

Decomposition of Children's Subjective Well-being by Countries: What Matters to Whom?



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Introduction

- Increased interest in children's quality of life, life satisfaction, and subjective well-being
- Recent studies report variations in children's subjective well-being among the different countries.
- No 'firm' explanations why and how are these differences in SWB

Goal of this study

- The primary purpose of this study is to examine what factors explain the SWB differences across the 15 ISCWeB countries.
- In order to do that:
 - We decompose the children's SWB by seven areas: self, environment, learning, leisure, money, relationships, and freedom to choose (Bradshaw, 2014+freedom to choose)
 - We examine what areas are accountable for the variations in the overall SWB.

For example:

Why is the level of Korean children's SWB lower than others?

- There are several possible explanations
 - Asian reporting bias?
 - Korean children are 'really' unhappy?
- If Korean children's SWB is lower than others, what 'factors' are accountable for that?

Methods

- Data: ISCWeB (14 countries) 12 years old dataset
 - Algeria, Nepal, Estonia, Spain, Colombia, Turkey, Ethiopia, South Korea, Germany, England, Romania, Norway, Poland, South Africa (Israel is not included because it didn't have the 'self' and 'freedom to choose' questions)
- Analysis: OLS decomposition

- Dependent variables

Scale	Definition	Items
PWI-SC9	Adapted version of Personal Well-being Index School Children, 9 items, 0 to 10, 11-point scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ How satisfied are you with.....<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All the things you have?• Your health?• The things you want to be good at?• Your relationships with people in general?• How safe you feel?• Doing things away from your home?• What may happen to you later in your life?• How you use your time?• Your life as a student?

• Independent variables

Domains	Definition	Items
Self	Have a positive view of themselves and an identity that is respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like being the way I am • I am good at managing my daily responsibilities • People are generally pretty friendly towards me
Environment	Have a safe and suitable home environment and local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In my area there are enough places to play or to have a good time • I feel safe when I walk around in the area I live in • I feel safe at home • I feel safe at school • I have quiet place to study
Learning	The condition to learn and develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel that I am learning a lot • I like going to school
Leisure	Have opportunities to take part in positive activities to thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in organized leisure time activities (like youth movement, scout, ...) • Playing sports or doing exercise • Taking classes outside school time on matters different than at school
Money	Have enough of what matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clothes in good condition to go to school in • Access to computer at home • Access to Internet • Mobile phone • Your own room • Books to read for fun • A family car for transportation • Your own stuff to listen to music • A television at home that you can use
Relationships	Have positive relationships with family and friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My parents (or the people who look after me) listen to me and take what I say into account • My friends are usually nice to me • My parents (or the people who look after me) treat me fairly • My teachers listen to me and take what I say into account • My teachers treat me fairly
Freedom to choose	Have enough choices for time use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have enough choice about how I spend my time

Descriptive Findings

Country	Self	Environment	Learning	Leisure	Money	Relationship	Freedom to choose	PWI-SC
Algeria	8.37	2.52	3.54	1.47	0.59	3.24	8.54	8.55
Nepal	7.9	2.79	3.71	1.7	0.52	3.19	7.76	8.02
Estonia	7.61	2.94	2.04	1.43	0.92	3.17	8.45	8.48
Spain	7.71	3.05	2.43	1.59	0.9	3.32	8.33	8.65
Colombia	8.42	3.03	3.14	1.74	0.72	3.17	8.88	9.05
Turkey	8.25	2.51	3.15	1.81	0.75	3.12	8.71	8.90
Ethiopia	7.78	2.22	3.72	1.26	0.21	3.08	7.73	8.10
South Korea	6.9	1.97	2.79	1.15	0.94	3	7.44	7.74
Germany	7.19	2.96	2.09	1.49	0.91	2.98	8.43	8.42
England	7.54	2.84	2.16	1.75	0.94	3.13	8.56	8.49
Romania	8.42	2.57	2.88	1.62	0.84	3.19	9.05	9.27
Norway	7.74	3.36	2.8	1.48	0.98	3.38	8.81	8.86
Poland	7.39	3.18	2.2	1.47	0.93	3.17	8.41	8.59
South Africa	7.88	2.24	3.05	1.95	0.76	3.01	8.24	8.26
Total	7.74	2.68	2.81	1.54	0.81	3.16	8.32	8.50

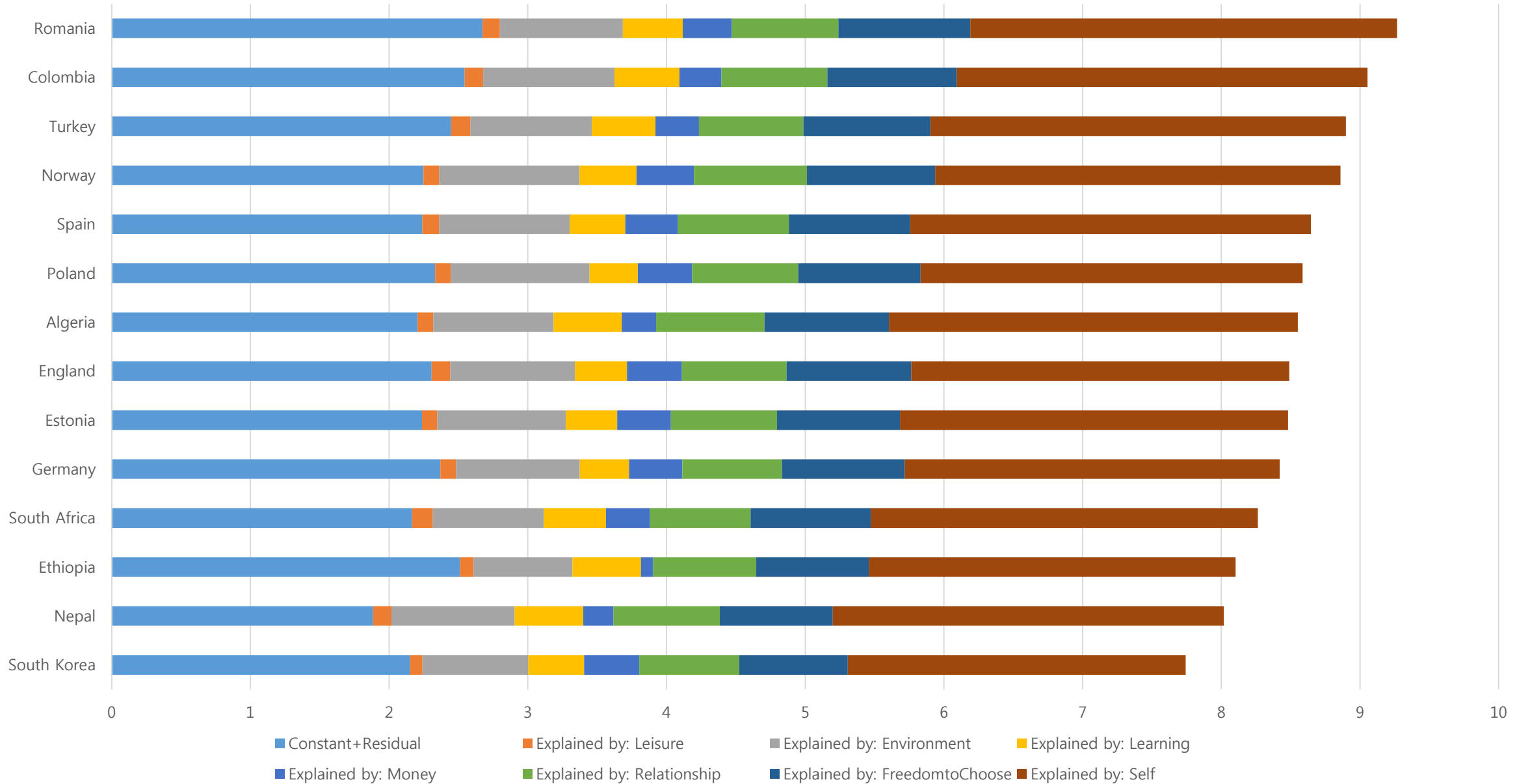
Results (Pooled-data)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
	PWI-SC9
Leisure	.077 (.009) ***
Environment	.291 (.011) ***
Learning	.055 (.004) ***
Money	.421 (.028) ***
Relationship	.241 (.013) ***
Freedom to choose	.105 (.004) ***
Self	.333 (.005) ***
N. Of observations	16,987
Adjusted R-square	.637

Note 1) Standard errors in parentheses

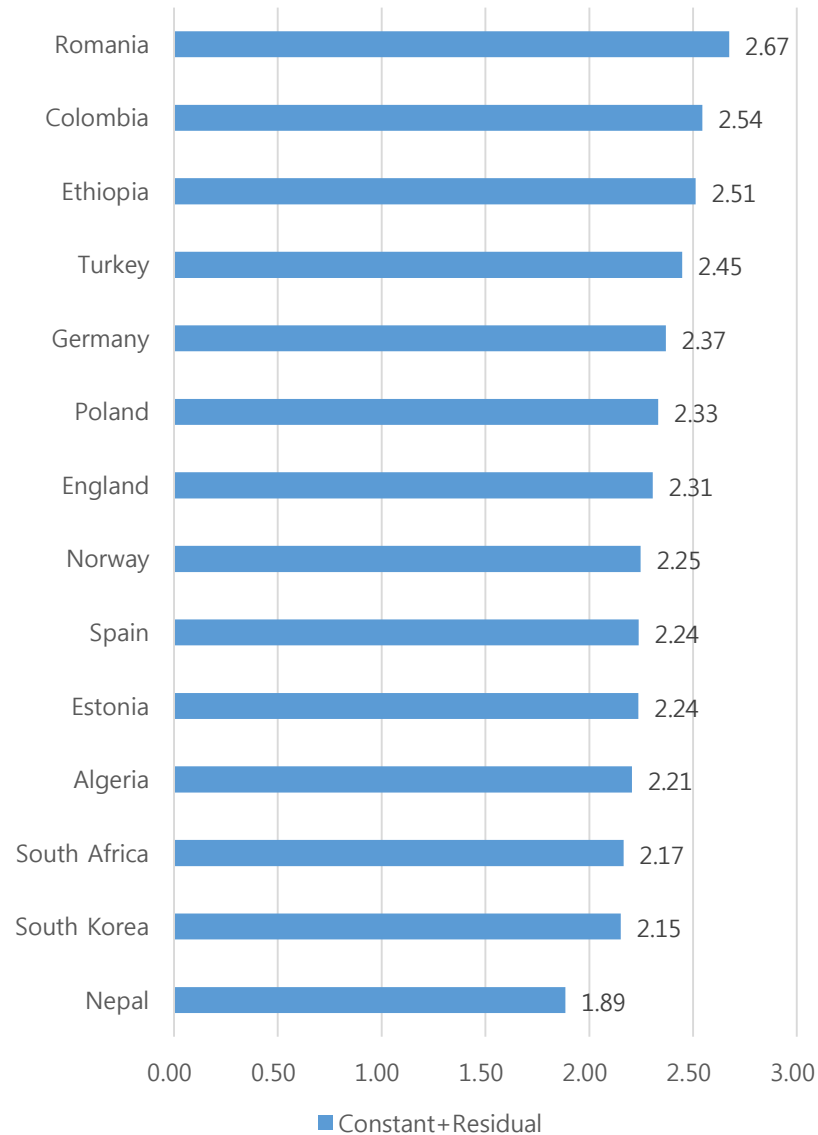
2) * p<.1 ** p<0.05, ***p<0.01

Decomposition of SWB by countries (PWI)



Decomposition of SWB by countries

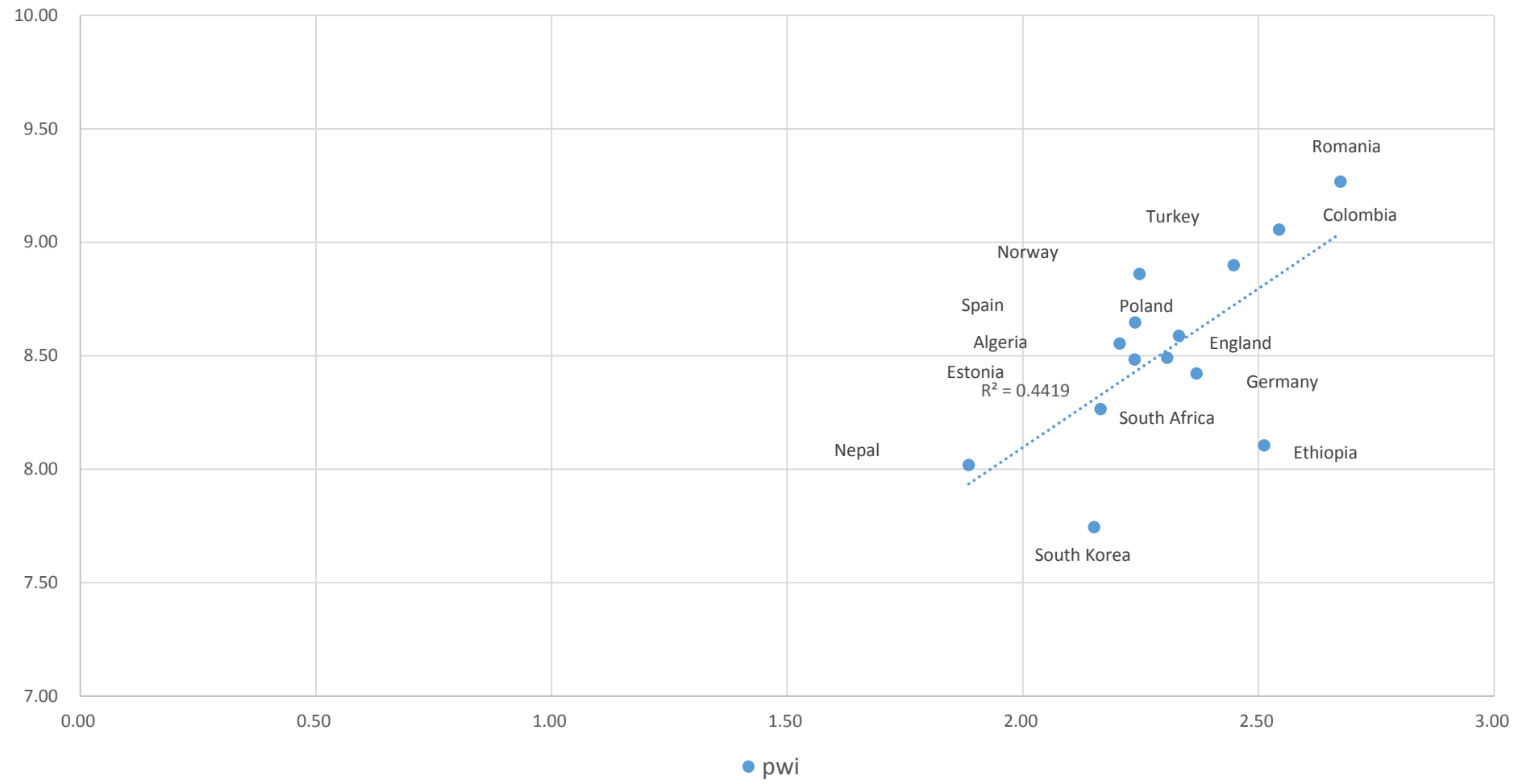
Constant + Residual



Variations in the 'unexplained'

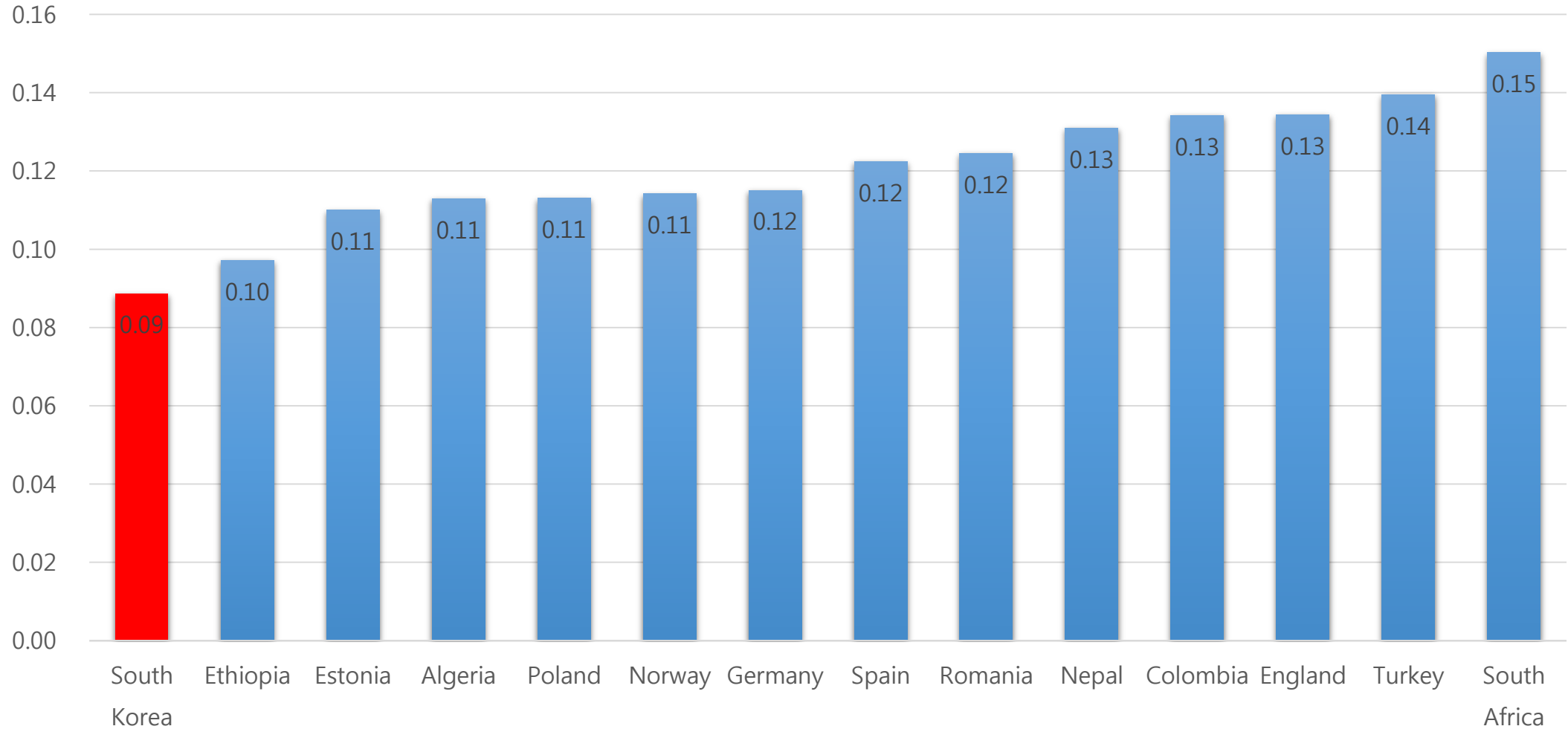
But, the 'unexplained' variations do not tell the whole story!

The relationship: Constant+Residual - PWI

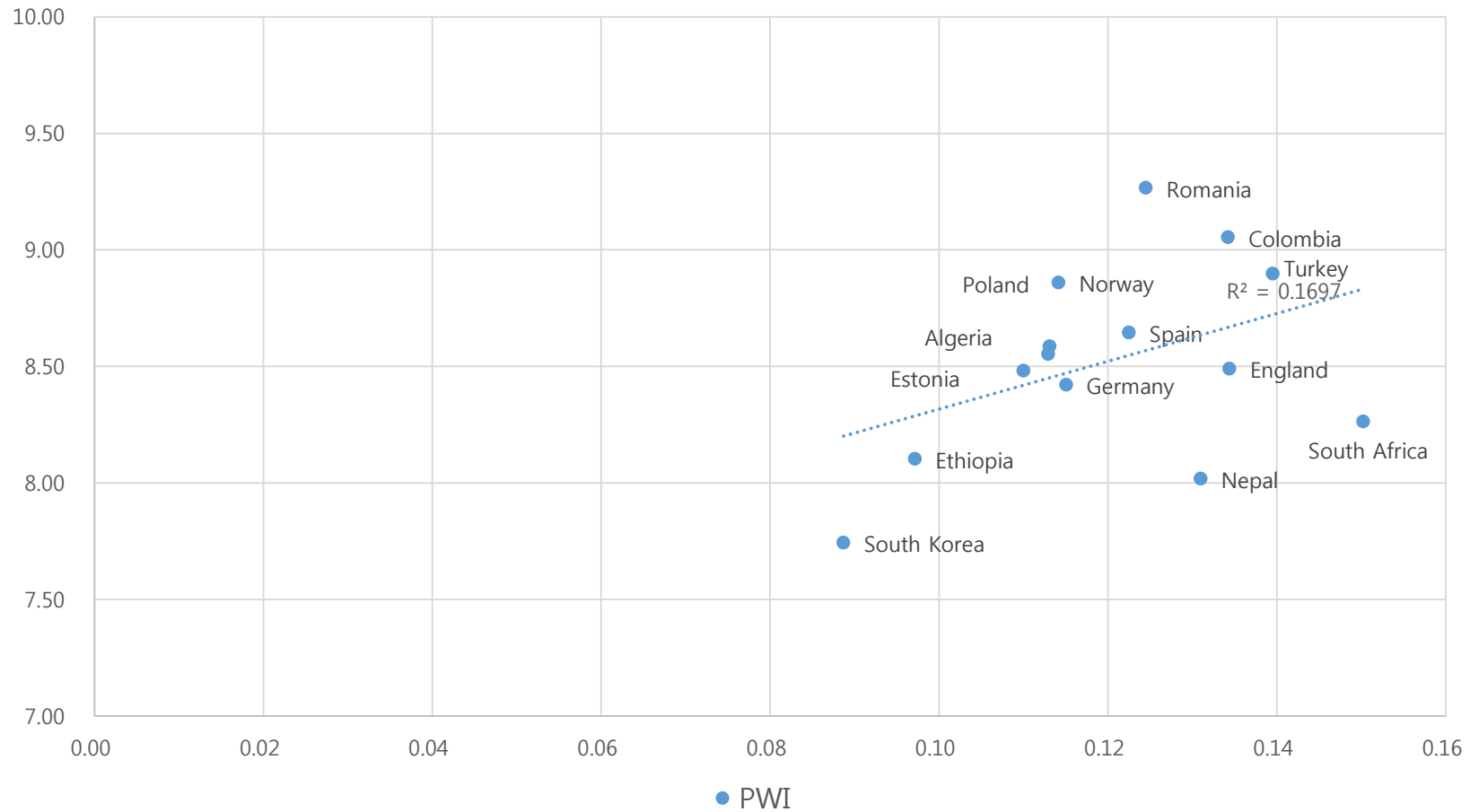


Leisure

- Participate in organized leisure time activities
- Playing sports or doing exercise
- Taking classes outside school time on matters different than at school

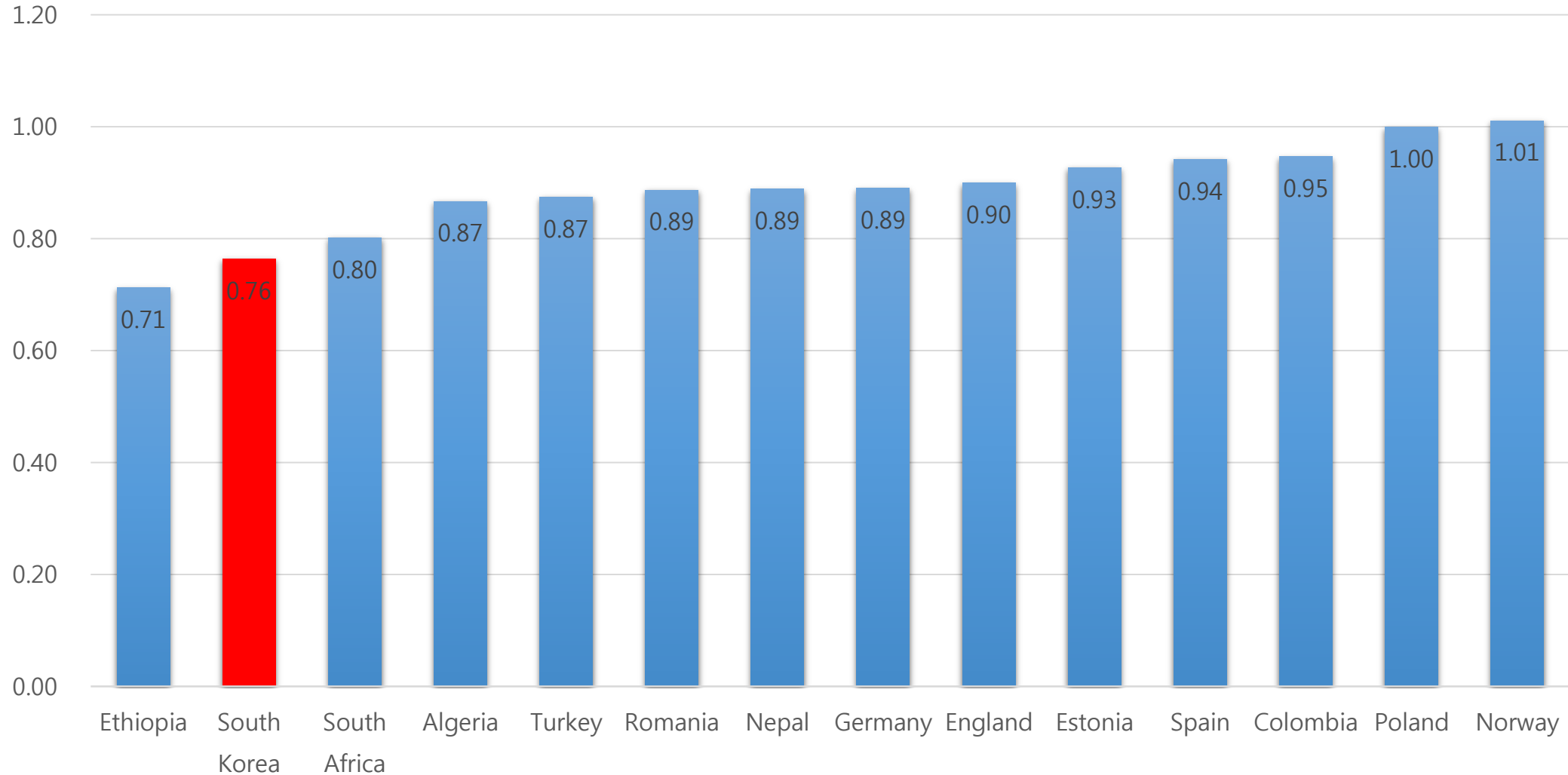


Leisure-PWI

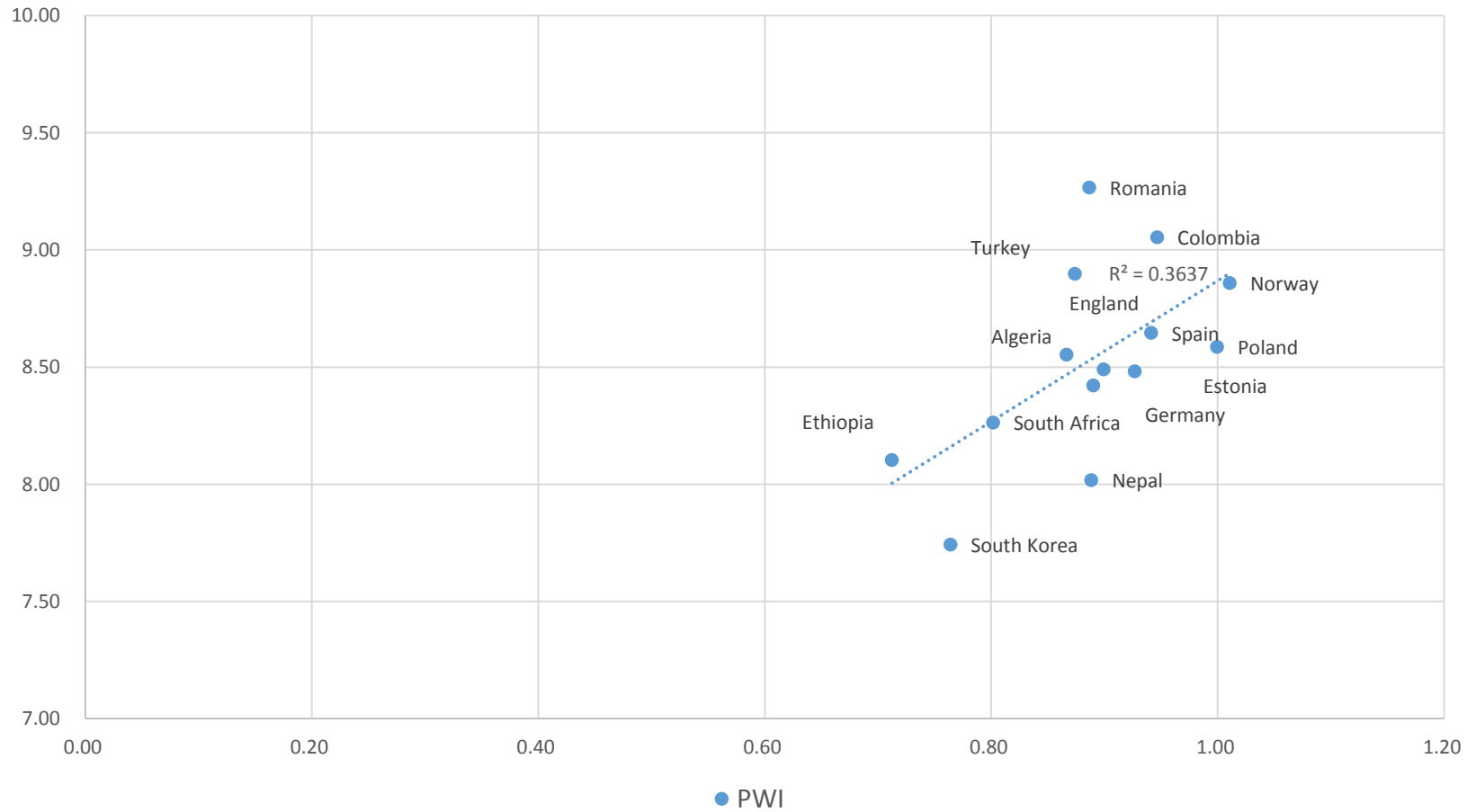


Environment

- In my area there are enough places to play or to have a good time
- I feel safe when I walk around in the area I live in
- I feel safe at home
- I feel safe at school
- I have quiet place to study

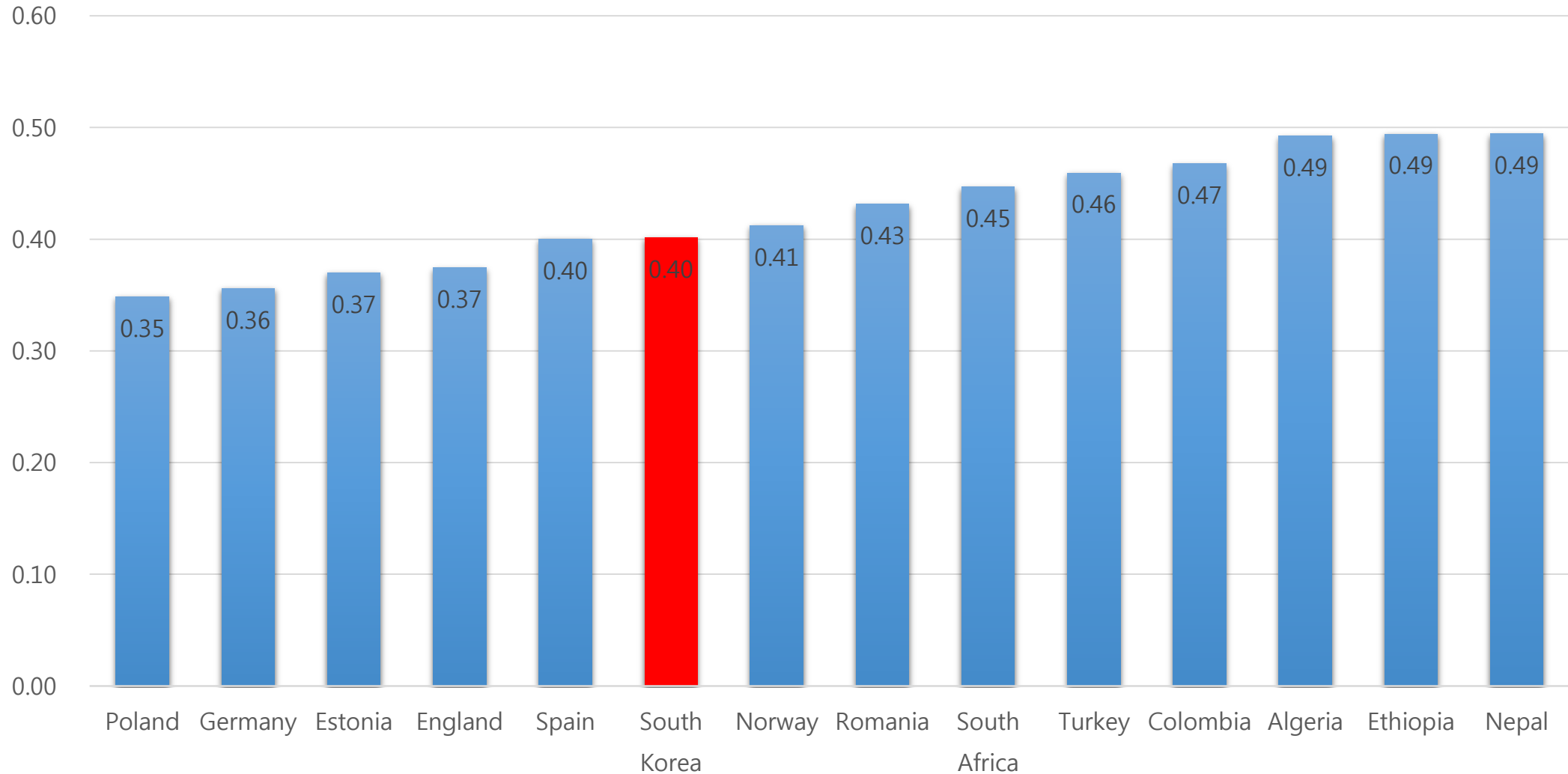


Environment-PWI

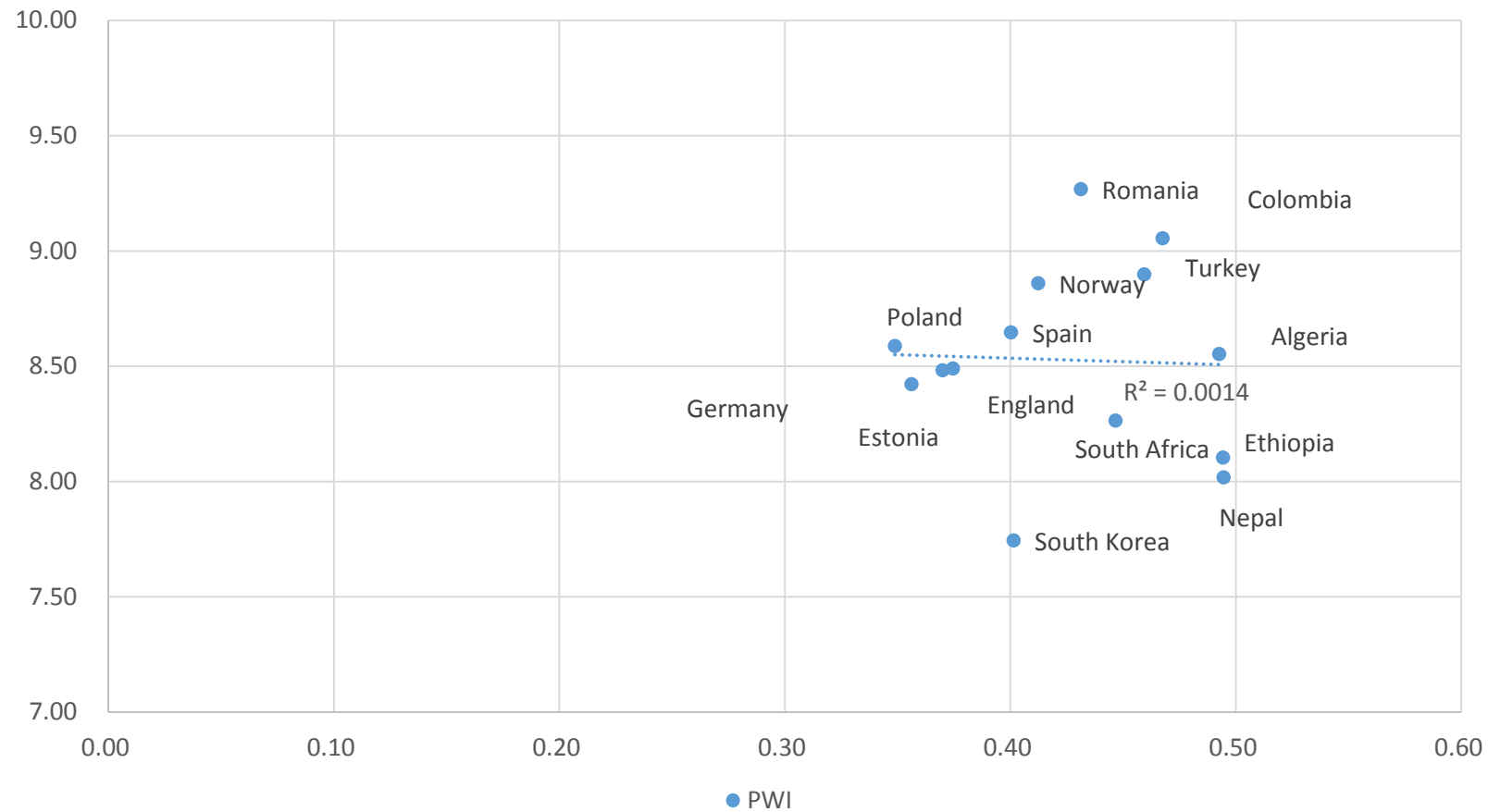


Learning

- I feel that I am learning a lot
- I like going to school

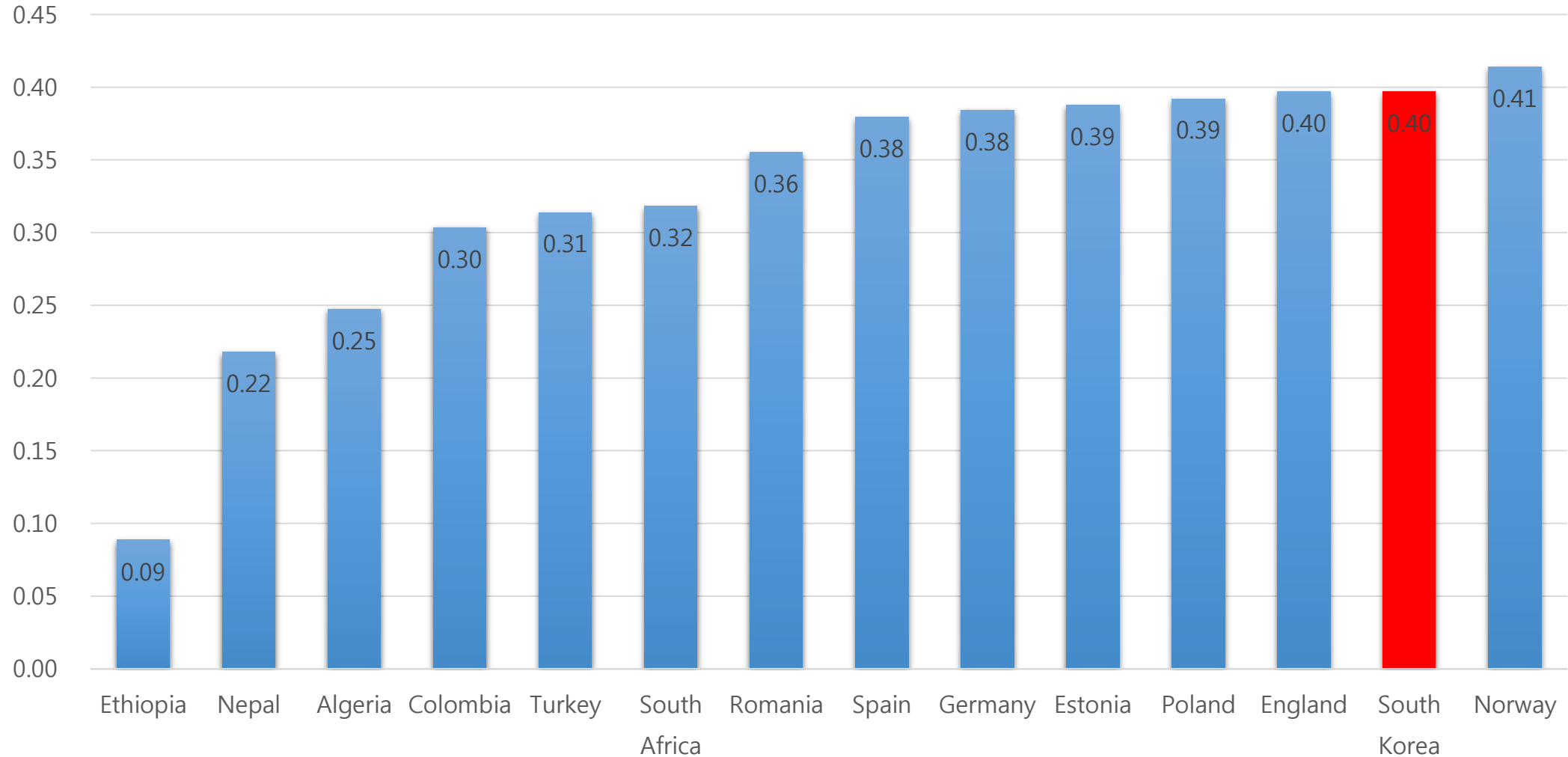


Learning-PWI

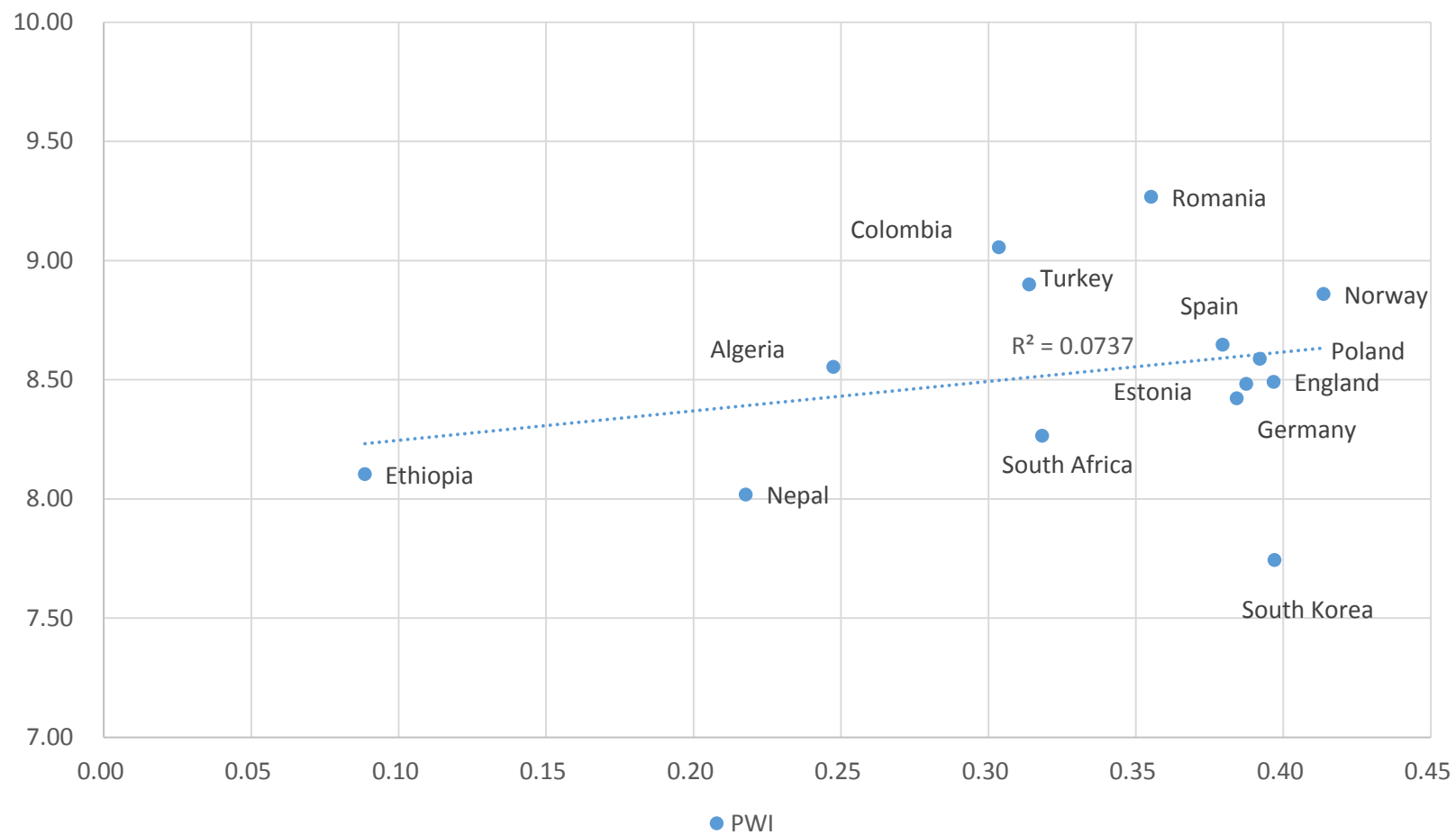


Money

- Clothes in good condition to go to school in
- Access to computer at home
- Access to Internet
- Mobile phone
- Your own room
- Books to read for fun
- A family car for transportation
- Your own stuff to listen to music
- A television at home that you can use

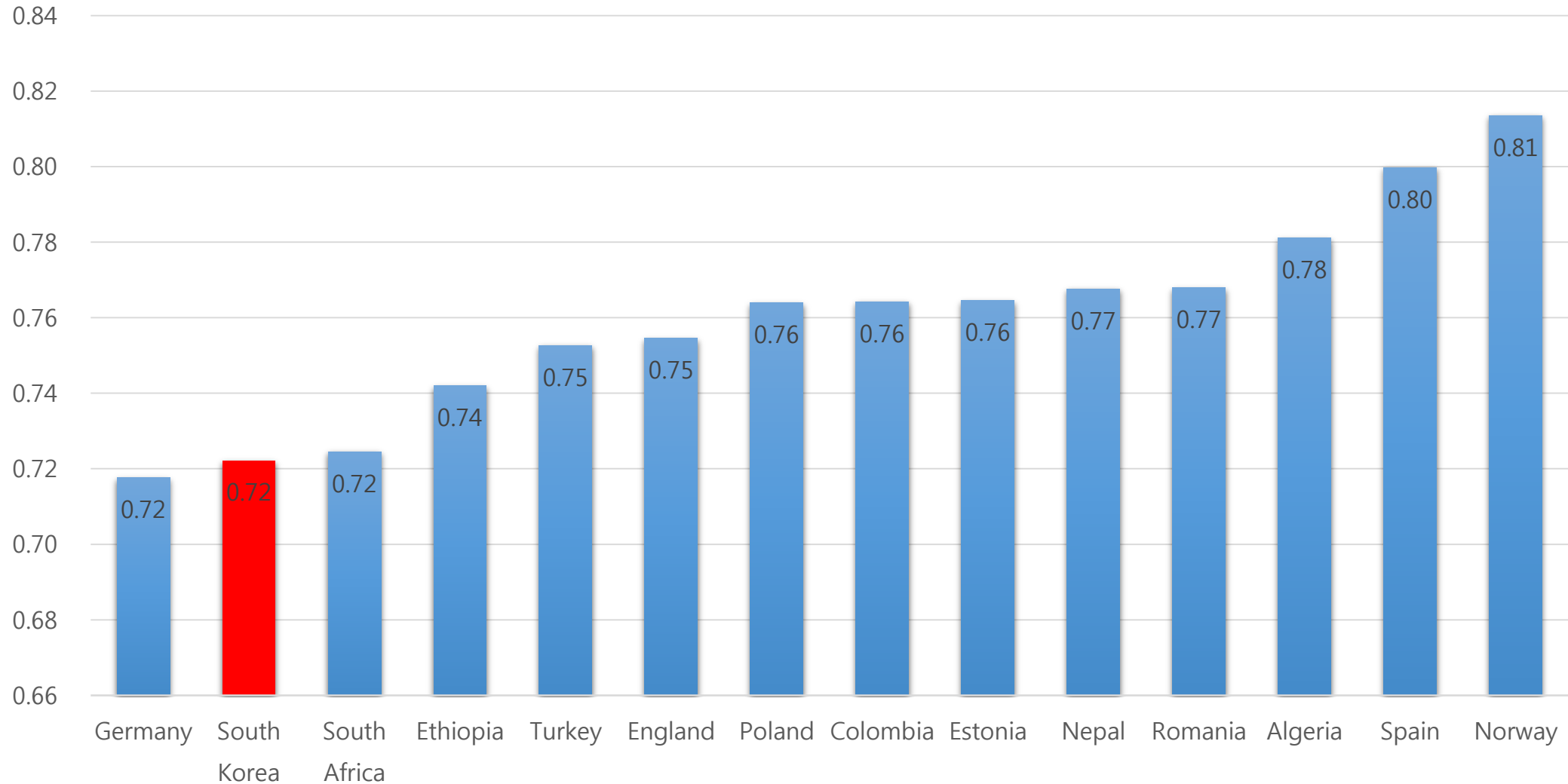


Money-PWI

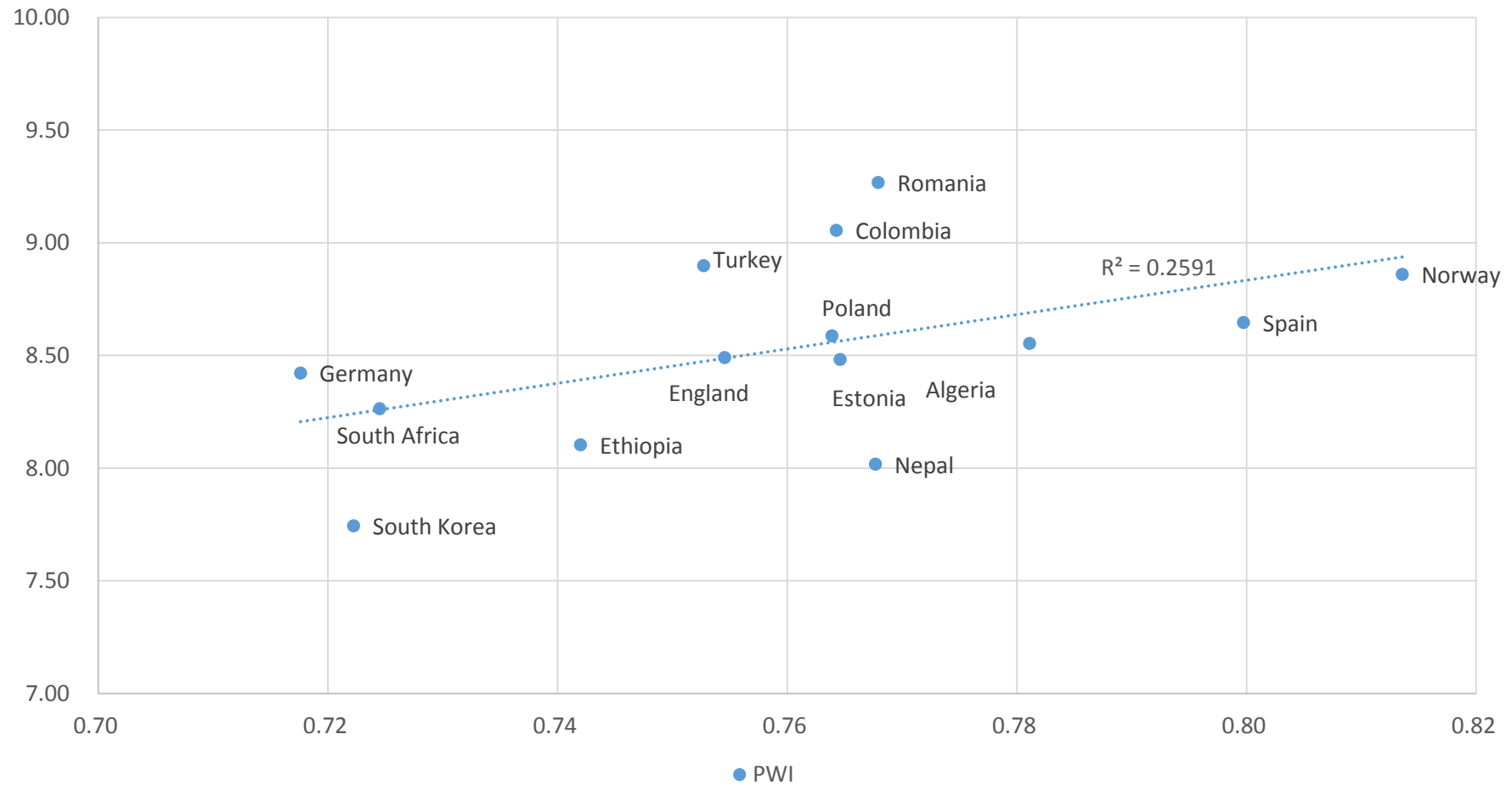


Relationship

- My parents (or the people who look after me) listen to me and take what I say into account
- My friends are usually nice to me
- My parents (or the people who look after me) treat me fairly
- My teachers listen to me and take what I say into account
- My teachers treat me fairly

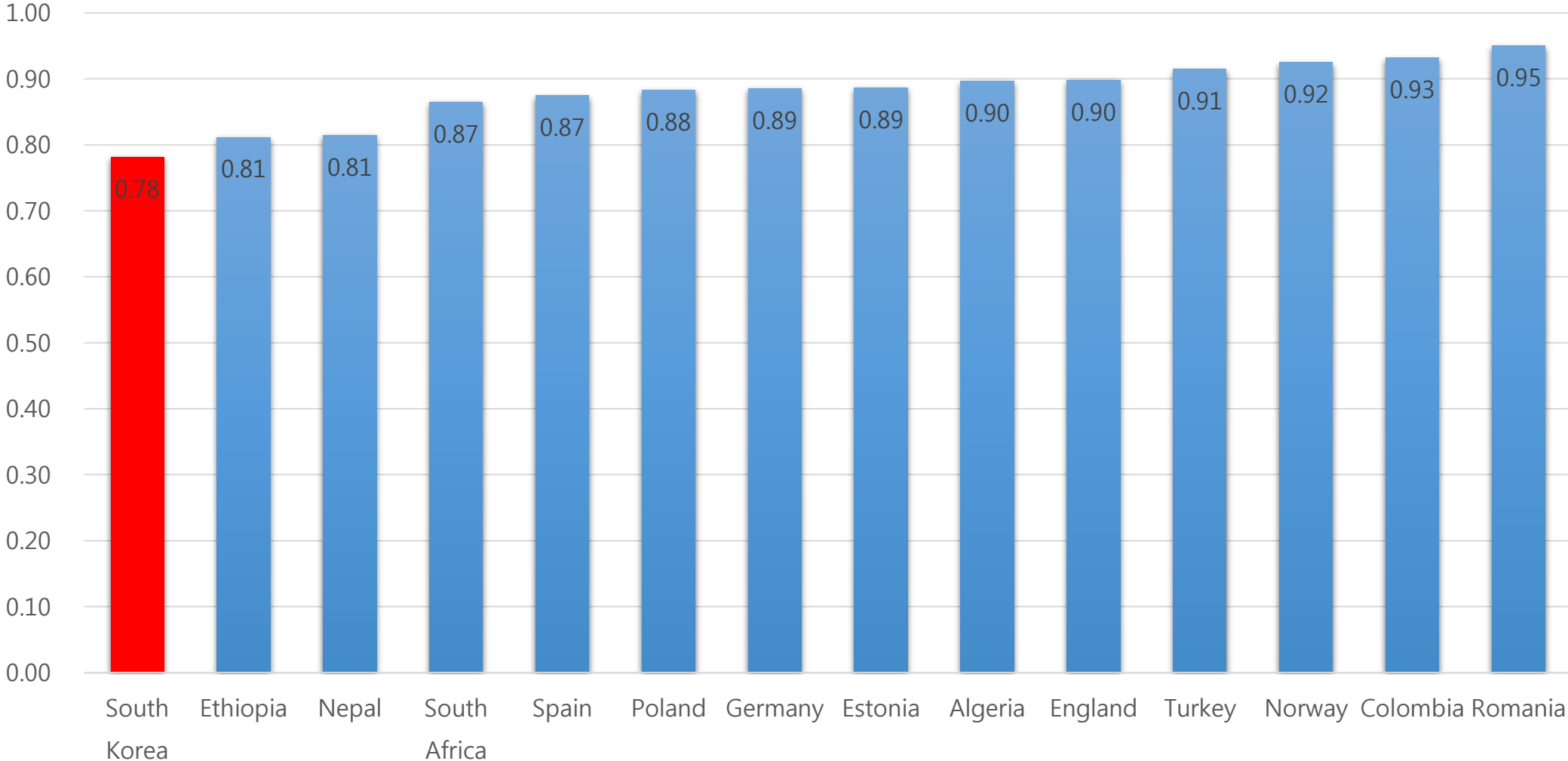


Relationship-PWI

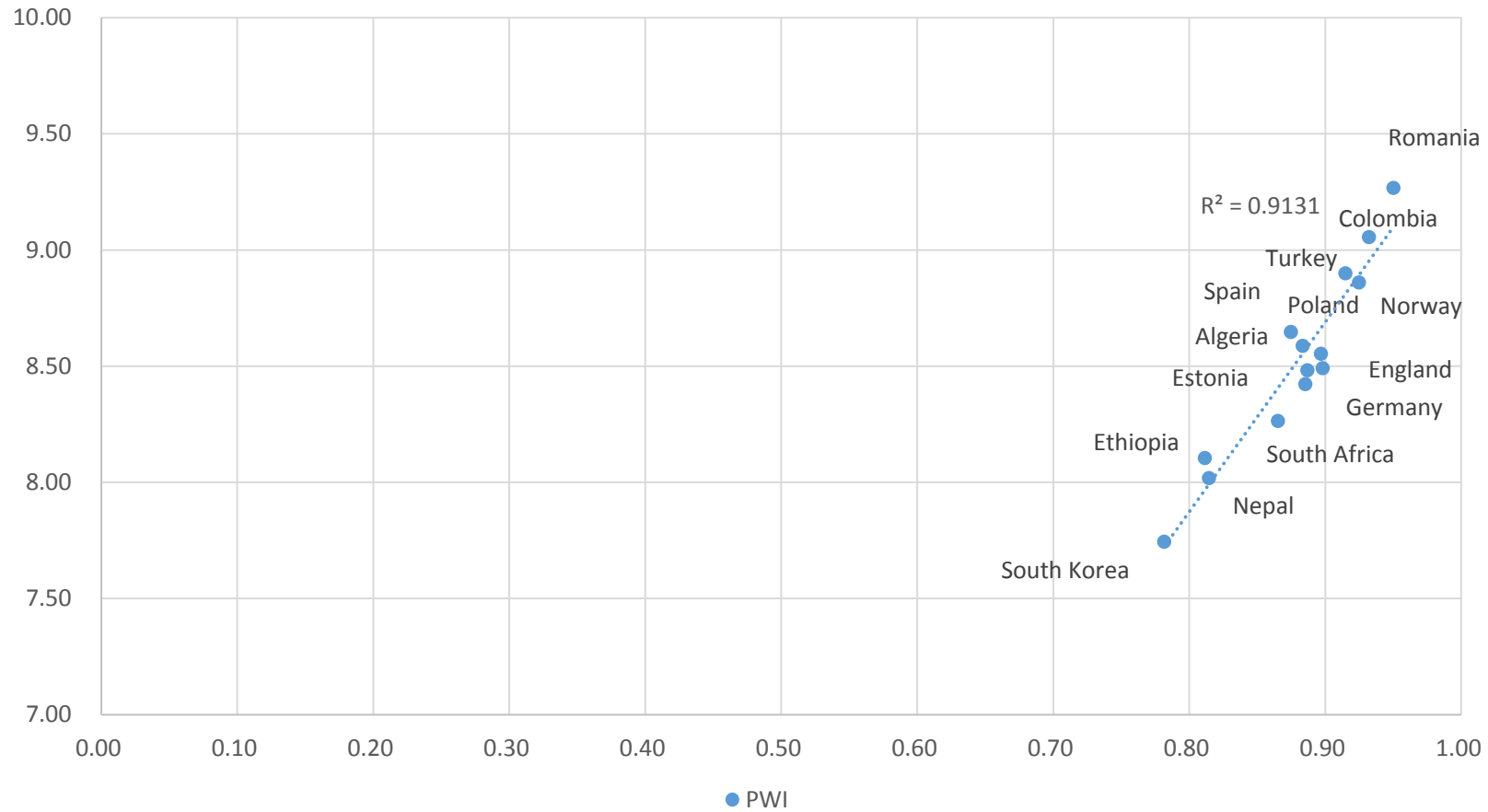


Freedom to choose

• I have enough choice about how I spend my time

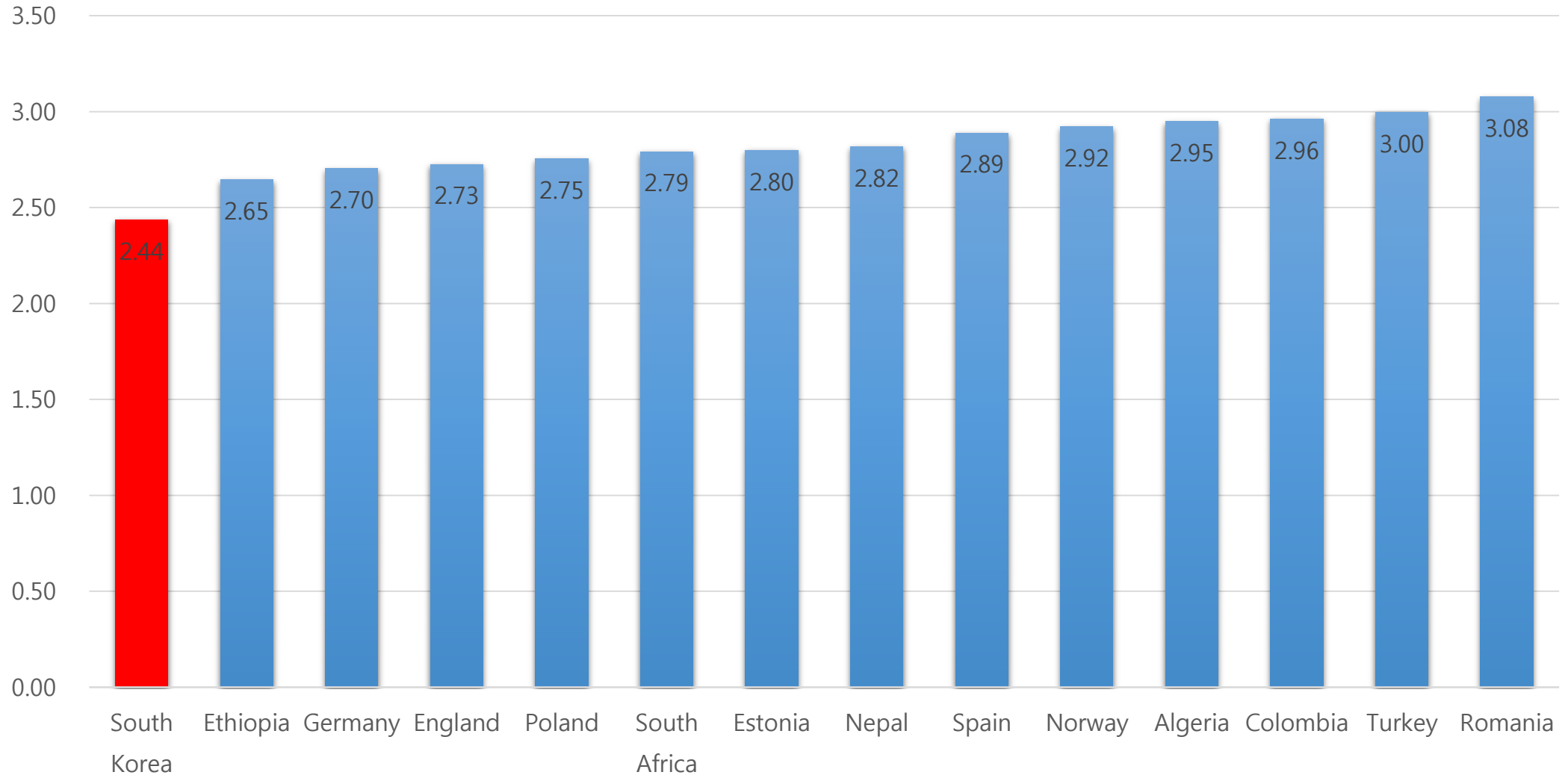


Freedom to choose-PWI

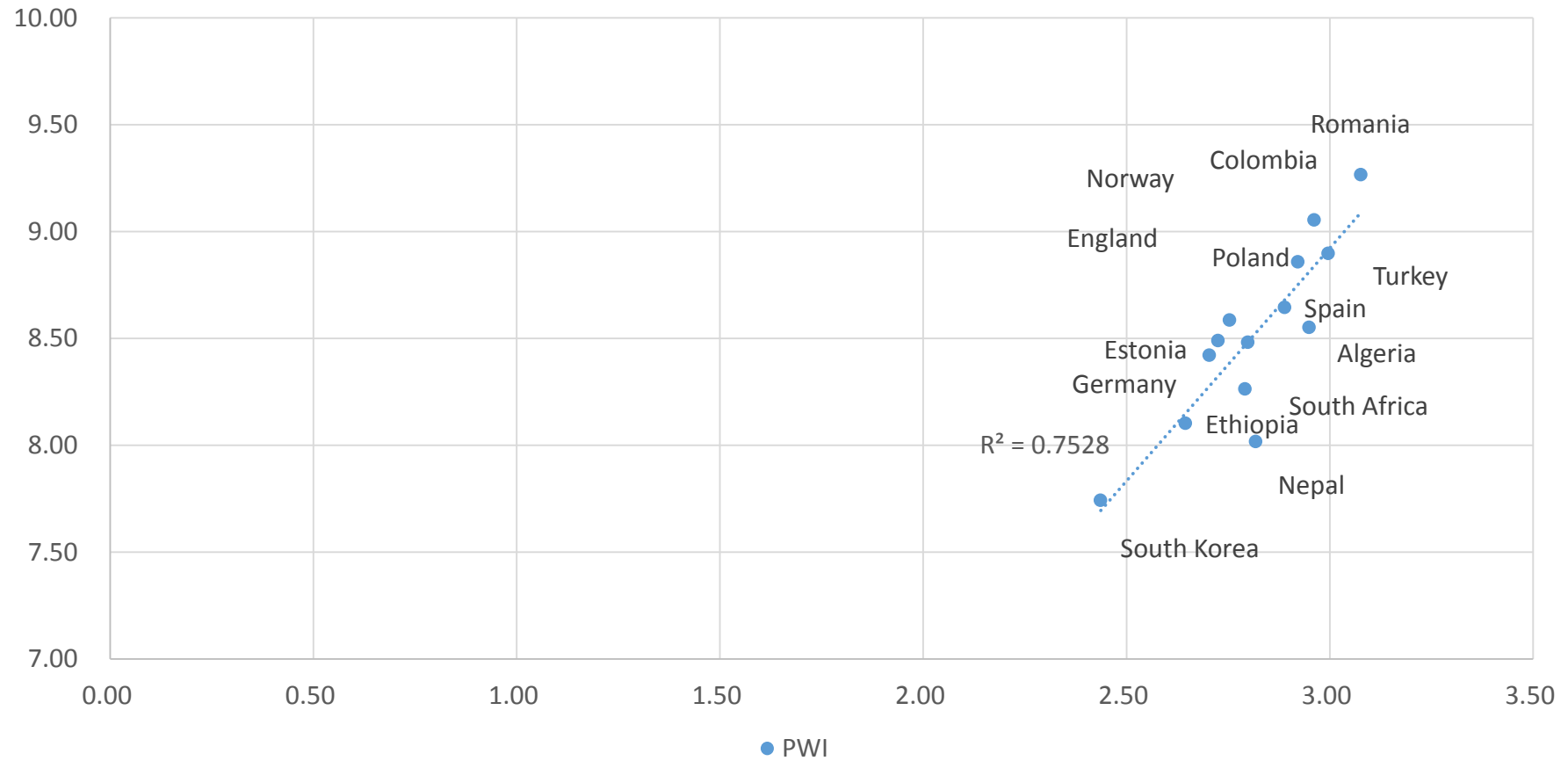


Self

- I like being the way I am
- I am good at managing my daily responsibilities
- People are generally pretty friendly towards me



Self-PWI



Discussion

What matters to whom?



Discussion

- The results showed that the variations of children's SWB exist across countries.
 - South Korea, Nepal, and Ethiopia's children reported low level of SWB consistently.
 - But, why?
- Decomposition of SWB
 - We decomposed of SWB using the pooled-data, individual-level country data.
 - We divided differences of SWB between countries into the 'explained' and 'unexplained' portions.
 - The 'effects' of the 7 major factors are different across countries.

Discussion

- We can assume the ‘unexplained’ part of SWB could be due to ‘reporting bias’.
- However, the differences in the ‘unexplained’ parts do not fully account for the observed SWB variations.
- Then, what matters?

Different level of influences to 'determine' children's SWB

- 'Weak' factors
 - Leisure
 - Learning
 - Money
- 'Moderate' factors
 - The unexplained
 - Environment
 - Relationship
- 'Strong' factors
 - Freedom to choose
 - Self

- In fact, the reason why Korea has the lowest level of SWB is due to the facts that Korean children have lower level of 'self' and 'freedom to choose'
- Along with more obvious policy targets (such as learning, money, relationship, etc.), more attention is needed to how children view themselves and the choices they can make.



Thank you for your attention!

References

- Bradshaw, J. (2014). Overview: Social Policies and Child Well-Being. In *Handbook of Child Well-Being* (pp. 2921-2943): Springer.
- Bradshaw, J. (2014). Subjective Well-Being and Social Policy: Can Nations Make Their Children Happier? *Child Indicators Research*, 1-15.
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