency of reliability. As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha values were ranged from 0.905 to 0.945, confirming all measures used in this study were high on construct reliability. All the correlation coefficients between the four constructs were significantly positive. As expected, SS was positively correlated with SE ($r=0.420$, $p<0.001$), OC ($r=0.200$, $p<0.01$) and SWB ($r=0.241$, $p<0.001$), SE was positively correlated with OC ($r=0.560$, $p<0.001$) and SWB ($r=0.565$, $p<0.001$), and OC was positively correlated with SWB ($r=0.697$, $p<0.001$). As we

known, Pearson's correlation coefficient is equal to the standardized regression coefficient of simple linear regression model. The six causal relationships among the four constructs can therefore be concluded significantly positive. In other words, hypotheses H1 to H6 were supported.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alphas, and correlation coefficients

Construct	Mean	SD	SS	SE	OC	SWB
SS	5.4103	0.89431	(0.945)			
SE	5.2607	0.73967	0.420***	(0.934)		
OC	4.8264	0.90451	0.200**	0.560***	(0.938)	
SWB	4.9642	0.76816	0.241***	0.565***	0.697***	(0.905)

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

4.1 Mediating Effect of SE

By using hierarchical regression analysis, the research hypotheses H7 and H8 were tested, and the results were shown in Tables 3 and 4. It can be seen from models 1 to 3 in Table 3 that the three standardized regression coefficients were all significant. Comparing the coefficients of SS in models 2 and 4, it changed from 0.200 ($p < 0.01$) to -0.043 ($p > 0.05$), implying that SE played a complete mediating role between SS and OC following the analytical approach proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). Hence, hypothesis H7 was supported. Analogously, as shown in models 1 to 3 in Table 4, the three standardized regression coefficients were all significant. Comparing the coefficients of SS in models 2 and 4, it changed from 0.241 ($p < 0.001$) to 0.005 ($p > 0.05$), implying that SE played a complete mediating role between SS and SWB. Thus, hypothesis H8 was supported.

Table 3: Mediating effect of SE between SS and OC

Independent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	SE	OC	OC	OC
SS	0.420***	0.200**	-	-0.043
SE	-	-	0.560***	0.579***
R ²	0.176	0.040	0.314	0.316
Adjusted R ²	0.173	0.036	0.311	0.310
F-value	52.408***	10.182**	112.196***	56.267***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 4: Mediating effect of SE between SS and SWB

Independent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	SE	SWB	SWB	SWB
SS	0.420***	0.241***	-	0.005
SE	-	-	0.565***	0.563***
R ²	0.176	0.058	0.320	0.320
Adjusted R ²	0.173	0.054	0.317	0.314
F-value	52.408***	15.146***	115.173***	57.356***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

4.2 Mediating Effect of OC

In what follows, the research hypotheses H9 and H10 were tested to assess the mediating effect of OC. From models 1 to 3 in Table 5, it can be seen that the three standardized regression coefficients were all significant. Comparing the coefficients of SS in models 2 and 4, it changed from 0.241 ($p < 0.001$) to 0.106 ($p < 0.05$), implying that OC played a partial mediating role between SS and SWB. Hence, hypothesis H9 was supported.

Table 5: Mediating effect of OC between SS and SWB

Independent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	OC	SWB	SWB	SWB
SS	0.200**	0.241***	-	0.106*
OC	-	-	0.697***	0.676***
R ²	0.040	0.058	0.486	0.497
Adjusted R ²	0.036	0.054	0.484	0.493
F-value	10.182**	15.146***	231.732***	120.509***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Similarly, the three standardized regression coefficients given in models 1 to 3 in Table 6 were all significant. Comparing the coefficients of SE in models 2 and 4, it changed from 0.565 ($p < 0.001$) to 0.255 ($p < 0.001$), implying that OC played a partial mediating role between SE and SWB. Thus, hypothesis H10 was supported.

Table 6: Mediating effect of OC between SE and SWB

Independent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	OC	SWB	SWB	SWB
SE	0.560***	0.565***	-	0.255***
OC	-	-	0.697***	0.554***
R ²	0.314	0.320	0.486	0.531
Adjusted R ²	0.311	0.317	0.484	0.527
F-value	112.196***	115.173***	231.732***	137.907***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

4.3 Path Analysis

According to the above results, the ten hypotheses were all supported. Specifically, SE played a complete mediating role between SS and OC, and between SS and SWB. OC played a partial mediating role between SS and SWB, and between SE and SWB. In order to understand the framework more comprehensively, a path analysis was further carried out, and the results were shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Results of path analysis

Independent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	SE	OC	SWB
SS	0.420***	-0.043	0.029
SE	-	0.579***	0.242***
OC	-	-	0.556***
R ²	0.176	0.316	0.531
Adjusted R ²	0.173	0.310	0.525
F-value	52.408***	56.267***	91.811***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

It is known that independent variables applied in a multiple regression model should be selected to be statistically significant. In case when a regression coefficient is not significant, the corresponding independent variable should be excluded from the regression model. It can be seen from Table 7 that the coefficient of SS was not significant in models 2 and 3. Causal relationships of SS to OC and SWB were then removed to obtain the final version of path analysis, which was shown in Figure 2. Table 8 presented the direct, indirect and total effects.

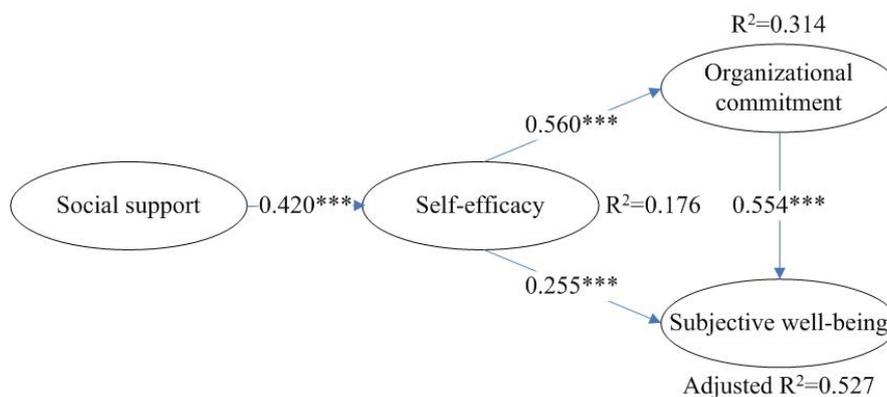


Figure 2: Concluding result of path analysis

Table 8: Results of effect analysis

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
SE	SS	0.420	-	0.420
	OC	-	0.235	0.235
SWB	SE	0.560	-	0.560
	SS	-	0.237	0.237
	OC	0.255	0.310	0.565
		0.554	-	0.554

Table 8 indicated that SE has the highest total effect on SWB. A part of total effect of SE, indirect effect, would not exist without OC. Total effect of OC was slightly smaller than that of SE. As for SS, it can affect SWB indirectly via the mediation of SE and OC. On the basis of total effect on OC, SE was superior to SS. SS cannot affect OC in the absence of SE.

5. Conclusions

This study aimed to empirically test an integrated model linked to SWB. According to the simple and multiple regression analyses, all the causal relationships were significantly positive, and the mediation effects of SE and OC were hold. In particular, the positive impacts of SS on OC and SWB were found to be completely mediated by SE. A path analysis was then worked out to study the framework in more detail. Although we analyzed direct effects of SS on both OC and SWB, no significant direct effects were found. Effects of SS on OC and SWB were indirect, through its relationship with SE after thorough deliberation. Specifically, the indirect effects of SS were through SE and OC. SS should therefore be less important than SE and OC.

Both the two internal factors, SE and OC, positively influence SWB. Laborers work overseas can try to improve their SE and OC to achieve higher level of SWB. Migrant workers can participate in various training courses to learn some new knowledge and skills to improve their abilities such that they have the confidence to do their job well. They are also encouraged to take part in the organizational activities and make some new friends, so that they can feel much better to remain in the organization.

The analytic results showed the psychological process of migrant workers as they received support from others. It first positively affects SE. If left-behind family members, friends, coworkers, organizations and governments express their care, it would be helpful for migrant workers to achieve more confidence in daily works. Migrant workers have confidence with the ability to work, emotionally thereby enhancing their SWB. In the meanwhile, the migrant workers' SWB can be improved indirectly through the mediating effect of their commitments to the organizations. The greater the support from others, the higher will be the levels of SWB. Hence, to reduce negative affect, increase positive affect and life satisfaction of migrant workers, SS can be regarded as the strategic direction of human resource management.

The results of this study were based on the data from female Filipino migrant workers, future researches are advised to select populations of labor migrants from different home countries to conduct cross-cultural studies to compare the cultural and ethnic differences. Researchers are encouraged to explore other external and internal factors of SWB at the same time. Longitudinal studies are also recommended, especially to study the influences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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