

INFLUENCING FACTORS OF SATISFACTION WITH LIFE AMONG SPICES PRODUCER-GATHERERS IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Understanding life satisfaction across populations is imperative in the well-being of nations, as people who are satisfied with their lives are often positive about life, live longer, happier, and fulfilled lives. Empirical discussions over time have emphasized the significant influence of income and income groups on the life satisfaction of individuals. This study, however, aimed at ascertaining the influence of occupation on the life satisfaction of rural households. A multistage sampling procedure was employed to select 78 spice producer-gatherers in Imo state, Nigeria, whose occupation is cultivating and gathering spices. The study revealed that a large proportion of respondents were male (51.3%), married (59.0%), educated (78.3%), and had a large household size (56.8%). The study revealed that hot pepper and ginger were largely produced, while Alligator pepper and Ethiopian pepper were predominantly gathered in the state. The majority, 84.6% and 79.5% of respondents, were satisfied with the relationship with their children and with their social relationships, respectively. Also, 48.2% and 47.4% of respondents respectively disagreed with having all the important things they want in life and changing almost nothing about their lives. The majority (61.5%) showed a high level of satisfaction with life, with a mean score of 27.8 (SD = 7.2). Marital status, education, and participation in social organizations influenced the lifesatisfaction of spice producer-gatherers as significant relationships were revealed ($\chi^2=2.636$; χ^2 =6.777 and r=0.224, p<0.05). Education should be encouraged among rural households, as well as participation in social organizations, as activities and interactions in these organizations influence life satisfaction and enhance household wellbeing.

Keywords: Life satisfaction, Producer-gatherers, Satisfaction with life scale, Spices

INTRODUCTION

Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole. It is an assessment of the overall conditions of existence, as derived from a comparison of an aspirations to his individual's achievements (Saricam, 2015). It comprises high levels of positive affect (being happy, pleased, joyful), lack of negative affect (anger, depression, sadness), and high life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). Life satisfaction constitutes the cognitive dimension of SWB, which refers to individuals' global evaluation of their own lives. Satisfaction with one's life implies contentment with or acceptance of one's life circumstances or fulfillment of wants and needs for one's life as a whole. In essence, life satisfaction relies to a large extent on an individual's judgments and not those considered as true by others. It is a cognitive measure of how people assess their own lives, representing various evaluations, such as positive and negative, that people make of their lives and the affective reactions to their expectations (OECD, 2013).

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), it is an index of people's ability to self-actualize, i.e., to be masters of their destiny. Life satisfaction forms part of a broader suite of indices used in measuring development



progress, along with others such as social cohesion, inequality, security, and health. Its assessment has evolved as a valuable tool for informing policies that aim at improving the well-being of citizens. Well-being is multidimensional and generated by a range of conditions beyond income. It has been acknowledged that policies and programs target material conditions of citizens, not for their end, but to increase their satisfaction with life, as material conditions alone do not create the conditions required for the good life. Therefore, as opined by Cummins (2005), it is crucial to measure subjective well-being, an aggregate of people's experiences and evaluations across various individual life domains. As reported by Stiglitz et al. (2018), the use of well-being metrics in policymaking aims at reducing the negative impacts everyday of occurrences and crises. The terms well-being, quality of life, subjective well-being (SWB), happiness, and life satisfaction are often used interchangeably; however, quality of life and well-being refer to dimensions of observable and perceived indicators, while SWB and life satisfaction are limited to individuals' perceptions about their own lives (OECD, 2013; Eurostat, 2015).

Furthermore, as opined by UNDP (2015), quality of life and well-being are based on the theory of capabilities, choices, functioning of individuals reflected in the basic dimensions of the UNDP human development index. On the other hand, life satisfaction is used as a proxy for an individual's utility and a key indicator of well-being, as self-reported satisfaction correlates with the theoretical concept of well-being. Happiness, well-being, SWB, and life satisfaction describe how people feel and how satisfied they are with their lives. Individuals with high well-being experience life satisfaction, frequent joy, and only infrequently experience unpleasant emotions such as sadness, anger, and anxiety. People with low well-being are dissatisfied with life, experience little joy and affection, and frequently feel negative emotions. It is a reflection of the importance of people's subjective perceptions of their current ability to function as compared with their own internalized standards of what is ideal or possible. Drivers of life satisfaction are useful in identifying potential target populations and priorities for development interventions.

This study would contribute to the broader literature on the understanding of the life satisfaction of agricultural entrepreneurs who are responsible for the overall success of their enterprise. People with high levels of life satisfaction are generally more inclined to interpret everyday life experiences in a light, and individuals positive experience positive emotions tend to report higher life satisfaction (Kahneman and Riis, 2005). Given the pivotal role of small farmers and entrepreneurs in the rural economy, it is important to understand how their occupation contributes to their satisfaction with life to ensure the continuity of their enterprise. As reported by Frey and Stutzer (2001), researchers in well-being studies have generally agreed that subjective measures of well-being, i.e., self-reported life satisfaction indices, accurately measure well-being. Agriculture is an important sector that contributes significantly to industry and other service sectors in the form of inputs and raw materials (Bairwa et al., 2014). It is crucial to the country's economic structure and prosperity as it generates the majority of national revenue, provides job possibilities, and is the prerequisite for food security and nutrition of every country. It is important, therefore, to ensure that farmers are satisfied and assess the level of satisfaction with the lives of stakeholders involved in agricultural production for the sustainable development of other sectors as well as the human race. It will also ensure continuity of agricultural



enterprises, farming sustainability, and promote family succession.

The focus of this study is on life satisfaction, which is a commonly used evaluative measure of well-being; it is a novel research aimed at ascertaining the influence of enterprise on satisfaction with life of rural households. This study attempts to ascertain the life satisfaction of spice producergatherers who are farmers who deliberately cultivate spices in addition to gathering spices from the wild or from semidomesticated areas. Spices are aromatic substances or mixtures of vegetable origin obtained from indigenous or exotic sources used for the purpose of flavoring, coloring, enhancing, or imparting the appeal of foods and beverages (Adebayo, 2009; Olife et al., 2013). They are not usually cultivated like other horticultural crops- vegetables, crops, and other basic crops. They are still largely gathered from the wild, where they are found in their natural habitats by spice gatherers; on the other hand, they are included in cropping systems by farmers referred to as spice producers. Spice producer-gatherers are those who consciously allocate their time and resources between gathering spices from the wild and deliberately producing on their farms or homesteads. They engage in this persistent mix of spices gathering and deliberate low-level production for self-use, home use or trade (Adewale and Oladeji, 2021). Assessing satisfaction with life of all actors in the agricultural value chain is essential for developing suitable policy initiatives that will address their needs and demands. It is also necessary to ascertain the level of satisfaction with life of those living in rural areas to ensure that agricultural production processes remain sustainable, fight poverty, ensure food security and nutrition, as well as improve the well-being of both rural and urban citizens. Specifically, identify respondents' study will demographic characteristics, specific

enterprise attributes, satisfaction with life, and level of life satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Respondents were selected using a multistage sampling procedure. Primary data was obtained using a purposive random sampling method. The rainforest zone, noted for its abundance of spices and features that are amenable to agricultural production and activities. purposively gathering was selected. Furthermore, Imo state was purposively selected for its array of spices that occur naturally in the wild and the large population of farmers who deliberately cultivate and utilize spices. At the first stage, ten percent of the Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly selected: Okigwe, Ikeduru, and Isiala-Mbano. At the second stage, from each LGA, 2 communities with intensity of spices enterprise purposively selected; In Okigwe LGA, Umulolo and Alamanu were selected. In Ikeduru LGA, Amawanozuzu and Uzoagba, while in Isiala-mbano LGA, Amaraku and Ibeme communities were selected. At the third stage, thirty percent of households whose livelihood is premised on spices production and gathering were purposively selected to give 78 respondents. Data on demographic characteristics of respondents, the attributes of spices production and gathering were collected using a wellstructured questionnaire, which was analyzed with descriptive - frequency counts, percents, mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics like chi-square and Pearson product-moment correlation.

Satisfaction with life was assessed using an individual subjective rating approach of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, 1984), which measures overall life satisfaction. The scale was adapted for this study by changing the original 5-point Likert scale to a 3-point rating scale to make it easier for respondents, most of whom had basic education, to



understand. Participants responded to 15 statements evaluating life satisfaction. They rated each statement on the 3-point scale, where 3 indicates agreement (AGR), 2 indicates undecided (UND), and 1 indicates disagreement (DSG). Mean scores below 2.0 indicate low life satisfaction, while scores of 2.0 or higher reflect high life satisfaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION Demographic characteristics of respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents (Table 1) reveal that a large proportion (51.3%) of respondents were male, showing that men participated more in the production and gathering of spices than women in Imo state. This might be attributed to the land tenural system, which gives preference to males inheriting land from their parents over females. As submitted by Alawode (2020), land title arrangements in Nigeria usually ignore women's traditional right to own and have access to land. While only 17.9% of respondents were single, 23.1% were widowed, and a larger proportion (59.0%) were married, implying that the majority have a higher level of family responsibilities and will take advantage of opportunities that will enhance the wellbeing of their household. Age distribution of respondents showed that 29.5% of the

respondents were within the age range 20 and 40 years, while the majority (70.5%) was between 41 and 60 years, with an average age of 47.9±10.8 years. With an average household size of 9 persons, 43.2 % had between 1 and 5 persons in their households, while 56.8% had between 6 and 10 persons in their households. This implies that a large household size characterizes the population under study. This is characteristic of agrarian communities, as the availability of family farming activities increases labor for agricultural production, thereby further enhancing household well-being. Respondents belonged to five prominent social organizations, such as religious societies (84.4%), cooperative associations (61.8%), age grades (55.0%), women's groups (44.3%), and town development unions (41.5%). According to Ekong (2010), high participation in social networks is common in rural areas of Nigeria as they are sources of information, financial, social, and material aid to members. The educational status of respondents reveals considerable literacy; while 21.8% had no formal education, a large proportion of respondents (44.9%) had primary education, and 29.5% had secondary education. Also, some forms of informal educational attainment were revealed: 2.6% and 1.2% had vocational education and adult literacy, respectively.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Spice Producer-Gatherers

Variable	Category	Percent	
Sex	Male	51.3	
	Female	48.7	
Age	20 - 40	29.5	
	41 - 60	70.5	
Mean	$47.9 (\pm 10.8)$		
Marital status	Single	17.9	
	Married	59.0	
	Widowed	23.1	
Household size	1 - 5	43.2	
	6 - 10	56.8	
Mean	$9.2 (\pm 5.4)$		



Variable	Category	Percent
Social Network*	Religious society	84.4
	Cooperative association	61.8
	Age grade	55.0
	Women Association	44.3
	Town Development Union	41.5
Level of Education	Non formal	21.8
	Primary	44.9
	Secondary	29.5
	Vocational	2.6
	Adult Literacy	1.2

Source: Field survey, 2016 *Multiple response

Spices Producer-gatherers Enterprise Characteristics

Table 2 shows the extent of respondents' engagement in spices production and gathering. Spice producer-gatherers in the study area are those who are involved in the production and gathering of spices such as Alligator pepper (Aframomum melegueta), Black pepper (Piper guineensis), Ethiopian pepper (Xylopia aethiopica), Hot pepper (Capsicum spp), Ginger (Zingiber officinale), and African nutmeg (Monodora myristica). The result also shows that Black pepper (Piper guineensis), alligator pepper (Aframomum melegueta), and Ethiopian pepper (Xylopia aethiopica) were the predominantly gathered spices by 92.4%, 88.7% and 88.3% of respondents, respectively. Hot pepper (Capsicum spp.), ginger (Zingiber officinale), and turmeric (Curcuma longa) were produced spices by 100.0%, 92.1% and 62.0% respectively. The majority (68.5%) of respondents engaged family labor for their enterprise, while 24.1% used self-labor and only 7.4% used hired labor (Table 2). This is an additional inkling into why respondents had a large household size. This is also a corollary to the position of

the World Bank Group (2016) that large family sizes are significant in sustaining rural life. The majority (50.2%) of respondents traded their spices in rural markets, 28.5% sold their proceeds at the farm gate, and only 3.3% were able to get their produce to urban markets where they command higher earnings. This resonates with the position of (Magesa et al., 2014) that trading in rural markets limits farmers' economic opportunities as their produce is marketed through channels offering low prices, the markets are not competitive, and the variety of produce is limited. The majority (70.5%) of respondents earned less than ₹99,000 annually from their spices enterprise, and only 29.5% earned between №100,000 and N499,000. While spices are high-value crops capable of generating substantial income for household subsistence, households in the study area have yet to fully benefit economically from the high-value potential of spices. Harnessing the economic potential of these crops would improve the livelihoods of respondents, enhance their incomegenerating potential, and accordingly improve their satisfaction with life.

Table 2: Enterprise Attributes of Spices Producer-gatherers

Variable	Category	Percent
Spices gathered	African Black pepper	92.4
	Alligator pepper	88.7
	Ethiopian pepper	88.3
	African nutmeg	69.0



Variable	Category	Percent
Spices cultivated	Hot pepper	100.0
	Ginger	92.1
	Turmeric	62.0
Source of labor	Family	68.5
	Self	24.1
	Hired	7.4
Marketing channels	Rural market	50.2
	Farm gate	28.5
	Road side	9.8
	Family/Friends	8.2
	Urban market	3.3
Income from spices enterprise (₦)	< 99, 999	70.5
	100,000 - 499,999	29.5
Mean	$94,871.0\pm27,500.0$	

Satisfaction with the Life of Spices Producer-Gatherers

The self-reported assessment of respondents' life satisfaction is shown in Table 3. It gives a detailed subjective assessment of spice producer-gatherers' satisfaction with life. The percentage of spice producer-gatherers who agreed to being satisfied with the quality of their household meals was 68.5%. This might be because they are rural dwellers who cultivate a large proportion of their food. Only 14.8% were undecided about being satisfied with the quality of meals in their household, and 16.7% revealed they were dissatisfied with the quality of their meals. The majority (84.6%) of respondents agreed that they were satisfied with the relationship with their children; 10.3% of respondents were undecided about being satisfied with the relationship with their children, and only 5.1% revealed they were dissatisfied with the relationship with their children.

The majority (69.7%) of respondents revealed they were satisfied with the number of meals in their households, while 13.6% of respondents were undecided; 16.7% of respondents indicated their dissatisfaction with the number of meals in their households. Also, the majority (58.5%) agreed to being satisfied with the health of the members of

their households, while 26.2% of respondents were undecided about the health of members their households. and 15.3% respondents were dissatisfied with the health of members of their households. Table 3 further showed that 79.5% of respondents were satisfied with their social relationships; only 12.8% and 7.7% of respondents, respectively, were undecided and disagreed with being satisfied with their social relationships. This clearly shows that social capital results in better informed intentions and decisions, such as life satisfaction, as connectedness, trust, and cooperation from participation in associations positively influence life satisfaction, as opined by Tov and Diener (2008). A large proportion (41.8%) of respondents agreed to having the important things they desire in life; only 10.0% of respondents were undecided, and the majority (48.2%) disagreed with having all the important things they need in life.

Table 3 further showed that 18.0% of respondents revealed they would change nothing about their lives if they could, 34.6% were undecided, while a large proportion (47.4%) disagreed with changing nothing about their lives even if they could. Also, the majority (64.6%) of respondents reported being satisfied with their lives. As opined by



Milone and Ventura (2019),farming enterprises combine a profession and a way of life, which makes farmers usually satisfied with the lifestyle benefits derived from rural areas. Only 20.0% and 15.4% of respondents were undecided and disagreed with being satisfied with their lives, respectively. Half (50.0%) of the respondents revealed that their lives were close to ideal; this might be attributed to rural dwellers being able to construct and contrive a living with their local knowledge, creativity and skills as reported by Viera et al., (2015); 28.2% of respondents were undecided and 21.8% of respondents disagreed to their lives being close to ideal. More than half (51.2%) of respondents agreed that their lives were excellent, 32.1% were undecided, and only 16.7% of respondents disagreed that their lives were excellent.

Also, the majority (67.2%) of respondents were satisfied with their ability to meet the basic needs of their households. This is in line with Turkdogan and Duru (2012), who reported that fulfillment of basic needs such as freedom, survival, love, belonging, and power contributes to life satisfaction. On the other hand, only 20.0% of respondents were undecided; only 12.8% of respondents were dissatisfied with their ability to meet the basic needs of their households. The study further showed that 52.6% of respondents were satisfied with income from their spices enterprises, while 20.5% of respondents were undecided about being satisfied with the

income from their spices enterprises; 26.8% of respondents were dissatisfied with the income derived from the enterprise. A large proportion (47.4%) of respondents were satisfied with the quality of their physical environment. According to Barton & Pretty (2010), natural environments improve life satisfaction by facilitating physically and mentally beneficial behaviors such as recreation, exercise, and social interaction.

Also, as reported by Zhang and Yang (2022), factors such as rural medical and health facilities, public services like roads, influence farmers' satisfaction with life. Only a few, 29.5% 24.4% of respondents respectively, were undecided and disagreed with being satisfied with the quality of their physical environment. Also, 47.4% of respondents revealed satisfaction with their while 24.4% of respondents security. revealed dissatisfaction, and 28.2% of respondents were undecided about their security. The majority (71.8%)respondents were satisfied with the success of their spices enterprise. This might be attributed to the internal motivation they have derived, which enables individuals to persist in an enterprise and derive satisfaction even in the face of challenges (Chen et al., 2017). On the other hand, only 17.9% and 10.3% of respondents, respectively, were undecided and disagreed with being satisfied with the success of their spices production and gathering.

Table 3: Life satisfaction of spice producer-gatherers

Life Satisfaction Indicators		UND	DSG	Mean
I am satisfied with the quality of our meals	68.5	14.8	16.7	2.96
I am satisfied with my relationship with my children	84.6	10.3	5.1	2.84
I am satisfied with the number of meals in my household		13.6	16.7	2.74
I am satisfied with the health of the members of my household		26.2	15.3	2.69
I am satisfied with my social relationships.		12.8	7.7	2.53
So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life		10.0	48.2	2.35
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing		34.6	47.4	2.09
I am satisfied with my life	64.6	20.0	15.4	2.07



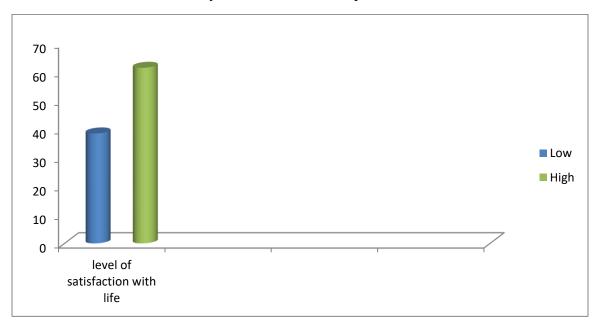
Life Satisfaction Indicators		UND	DSG	Mean
In most ways, my life is close to ideal	50.0	28.2	21.8	2.04
The conditions of my life are excellent	51.2	32.1	16.7	2.01
I am satisfied with my ability to meet the basic needs of my		20.0	12.8	2.00
household				
I am satisfied with the income from my spice enterprise	52.6	20.5	26.8	1.95
I am satisfied with the quality of my physical environment	47.4	29.5	23.1	1.74
I am satisfied with my security	47.4	28.2	24.4	1.68
I am satisfied with the success of my spices enterprise	71.8	17.9	10.3	1.66

AGR - Agreed, UND - Undecided, DSG - Disagreed

Level of Life satisfaction of spice producergatherers

The index of life satisfaction is shown in Table 4. It shows that the majority (61.5%) of spice producer-gatherers had a high level of satisfaction with life, while only 38.5% had a

low level of satisfaction with life. This is an indication that spice producer-gatherers are satisfied with their life based on the adequacy and realization of the working conditions associated with producing and gathering spices.



Mean 27.8, SD=7.2, Min. =15.0, Max. =45.0 Level of Life satisfaction of spice producer-gatherers

Relationship between respondents' demographic characteristics and life satisfaction

The result of the test of statistical relationship is presented in Table 5. It reveals that life satisfaction had no significant relationship with demographic characteristics such as sex (χ^2 =0.336, p>0.05). This implies that sex did not influence the satisfaction with life of spice producer-gatherers. While there are

diverse results regarding satisfaction with life and the sex variable, this study is in harmony with Ta and Iskender (2018) that satisfaction with life is not influenced by sex. It means that being a man or woman does not have any influence on life satisfaction. It, however showed a significant relationship between life satisfaction and marital status (χ^2 =2.636, p<0.05). As the study revealed a significant relationship between marital status and life



satisfaction, it implies that marital and family commitments, as observed by Addo (2018), influenced life satisfaction; it was expressed that the support of a life partner increases satisfaction, as higher levels of life satisfaction are revealed among married individuals than singles.

There is a significant relationship between life satisfaction and respondents' educational attainment (χ^2 =6.777, p<0.05). This denotes that with an increase in the education level of spice producer-gatherers, there is an increase in their satisfaction with life. This is in harmony with the findings of Bannor et al. (2021) that educational level significantly increases satisfaction with life, as education is a vital component that provides needed knowledge, ability, skills, and motivation for every meaningful enterprise to be worthwhile and satisfying. As opined by Ma et al. (2021), increase in educational attainment increased the life satisfaction of farmers. It further reveals that people who have attained higher levels of education are usually more satisfied with their lives, as it is easier for them to access information that will improve their well-being. Table 5 further revealed there was no significant relationship between life satisfaction and respondents' age (r=-0.098, p>0.05). This denotes that the life satisfaction of spice producer-gatherers was not influenced by age; this contrasts with the findings of Toker (2012), who posited that older age persons have higher life satisfaction levels. It further lends credence to the assertion that younger people usually have low life satisfaction, revealing a lower subjective evaluation of their lives than adults. Furthermore, no significant relationship between life satisfaction and household size of spice producer-gatherers was revealed (r=0.069, p>0.05). This denotes that the number of persons in their household did not influence life satisfaction. However, this does not support the position of Ovhare (2020) that family support has a substantial

impact on life satisfaction. It is expected that the support received from household members would enhance life satisfaction. However, this result resonates with the position of Maharajh et al. (2018), that life satisfaction decreases as the number of household members increases. This poses a concern for livelihoods in rural areas with characteristically crowded families for agrarian purposes, as a high number of household members has been found to decrease life satisfaction.

A significant relationship was revealed between respondents' social networks and life satisfaction (r=0.224, p<0.05); it implies that spice producer-gatherers' membership and participation in social organizations influenced their satisfaction with life. Individuals who are embedded in social networks are usually more satisfied with life, are happier, and manifest less loneliness as social networks provide opportunities for interaction with others. to friendships, receive information, support, and help when needed. As opined by Lim and Putnam (2010), people who belong to social networks have significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than those who do not. Trust, sociability, family ties. and participation influence life satisfaction. Spices producer-gatherers belonged to many social networks, which afforded them vast opportunities and benefits that enhanced their satisfaction with life. Thus, participation in social networks has a positive influence on the life satisfaction of respondents. People who participate in social networks experience less loneliness, despair, and anxiety and accordingly manifest a higher level of life satisfaction. Accordingly, marital status, education. and social networks influencing factors of life satisfaction among spice producer-gatherers.



Table 5: Relationship	p between respondents'	demographic variable	s and life satisfaction

Variables	χ²	Df	P	Decision
Sex	0.336	2	0.562	Not significant
Marital status	2.636	4	0.030*	Significant
Educational attainment	6.777	6	0.023*	Significant
	R	P		C
Age	-0.098	0.349		Not significant
Household size	0.069	0.511		Not significant
Social network	0.224	0.033*		Significant

 χ^2 = chi-square value, p= significant value, df=degree of freedom, * Significant at ≤ 0.05

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study attempted to ascertain the influencing factors of life satisfaction among spice producer-gatherers in Imo State, Nigeria. It was imperative to conduct this study to determine the index of satisfaction with life among spice producers and gatherers, ensuring the sustainability and continuity of the enterprise. Spices remain neglected and underutilized despite their vast potential. Ascertaining the satisfaction of life of farmers involved in spice enterprises will help promote spice enterprises, protect these farmers, and ensure that spices do not remain threatened and are readily available. The study's findings showed that the majority were male, married, had attained basic education, had a large household size, and belonged to various social networks, including religious societies, cooperative associations, age grades, women's groups, and town development unions. Hot pepper, and turmeric ginger, were primarily produced, while black pepper, alligator pepper, and Ethiopian pepper were gathered by respondents in the study. Spices producergatherers showed optimism with their lives as the majority had a high level of life satisfaction.

The results of this study suggest that marital status, education, and social network are key factors influencing the life satisfaction of spice producer-gatherers. It is therefore recommended that policies and services

enhancing the well-being of rural dwellers, especially households involved in the deliberate production of spices and the gathering of natural resources, incorporate educational and social networking components.

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