Poverty And Happiness: An Examination of the Factors Influencing Happiness among the Extreme Poor in Rural Ghana

By

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Outline

- Background

- Approach

- Results
  - Descriptive Statistics
  - Analytical Results

- Conclusions

Background

- Every person in life desires some level of inner fulfillment and this could come as a result of many factors

- The concept of happiness has thus become a subject of interest to many social science researchers

Background

- Many scholars have argued that, the search for happiness is the ultimate goal of human action

- It is however a well-documented fact that one single factor may not be able to influence happiness in its entirety

Background

- As a result, many scholars have examined the individual relationships between various demographic, sociological, psychological and behavioural characteristics and self-assessments of happiness.

Approach

- The sample for this work consists of households in the bottom 20 per cent of the extreme poor population according to the Ghana Living Standard Surveys Five (GLSS 5).

- 1504 households (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) of the government cash transfer programmme were sampled and inerviewed.
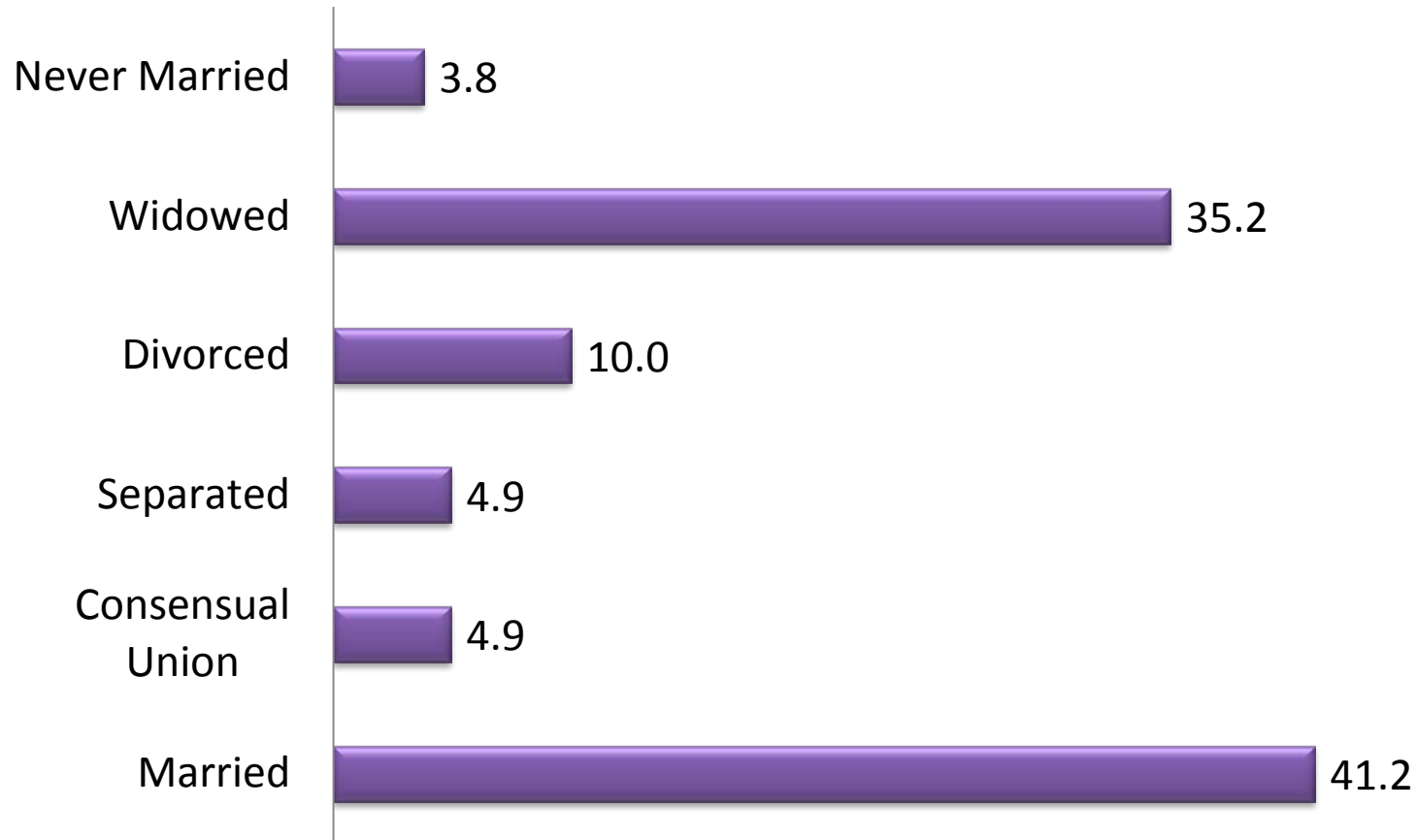
Approach

- Each household head was asked to evaluate their level of happiness and conclude whether in their own opinion, they were happy or otherwise

- The value of one (1) is assigned to a household if the individual admits they are happy in life and zero (0) otherwise.

- We then introduce different covariates that could potentially influence the happiness level of an individual
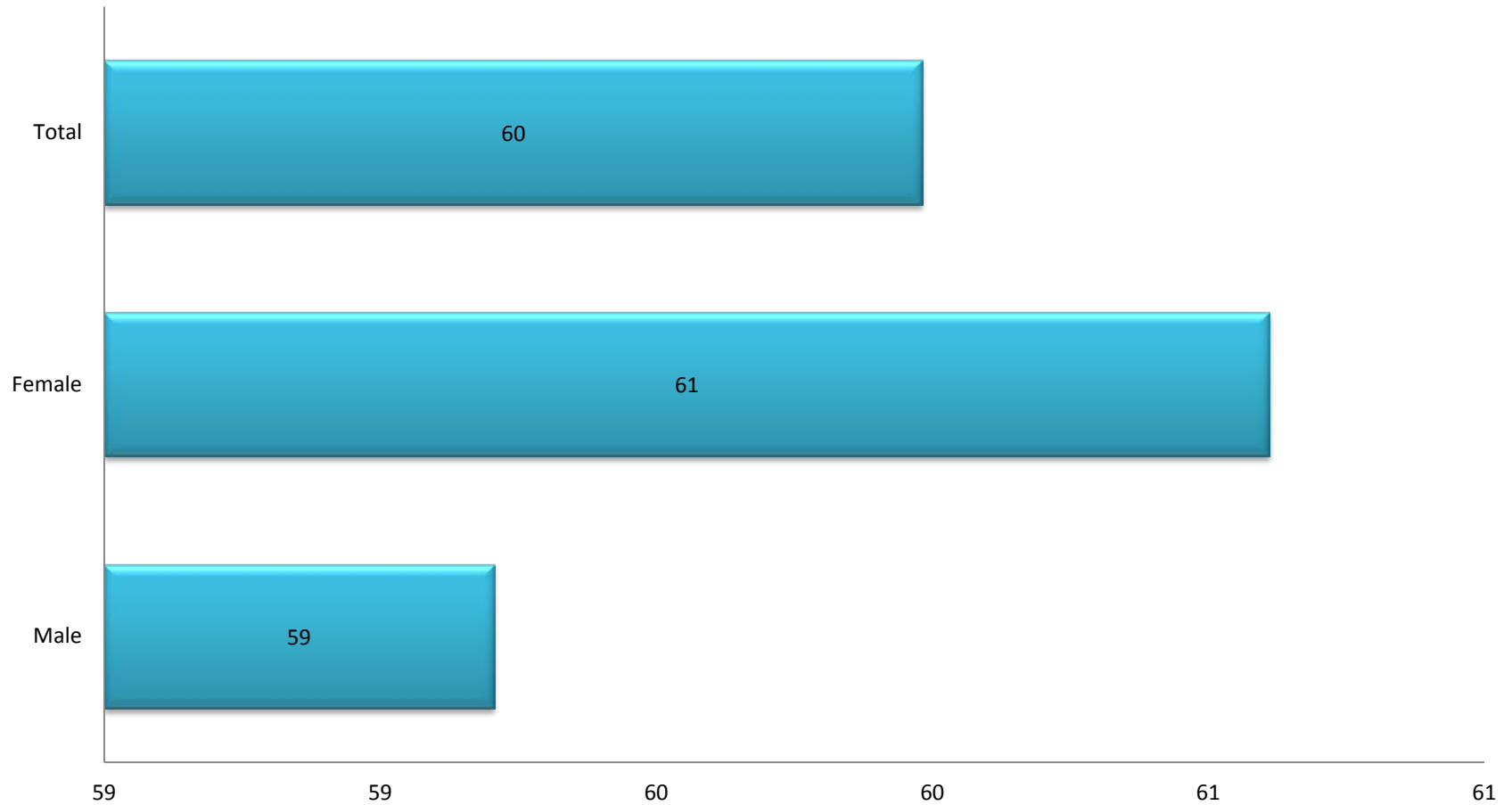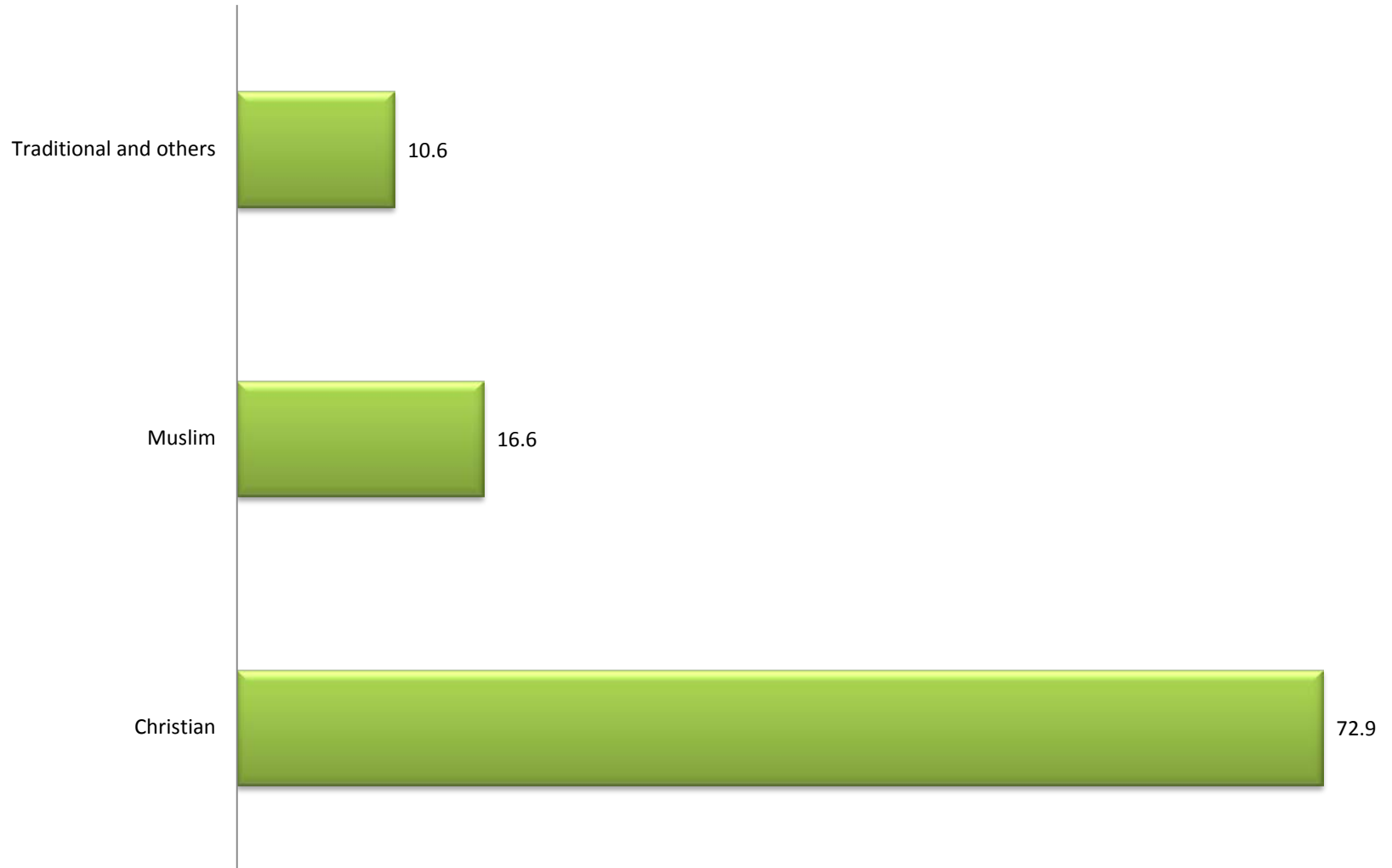
Descriptive Statistics

Marital Status of HH Head

- Never Married — 3.8
- Widowed — 35.2
- Divorced — 10.0
- Separated — 4.9
- Consensual Union — 4.9
- Married — 41.2

Age of HH Head

Religious Affiliations of HH Heads

Type of Housing

Category	Value
Other	0.1
(Rooms) Several Huts/Buildings (Different compound)	0.9
(Rooms) Several Huts/Buildings (Same Compound)	8.5
Room(s)	27.8
Rooms (Compound)	50.0
Flat (Apartment)	1.6
Semi-Detached House	4.8
Separate House (Bungallow)	6.4
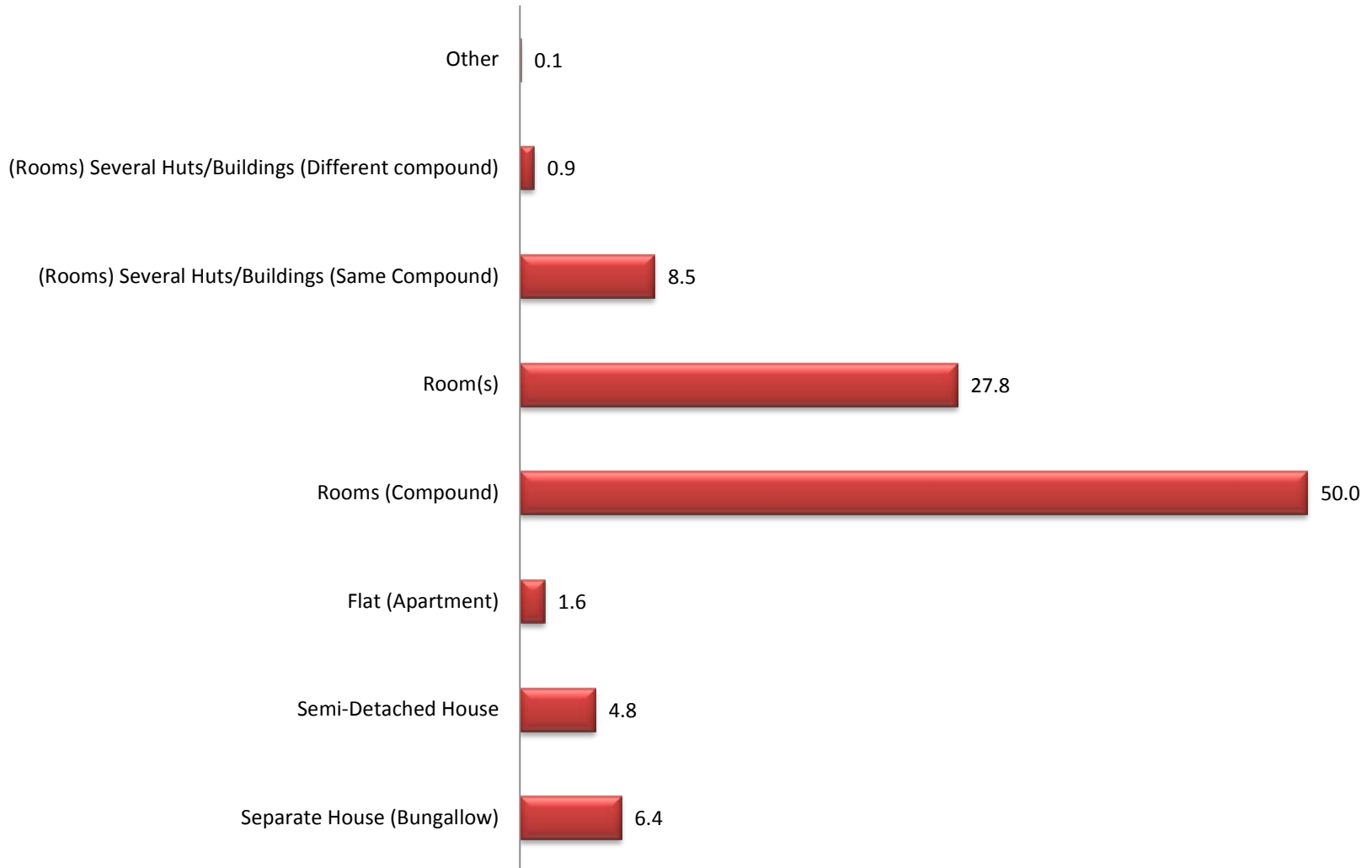
Other Descriptive Variables

Description	Proportion/Average number
Proportion of households who are happy in life	75.4
Proportion of households sharing dwellings	25.7
Average number of rooms available to households	**3.0**
Proportion of households who worked outside of self employed	10.1
Proportion of households raising livestock	**56.1**
Proportion owing money or goods to other people	**25.7**
Average number of debts per household	1.0
Proportion of households who paid debts in the past 12 months	5.8

Other Descriptive Variables

Proportion of household members who are owed money o goods	10.4
Average number of monies owed household members	2.0
Proportion of households receiving institutional transfers	**38.6**
Average number of institutional transfers	1.0
Proportion of households having savings at home or elsewhere	44.9
Average number of savings households have	1.2
Proportion of households operating a plot of land	**63.4**
Proportion of households with children under seven (7) years	31.4

Results

Happy	Coeff. (dy/dx)	Std. Err.	P>z
Numb_rooms_compound	0.055**	0.025	0.026
Share_hh	-0.007	0.026	0.786
Employee	0.031	0.033	0.349
Llivestock	0.024	0.024	0.324
Debt	-0.087***	0.028	0.002
Paid_loan	-0.002	0.049	0.973
Credit_hh	0.082**	0.034	0.015
Savings	0.021	0.024	0.365
Operated_plot	0.059**	0.028	0.032
Non_farm	0.074***	0.025	0.003
Child_under7	0.016	0.026	0.537

Other Variables

Happy	Coeff. (dy/dx)	Std. Err.	P>z
Headsex	-0.010	0.032	0.748
Received remittance	0.033	0.026	0.214
Inst_transfer	-0.059**	0.024	0.015
Headage	-0.001	0.003	0.853
Headagesq	0.000	0.000	0.928
christian	0.017	0.031	0.577
Muslim	0.062*	0.035	0.074
Marital_status	-0.028	0.035	0.418
Spouse_inhh	0.054	0.041	0.188

Conclusion

- Households receiving Institutional Transfers have higher likelihood of being unhappy

- Operating an agricultural plot and Non-farm activity were found to positively influence happiness among the poor.

Conclusion

- Households resident in compound houses have the chance of being happy

- Happiness declines with households who are indebted to others (goods or cash) but increases if others are indebted to the households.

Conclusion

- Muslim headed households turn to have a higher likelihood to be happy relative to other religions

Thank you