

Economic and Psychological Well-being in Pandemic Times

BESMIRA LAHI

Department of Psychology, University of New York Tirana,
ALBANIA

INES NURJA

Department of Economic and Finance, University of New York Tirana,
ALBANIA

Abstract: - The pervasive role of the COVID-19 pandemic in the economy and subjective well-being is the focus of this research study. There is extensive evidence suggesting a relationship between psychological well-being and income. In this study, we make use of data collected during the pandemic in the fall of 2021 from a cross-sectional online survey of Albanian adults living and working in the country. This study examines the association between average income level, age, civil status, and level of education with psychological well-being during the pandemic. We examined the data through descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests. We synthesize a wide range of information from the literature on well-being and economy and use the Wellbeing Index as a standardized scale. According to the study's findings, income level is relatively related to happiness. The general well-being of the population under investigation is below average. Young and single people have a higher quality of life. In conclusion, economic and social variables are essential and related to psychological well-being.

Key-Words: economic well-being, psychological well-being, social factors, incomes, level of education

Received: October 10, 2022. Revised: February 24, 2023. Accepted: March 15, 2023. Published: March 31, 2023.

1 Introduction

Referring to INSTAT statistics, the Albanian population as of 2021 consisted of 2,793,592, and the average age was 38.2 years, [28]. Therefore, this research has targeted the adult population to understand their psychological well-being and economic concerns in contemporary times.

The literature review points us to studies examining human well-being in four main domains: education, health, living conditions, and economy, [11]. Others believe there are various types of well-being, but there are two dimensions of psychological well-being: positive and negative effects, [15]. In clinical terms, adult population well-being refers to the presence of mental health; according to Maslow, well-being refers to self-actualization, and by Jung, well-being is the fulfilment of individuation, [5]. Throughout a literature review, well-being includes four other domains, (i) orientations such as values, ideals, and priorities; (ii) behaviors representing engagement in different activities like parties, working groups, etc.; (iii) experiences including feelings, emotions, and meaning; and (iv) functioning, representing how able, accomplished, healthy, and self-regulating the

individual is. The latter two, including experiences and functioning, are named well-being outcomes, and their meaning aligns with the concepts of well-being used in this paper. Since it is not easy to measure and identify well-being, it is essential to study its short-term and long-term outcomes referring to experiences and functioning, [13].

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we noticed that the well-being agenda is so closely related to healthy individuals versus easily contaminated ones since stress and other psychological disorders may affect the individuals' immunity. However, economic well-being is far more than a concept related to the health sector. There is an increasing interest in considering well-being as an economic and societal objective, [8]. Essentially, well-being has swayed over the healthcare system, as "interest in well-being as an economic and societal goal is growing. The Roadmap for Wellbeing in the Western Balkans 2021-2025 highlights the importance of economy and well-being in the European Programme of Work 2020-2025. "People want authorities to guarantee their right to universal access to quality care without fear of financial hardship, effective protection against health emergencies, and the ability to thrive in healthy

communities where public health actions and appropriate public policies secure a better life in an economy of wellbeing, [25]"

The Corona crisis has consequences for the economy of Albania, likewise, other Western Balkan countries, the recovery of whom will depend on measures taken by the authorities, [22]. In many cases, the well-being economy is "an alternative for guiding policy development, [7]"

Besides operationalizing wellbeing and describing ways to measure it, it remains in the interest of studies to use wellbeing data to further design policies for a country. Some authors suggest that "the science of wellbeing is theoretically, metrically, and empirically ripe enough to complement economic measures of prosperity for public policy, [1]." The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 3 states that "ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages is essential to sustainable development, [33]." Insights from papers suggest that "to reposition economic growth, especially the year-on-year increase in GDP, as a means to an end, not as the end in itself, [2]" we should aim to promote well-being.

The relationship between well-being and income

One of the paper's goals is to examine the concepts of well-being and its connection to the economy. Some researchers consider subjective well-being a potential social indicator since subjective outcomes influence social and economic changes that influence the quality of life, [24]. Using the concepts of income and employment triggers several social conditions like happiness and well-being; therefore, we are interested in studying their relationship.

Since subjective well-being empowers productivity and physical and mental health but is sensitive to economic changes, does that mean money makes people happier? If yes, are we expecting a higher level of psychological well-being in people with relatively high-income levels? While some evidence based on the relatively long (29) years of this study indicates that: "psychological well-being may reflect the accumulation of socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage over decades, [16]", little is known concerning the impact of the pandemic, individual's well-being and economic issues in Albania. However, there is also evidence that Albanian's socioeconomic level during communism was moderately low; this status is

associated with lower psychological pressure and stress. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that patterns of economic outcomes could have an impact on the population's feelings, functioning, and well-being. (ii) Metrics of wellbeing. There are different methods and psychometric scales used to measure subjective well-being. Through the years, studies have shown that diverse study methods and scales report one common understanding: subjective well-being is related to better health and longevity. As the Covid-19 pandemic refers to a stressful major event in life, studies acknowledge the effects of these types of events on one's immunity. However, sometimes, the effects of happiness and well-being are unclear. In France, in 1998, the national mortality rate from myocardial infarction in French men decreased when they won the World Cup in 1998, probably because of a national day off work and the euphoria of a vital sports game, [4].

(iii) Others identify two forms of well-being: feelings, named experienced well-being, and evaluative well-being, related to how people evaluate their life, [17].

The study shows a significant correlational relationship between income and negative emotion, [27]. Other studies have examined not only income but financial capability on the individuals' psychological health, reporting that having this high capacity is essential, especially "in times of economic recessions when people feel anxious and stressed about their financial well-being, [23]". We have examined the impact of financial capability on an individual's psychological health, independent of the effects associated with income, financial resources, and financial shocks more generally. High financial capability is particularly crucial during economic recessions when many people experience anxiety and stress about their financial well-being. Being financially capable, they can manage their income, understand how to use credit and debt effectively, have a solid internal locus of control, and develop other abilities that yield psychological benefits. Research suggests that higher incomes may improve individuals' day-to-day well-being, but there is no evidence of a well-being plateau, [17].

Research considering that subjective well-being affects health and longevity in healthy populations is compelling; however, it needs further study, [9]. General well-being as a function of income and education has been the research focus on a sample

of African-Americans and Caucasians at two points. Research shows that the more educated groups are happier than others and that income is a resource that covaries with well-being, [10].

The relationship between well-being and age

The average life expectancies have increased by 30 years over the last century, yet our system has failed to adapt to this reality, [18]. However, this does not mean that with the rise of age, people are happier, and there have continuously been contradictions and discussions about the relationship between these two variables, considering the degree of satisfaction with life and longevity. Moreover, we need to develop unique programs related to the issue of the elderly, including local government, psychologists and social workers, and health and education secretaries as recipients of these recommendations, [3].

Does well-being improve with age? Some studies show that aged people living with their family members are happier than others in residency homes, [6]. The studies on ageism and psychological well-being indicate that the increase in age is a statistically significant predictor for lowered psychological well-being in older adults. When they feel proud of their age group, they do not have negative feelings, consider age a positive process, estimate their body system, and adapt to their goals, [14]. Research conducted with the elderly in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic shows that the elders use productive and religious activities as main coping strategies, [12].

Meanwhile, other studies suggest that people's economic situation and concerns about the economy mostly correlate with subjective well-being in the long and short term, [19]. A study conducted in China in 2013 showed that "age was not always a strong significant predictor of subjective well-being," and authors suggested paying attention to the specific contents of subjective well-being, [26]. In light of Covid-19 affecting the individuals' responsibility in terms of power to cope with the challenges emotionally and financially, it was considered relevant to see the relationship between age and reported psychological well-being during the pandemic.

2 Problem Formulation

We consider personal category income and use official statistical data on household income.

Regarding the income variable, as studies suggest, low levels of household and reductions in household income "are associated with increased risk for mental disorders, [20]" reflecting the lack of psychological well-being. Well-being is measured by how people experience it; intrinsic and extrinsic values of subjective well-being are important and affect the individuals' lives and those around them.

The objectives of this paper are as the following: (i) to measure the general well-being of the population (of this study) during the pandemic times: (ii) to understand how is the relationship between well-being and income during the pandemic: (iii) to understand how is the relationship between well-being and other socio-demographic variables such as age, level of education and civil status.

RQ1: What is the average well-being of people living in pandemics in Albania?

RQ2: What is the relationship between well-being and income during the pandemic?

RQ3: What is the relationship between well-being and age, civil status, and levels of education during the pandemic times?

2.1 Methodology

Research Design and Statistical analysis

A cross-sectional survey was conducted in the Fall of 2021 in Albania through social media and different networks to gather information from potential respondents. The 212 respondents provided consent before filling in the questionnaire. We conducted the SPSS and the analysis of descriptive statistics and Chi-square test statistical analysis.

Instruments of measurement

The World Health Organization 5 Well-Being Index (WHO-5)

We measured with a single self-report scale, the "Well-being index" of the Psychiatric Research Unit, whose Collaborating Centre in Mental Health enquiring (version 1999) how respondents have been feeling during the last two weeks, [29]. The scale is standardized and translated into Albanian, containing six declarations that respondents have to rank from never (1) to all the time (6). The higher the cumulative number of all declarations, the higher the level of well-being. The psychometric

properties of the WHO-5 indicate validity. It is an already standardized and translated instrument into Albanian and 30 other languages.

Relative Income

The relative income of respondents was a self-declared data gathered throughout the survey. The declarations varied from the lowest payment to the higher taxed one.

Controlling variables

Some socio-demographic variables, including age, gender, and educational level, were gathered and used to conduct the analysis.

3 Problem Solution

3.1 General well-being during the Pandemic

Considering that the pandemic times compromised life in different dimensions, researchers were interested to see the implication of the Covid-19 pandemic time in the Albanian population, whose economy is rather sensitive. Respondents evaluated their psychological well-being by referring to their feelings during the last two weeks. This evaluation ranged from 1-No time, the lowest score, to 6-All of the time, the highest score. A high score would show a high quality of life with a range between 5 (minimum level) to 30 (highest level of psychological well-being). If we refer to the instrument's items, responses rank between 3- 4; specifically, respondents have been feeling moderately cheerful, active, fresh, and relatively filled with interest.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on Wellbeing Index

During the last week, I have:	N	M in	M ax	Mea n	Std. Deviat ion
Been cheerful and in good spirits	212	1	6	3.27	1.31
Been active and vigorous	211	1	6	3.28	1.343
Woken up feeling fresh	212	1	6	3.1	1.414
My daily life is filled with interests	212	1	6	3.73	1.521
Been calmed and relaxed	212	1	6	3.14	1.334

Table 1.1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mi n	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Wellbeing Index	211	5.0	30.0	16.49	5.92
Valid N (listwise)	211				

Through 212 responses, we see that the average level of well-being is 16.49. We analyze that subjective well-being is in the medium range: people have been feeling somehow good during the pandemic times.

3.2 Wellbeing and Grouped Revenues

In this section of our study, we aim to see how the psychological well-being of individuals refers to economic well-being. Firstly, we observe how the economic situation has changed in Albanian families over the last months, and we identify how the distribution of revenues per level of education is.

Table 2. Change in the financial situation of your family in the last 12 months

	It has worsened	It has worsened very much	Has improved	Has improved very much	I do not know
Until 40.000 ALL	32.20%	5.60%	8.90%	1.10%	10.00 %
40.000 - 60.000 ALL	40.70%	6.80%	10.20 %	0.00%	3.40%
60.000 - 95.000 ALL	22.90%	0.00%	8.60%	0.00%	0.00%
Over 95.000 ALL	14.30%	0.00%	14.30 %	10.70 %	3.60%
Total	30.70%	4.20%	9.90%	1.90%	5.70%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.366a	15	0.003
Likelihood Ratio	34.25	15	0.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.754	1	0.029
N of Valid Cases	212		

13 cells (54.2%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .53.

The Chi-square tests analyzed the relationship between grouped revenues and the perception that the economic situation has changed during the last year. As a result of the Chi-square analysis, we conclude that the more the income increases, the more individuals perceive that their situation has worsened. The individuals with the lowest incomes have perceived the deterioration of their economic conditions during Covid-19. On the other hand, individuals with the highest incomes are more stable in their financial situation in their families. Incomes affect a lot of individuals' perceptions regarding their economic state; that is especially sensitive to individuals with low incomes.

Raise of economic problems during the pandemic

We analyzed how the grouped revenues are distributed among the population under study, referring to their level of education. Table 2.1. shows individuals holding a university degree, 50% of the cases are to 40.000 ALL/342 Euro, as per the exchange rate of the Albanian Bank, where 1 Euro=116.9 ALL, reported on November 15th, 2022), with minimum monthly salary, [31].

Table 2.1. Grouped revenues within the level of education

Educational level	Until 40.000 ALL	40.000-60.000 ALL	60.000-95.000 ALL	Over 95.000 ALL
High School	60.0%	26.7%	3.3%	10.0%
Post-university	16.0%	32.0%	36.0%	16.0%
University	48.5%	26.5%	12.1%	12.9%
Total	42.5%	27.8%	16.5%	13.2%

They feel underestimated and not motivated because they are not well paid. Only 13% of the individuals with a university level of education receive a high salary category. The post-university level of education has a good income level; therefore, even the average psychological well-being index is higher in this category. Meanwhile, for the high school category, the distribution of the revenues is in line with the level of education they have received. 60% of the high school level category have the minimum income level (until 40.000 ALL/month). The 10% of the high school category has the highest monthly salary level.

Then, Chi-square analyzed the association between the level of education and perceptions about the rise of economic problems compared with two years ago.

Table 2.2. Crosstabulation: Perceptions on economic problems compared with two years ago as per the educational level

Educational level	I Disagree	I agree	Neutral	I disagree	I totally Agree
High School	3.40%	51.70%	20.70%	6.90%	17.20%
Post-university level	4.00%	62.00%	12.00%	2.00%	20.00%
University level	2.40%	55.10%	17.30%	3.10%	22.00%
Total	2.90%	56.30%	16.50%	3.40%	20.90%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.406a	8	0.906
Likelihood Ratio	3.246	8	0.918

Covid-19 times reflects more economic problems in comparison with two years ago. Despite the level of education, all groups reflect concern regarding their economic situation; roughly 77% of the individuals have perceived more economic problems. Only 6.3% of them perceived that they did not have economic problems. The people who present the most serious economic problems are the people who belong to post-university education in 82% of the cases. Our data suggests there is no relationship between individuals' perception about the economy and their levels of education.

Then, we referred to the official data from INSTAT aiming to see how the economic situation for the Albanian population has been over the last few years; following these data, as presented in table 3 below, 43% of the Albanian population lives with a minimum salary of up to 40.000 ALL, corresponding approximately to 342 Euro. Referring to the table below, 23% of the employed population

has an average monthly salary of 60.000-95.000 ALL, corresponding to 513-812.6 Euro, [34]. This data shows that Albanians' salaries are shrinking, and every increase in price affects their everyday living.

Table 3. Distribution of employee contributors by average gross monthly wage intervals by Groupings wage, Type and Quarter

	2021- 2	2021- 3	2021- 4	2022- 1	2022- 2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Up to the minimum wage	33.5	33.3	29.9	21.1	23.0
Minimum wage - 40.000 ALL	16.1	16.1	17.0	23.3	20.0
40.001- 50.000 ALL	11.0	11.1	11.4	13.6	14.0
50.001- 60.000 ALL	7.8	8.0	7.8	8.7	8.8
60.001- 95.000 ALL	22.4	22.4	23.0	23.5	23.8
95.001- 120.000 ALL	4.0	4.0	4.7	4.3	4.5
Over 120.000 ALL	5.2	5.2	6.2	5.5	5.9

Source: INSTAT:

http://databaza.instat.gov.al/pxweb/sq/DST/START__PK P__PTM/PTM031/table/tableViewLayout1/

3.3 Consumer Price and Its Relation to the Average Indicator

Aiming to see the relationship between the Consumer Price and its average indicator, referring to the official sources from INSTAT Albania, we gathered the following data:

(a) The economic well-being of Albanian families per month in 2021, referring to the Annual Change of Consumer Price Index from INSTAT official sources, table 4 as below, [32]. Albanian families use 41,3% of the overall budget for food and non-alcoholic beverages. The data shows that every cost increase affects the Albanian family budget because most of them use this budget for food and non-alcoholic drinks. In these moments, every inflation rise directly influences the well-being of Albanians as it brings them to survival

mode. Table 4 refers to the household budget consumption of the leading 12 consumer groups. According to the data, the Albanian budget has changed drastically from 6% to over 14.6%, and this rise will continue.

Table 4. Household budget structure by the leading 12 groups

Main consumer groups	2021	2020	2019	2018**
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	41.3	41.6	41.3	44.7
Alcoholic beverages, tobacco	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.4
Clothing and footwear	4.6	4.6	5.2	4.2
Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels	10.0	10.0	10.1	10.3
Furnishing, household equipment, etc.	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.3
Health	5.4	5.4	4.3	4.1
Transport	6.3	6.2	5.9	6.6
Communication	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.5
Recreation and Culture	2.8	2.8	3.8	2.6
Education	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.0
Restaurants and hotels	5.5	5.6	4.9	4.6
Miscellaneous goods and services	6.2	6.3	7.3	6.7
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: INSTAT official statistics on Household Budget Survey:

<http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/social-condition/household-budget-survey/#tab2>

(b) The distribution of household consumption expenditures by deciles reports that approximately 90% of the households have 83.9 % of the total consumption per month. It indicated a monthly average consumption expenditure per household of 70,788 ALL; meanwhile, the other 10th percent of

households spend 16.1 % of the total consumption with an average consumption expenditure per household of 122,242 ALL, [35].

Table 5. The monthly average consumption expenditures of households and the deciles ratio of 10/90

	2017		2018	
	Monthly average consumption expenditures of households	Mean household size	Monthly average consumption expenditures of households	Mean household size
10% of Households (with the highest expenditures)	152,079	2.6	122,242	2.1
90% of the rest of the Households	64,659	3.9	70,788	3.8
Average consumption expenditure	73,400	3.7	75,935	3.7
The ratio 10/90	2.4		1.7	

Source: *INSTAT official statistics*
http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6322/hbs_2018_.pdf

Data, as reported by INSTAT, shows that: "In 2018, the average consumption expenditures by deciles have a decrease of 19.6 pct in the average consumption expenditures for the 10th pct with the highest expenditures and an increase of 9.5 pct for the remaining 90th pct of households compared with the year 2017; as a result, the ratio of the deciles in 2018, for this indicator showed a decrease in the inequality from 2.4 to 1.7, compared to 2017, [35]".

(c) Another indicator showing that the crises will seriously impact Albania, affecting well-being, is the distribution of consumption expenditure in Albania. "At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion refers to the individuals at risk of poverty or severely materially deprived or living in a household with very low work intensity," as reported by INSTAT. Table 6 below shows a distinctive inequity, [40].

Table 6. The leading Indicators of Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion, 2017-2020

Indicators	2017	2018	2019	2020
At the risk of poverty rate (%)	23,7	23,4	23,0	21,8
Severe material deprivation (%)	41,1	38,3	37,1	34,7
Very low work intensity (%)	14,4	13,3	12,4	11,6
At the risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) (%)	51,8	49,0	46,2	43,4

Source: *Official INSTAT data*
<http://www.instat.gov.al/media/9409/income-and-living-condition-silc2020final.pdf>

These findings suggest that economic well-being is a crucial variable in the Covid-19 pandemic situation in Albania.

3.4 Wellbeing and Age Category

We aim to see and understand the relationship between well-being and age during the pandemic. Our findings show that the age category with the highest level of well-being is the youth category (Mean=16.9% for the 18-24 years old; Mean=16.46 for the 25-34 years old). The younger individuals are, the better their quality of life is. The more individuals over 55 years old (Mean=14 for 55-64 years old; for the category 65-70 is 11), the lower their psychological well-being is, showing that quality of life and happiness decreases with aging. Our findings suggest that these categories did not feel good during the pandemic; moreover, they are the most vulnerable ages for infection.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics on Wellbeing Index and age

Age category:		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
18-24	Wellbeing Index	114	5	30	16.9386	6.55445
25-34	Wellbeing Index	50	9	30	16.46	4.98246
35-44	Wellbeing Index	30	8	27	15.6333	5.0411
45-54	Wellbeing Index	11	8	25	16	4.79583
55-64	Wellbeing Index	5	8	25	14	7.31437
65-70	Wellbeing Index	1	11	11	11	.

The highest level of well-being is reported from the age category 18-24, with an average well-being index of 16.93, followed by the 25-34 age category showing an average psychological well-being index of 16.46. From the young middle ages to old ages, the decrease in psychological well-being is quite distinctive. The psychological well-being index drops to 11 (clearly below the medium level) in the retirement category of 65+, reporting that they have not been feeling good.

3.5 Wellbeing and Level of Education

Regarding the level of education, results show that even though in all measurements, the well-being level is moderate; however, it does not refer to being happy or very happy. They are indicating in our example the high school educational level (Mean=17.6), which reflects better well-being and positive perception in comparison with the university (Mean=16) and post-university level (Mean=16.9).

Table 8. The average well-being indicator refers to the level of education

Educational Level		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
High school level	Wellbeing Index	29	7	30	17.6552	6.60777
Post university level	Wellbeing Index	50	5	30	16.94	6.01498
University level	Wellbeing Index	132	5	30	16.0682	5.72419

In our results, their psychological well-being is positive despite their economic level since their expectations about their economic situation align with reality.

3.6. Wellbeing and Civil Status

Results show that the happiest as per civil status is the single individuals; accordingly, the single individuals representing 61% of the population of the study, have better well-being (Mean=15.57) than others being married with children (Mean=15.9) or without children (Mean=15). Findings show that individuals with a partner have a higher level of well-being than others. Meanwhile, divorced and, or widowed individuals have the lowest average well-being (Mean=10).

Table 9. The average well-being indicator refers to the civil status

Civil Status		N	Min.	Max.	Mean
Co-living partner	Wellbeing Index	7	13	25	18.5714
Single	Wellbeing Index	128	5	30	16.8672
Engaged	Wellbeing Index	4	14	19	16.5
Married with children	Wellbeing Index	55	8	30	15.9455
Married without children	Wellbeing Index	15	8	23	15.1333
Others (divorced, widowed)	Wellbeing Index	2	10	11	10.5

4 Discussion

While we discuss the psychological and economic domains in the context of well-being, little research is investigating this perspective during the Covid-19 pandemic in Albania. A non-EU country with a delicate economy adhering and targeting the UN SDG to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages (SDG, goal nr 3), [30], [36]. This article may be considered a decent contribution to the growing evidence on the relationship between psychological well-being and economic well-being, which is seen not only at the individual level but also at a country and broader level.

This research included data from the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021 in Albania, which covered a sample of 212 adults, were part of this research. The data analysis carried out through SPSS, through descriptive and qualitative chi-square tests were analyzed and then further integrated with official sources of information from INSTAT. Recent studies show that the Chi-Square statistic is commonly used for testing relationships between categorical variables [37], [38],[39].

There is much to discuss regarding the need for good physical and psychological health and, on the other hand, a good economy. The key results revealed that the most important features of psychological well-being for the Albanian population during the pandemic were the income level (economic situation) and the age group of people.

Firstly, a general evaluation of the psychological well-being index was investigated by reporting a modest level of experience and functioning in people. These individuals reported having felt somehow good, with an average level of life satisfaction; moreover, the relation between subjective well-being and the economy needs further investigation. The annual Change of Consumer Price Index from INSTAT official sources shows that Albanian families use 41,3% of the overall budget for food and non-alcoholic beverages. The Albanians' salaries are low, leading them to be in survival mode in most cases. The household consumption expenditures by deciles report that approximately 90% of the households have 83.9 pct of the total consumption per month, which is relatively high; moreover, indicators of Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion, 2017-2020 show that there is evident inequity in Albania. Referring to the reviewed literature, the economy of Western Balkan countries depends on the measures

taken by the authorities, but since the country was earlier hit by the Earthquake of November 2019 and soon after, by the Covid-19 pandemic, this was not easy to manage the well-being of the country.

Secondly, in light of these crises, the Albanian family's economic situation targets the surviving domains of food and non-alcoholic beverages. This perspective of survival does not allow individuals to be feeling very good. It instead increases their worries and insecurities about their life and the economy. Chi-square tests showed that perceptions about the rise of economic problems are positive and refer to levels of education, whose grouped revenues were part of the analysis. The university level of education represents more economic issues and worries. According to our results, economic well-being needs to be seriously considered for subjective well-being, affecting health and longevity, as the study reports.

Thirdly, subjective well-being is affected by age, which differs from the individuals' social status. The younger individuals are and the more they have positive subjective well-being. It may be related to their economic potential to work and be financially rewarded. From mid-life to retirement, psychological well-being drops due to economic force, retirement, and losing people in life. In this perspective, psychological well-being is related to economic well-being too. The existing literature reports that "interest is growing in well-being as an economic and societal objective", [8].

Limitations: Findings generated from a database with random respondents, not conventional ones; however, findings cannot be generalized to the whole population. The findings are relevant for the timeframe gathered; however, they could be valuable sources to estimate well-being and its relationship with other socio-demographic and income variables and anticipate how these mechanisms work in crises and difficulties to prevent and for further care. Regardless of these limitations, this research provides suggestions about the effect of the economic and social variables on the quality of life as in crises, psychological disturbances arise. Moreover, the financial level's impact on psychological well-being is significant since it affects mental health; therefore, a well-being agenda implemented through its policies in our country with continuous economic flows is needed. This study contributes to the identification of an existing pattern between psychological and economic well-being in Albania. Further

measurements of well-being should be used to contribute to public sector policies.

5 Conclusion

This research paper represents findings deriving from descriptive and qualitative analysis from a database referring to Albanian adults' perceptions gathered during the pandemic when limitations were still in place and the Omicron wave had captured the country. The important statistical data from the official sources of INSTAT added important information to this paper which aims to understand the well-being of the Albanian population, referring to their quality of life and happiness. For this purpose, we used socio-demographic variables to see their relationship with the overall well-being index. The findings show that the general well-being index is under the average value. The Albanian adults report they do not have good well-being during the pandemic, their quality of life is not good, and they are not happy. Although the literature majorly suggests that the rise in incomes is associated with the rise in well-being, our findings show that during the pandemic, incomes are relatively significant only for the middle class who belong to the revenue category. Group ages who reflect the higher level of well-being are the youngsters who are happier than the other age groups. The level of education whose average well-being means is higher than the high school level of education. Regarding family arrangements and commitments, the civil status category reporting the higher average mean of well-being is a single category.

Acknowledgments:

The authors are thankful to the editor and the reviewers, who contribute to improving this article by providing valuable comments regarding its quality and presentation.

References:

- [1] Adler A, Seligman M. E. P, Using wellbeing for public policy: Theory, measurement, and recommendations, *International Journal of Wellbeing*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2016, pp.17.
- [2] Allin P, Official Statistics and the Politics of Sustainable Development, *WSEAS Transactions on Environment And Development*, Vol. 13, 2017, pp.51.
- [3] Tascón A, Vargas P.A.F, Luz J, Jizela J.L, Lozano J.M, Peñaranda D, The Longevity in A Population of a Country in Development, *WSEAS Transactions On Environment And Development*, Vol.14, 2018, pp.691.
- [4] Berthier F, Boulay F, Lower myocardial infarction mortality in French men the day France won the 1998 World Cup of football, *Heart*, Vol. 89, No.5, 2003, pp. 555–556.
- [5] Carol D. Ryff, Psychological well-being in adult life, *Current directions in Psychological Science*, Vol. 4, 1995, pp. 99-104.
- [6] Chaudhary Sh, Srivastava Sk, Happiness and ageing: a comparative study, *Journal of Psychology Savannah, Ga.*, Vol. 55, 2018, pp.108-113.
- [7] Costume L, Sutton P, Mortensen LF, Kubiszewski I, Costanza R, Trebeck K, Pulselli FM, Giannetti BF, Fioramonti L, Overcoming the Myths of Mainstream Economics to Enable a New Wellbeing Economy, *Sustainability*, Vol. 11, No. 16, 2019, pp.4374.
- [8] Cylus J, Smith PC, The economy of well-being: What is it and what are the implications for health?, *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 369, 2020, pp.1-4.
- [9] Diener E, Chan M, Happy People Live Longer: Subjective Well-Being Contributes to Health and Longevity, *Applied psychology: health and well-being*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2011, pp.1–43.
- [10] Diener E, Diener M, The relationship between income and subjective well-being: "Relative or absolute?", *Social Indicators Research: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal for Quality-of-Life Measurement*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 1993, pp.195-223.
- [11] Haq R, Zia U, Multidimensional Wellbeing: An Index of Quality of Life in a Developing Economy, *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 114, 2013, pp. 997–1012.
- [12] Herodian H, Suwarti S, Estria S. R, *Consortium Psychiatricum*, Psychological Wellbeing, and Psychological Distress in the Elderly during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2022, pp.93.
- [13] Huta Veronika, An overview of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being concepts, In L. Reinecke & M. B. Oliver (Eds.), *Handbook of media use and well-being*, Routledge, 2015

- [14] Kang H, Kim H. Ageism and Psychological Well-Being Among Older Adults: A Systematic Review, *Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine*, Vol. 8, 2022, pp.1-22.
- [15] M. Powell Lawton (1983) The varieties of wellbeing, *Experimental Aging Research*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1983, pp. 65-72.
- [16] Kaplan GA, Shema SJ, Leite CM, Socioeconomic determinants of psychological well-being: the role of income, income change, and income sources during 29 years, *Ann Epidemiol.* Vol. 18, No. 7, 2018, pp.531-537.
- [17] Killingsworth M A, Experienced well-being rises with income, even above \$75,000 per year, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 118, No. 4, 2021, pp.1-16.
- [18] Kim ES, Tkatch R, Martin D, MacLeod S, Sandy L, Yeh C. Resilient Aging: Psychological Well-Being and Social Well-Being as Targets for the Promotion of Healthy Aging, *Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine*, Vol. 7, 2021, pp.1-12.
- [19] Moro-Egido, Al., Navarro M, Sánchez A, Changes in Subjective Well-Being Over Time: Economic and Social Resources do Matter, *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Vol. 23, 2022, pp.20-22.
- [20] Sareen J, Afifi TO, McMillan KA, Asmundson GJG, Relationship Between Household Income and Mental Disorders: Findings From a Population-Based Longitudinal Study, *Arch Gen Psychiatry*, Vol. 68, No. 4, 2011, pp.419-427.
- [21] Stefaniak AR, Blaxton JM, Bergeman CS. Age Differences in Types and Perceptions of Daily Stress, *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, Vol. 94, 2022.
- [22] Svrtinov G.V, Trajkovska G.O, Kacarski M.E, Koleva B, The impact of Covid-19 on Western Balkans economies, *Journal of Economics*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2020, pp.1-12.
- [23] Taylor M, Jenkins S, Sacker A, Financial capability, income, and psychological wellbeing, *Research Paper in Economics*, No. 18, 2011, pp. 22-23.
- [24] Tay, L., Kuykendall, L., Diener, E, Satisfaction, and Happiness – The Bright Side of Quality of Life, *Global Handbook of Quality of Life*, Springer.
- [25] WHO Regional Office for Europe, Roadmap for health and well-being in the Western Balkans (2021–2025): *European Programme of Work (2020–2025)* – “United Action for Better Health, 2021.
- [26] Xing Z, Huang L, The Relationship Between Age and Subjective Well-Being: Evidence from Five Capital Cities in Mainland China, *The Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 117, No. 3, 2014, pp.743–756.
- [27] Yu Z, Chen L, Income and Well-Being: Relative Income and Absolute Income Weaken Negative Emotion, but Only Relative Income Improves Positive Emotion, *Frontiers Psychology*, Vol. 7, 2012, pp. 1-6.
- [28] Institute of Statistics, ‘Albanians’ population’, 2022. [Online]. Available: http://www.instat.gov.al/media/9828/popullsia-me-1-janar-2022_final-15-04-2022.pdf. [Accessed: 20 Oct. 2022].
- [29] Psychiatric Research Unit, ‘WHO 5 indexes of Wellbeing’, [Online]. Available: https://www.psykiatri-regionh.dk/who-5/Documents/WHO5_Albanian.pdf. [Accessed: 10 Sept. 2021].
- [30] United Nations, ‘Sustainable Development Goals’, [Online]. Available: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/>. [Accessed: 10 April 2022].
- [31] Bank of Albania, ‘Official exchange rate’, [Online]. Available: https://www.bankofalbania.org/Tregjet/Kursi_zyrtar_i_kembimit/. [Accessed: 15 Nov. 2022].
- [32] Institute of Statistics, ‘Household Budget Survey’, [Online]. Available: <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/social-condition/household-budget-survey/#tab2>. [Accessed: 1 Oct. 2022].
- [33] Council of Europe, ‘3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages’, [Online]. Available: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/un-agenda-2030/goal-3>. [Accessed: 10 Sept. 2022].
- [34] Institute of Statistics, ‘Distribution of contributory employees according to average gross monthly salary intervals according to Salary Groupings, Variable and Quarter’, 2022. [Online]. Available: http://databaza.instat.gov.al/pxweb/sq/DST/S TART__PKP__PTM/PTM031/. [Accessed: 10 Sept. 2022].

- [35] Institute of Statistics, 'Household Budget Survey 2018', 2019. [Online]. Available: http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6322/hbs_2018_.pdf. [Accessed: 10 Sept. 2022].
- [36] World Health Organization, 'Targets of Sustainable Development Goals', [Online]. Available: <https://www.who.int/europe/about-us/our-work/sustainable-development-goals/targets-of-sustainable-development-goal-3>. [Accessed: 15 Sept. 2022].
- [37] Statistics Solution, 'Using Chi-Square Statistic in Research', [Online]. Available: <https://www.statisticssolutions.com/free-resources/directory-of-statistical-analyses/using-chi-square-statistic-in-research/>. [Accessed: 18 Sept. 2022].
- [38] Kent State University libraries, 'SPSS tutorials: chi-square test of independence', [Online]. Available: <https://libguides.library.kent.edu/spss/chisquare>. [Accessed: 20 Aug. 2022].
- [39] University of Southampton, 'Chi Square', [Online]. Available: https://www.southampton.ac.uk/passs/full_time_education/bivariate_analysis/chi_square.page. [Accessed: 20 Aug. 2022].
- [40] Institute of Statistics, 'Income and Living Conditions in Albania, 2020', [Online]. Available: <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/9409/income-and-living-condition-silc2020final.pdf>. [Accessed: 20 Sept. 2022].

Contribution of Individual Authors to the Creation of a Scientific Article (Ghostwriting Policy)

-Besmira Lahi carried out the conceptualization, methodology, project administration, resources, supervision, visualization, and writing.

-Ines Nurja is responsible for data curation, formal analysis, investigation, software, writing, review, and editing.

Both authors discussed the results and contributed to the manuscript.

Sources of funding for research presented in a scientific article or scientific article itself

This research did not receive any funding.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare that is relevant to the content of this article.

Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (Attribution 4.0 International, CC BY 4.0)

This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0

https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.en_US