

A Review of the Factors Affecting College Students' Subjective Well-being

Mingyue Zhang, Shumei Jiang*

School of Education, Jilin Normal University, Siping, Jilin, China.

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Corresponding author: Shumei Jiang, School of Education, Jilin Normal University, Siping, Jilin, China.

Abstract

Whether in ancient times or in modern times, happiness is the goal that human beings continue to pursue. The study of subjective well-being, especially the subjective well-being of college students, has been the focus of attention of many scholars at home and abroad in recent years, and has achieved very rich research results. However, compared with a large number of international studies, there are still many deficiencies in the study of subjective well-being in China, which needs to be further improved. College students are an important group in today's society. They are in a critical period of life development. The promotion and cultivation of their subjective well-being has positive practical significance for the development of today's society and individuals. This paper introduces the concept, structure and characteristics of subjective well-being, analyzes in detail the subjective and objective factors that affect the subjective well-being of college students, points out the deficiencies of the current college students' subjective well-being in three aspects of measurement tools, research vision and intervention research, and proposes that in the future study of college students' subjective well-being, researchers should develop evaluation tools suitable for the local conditions of China. To further broaden the depth and breadth of the research on college students' subjective well-being, we should explore and strengthen the intervention research on college students' subjective well-being. It aims to provide a new perspective for future research.

Keywords

University student, Subjective well-being, influence factor, Research overview

1. Introduction

In today's society, multi-cultural values are constantly spreading out in every aspect of society. When we enjoy a higher level of material life, we also begin to pay more attention to our spiritual life, especially our quality of life. From focusing on survival to focusing on life, people begin to focus on the pursuit of happiness. What is happiness and how can we be happy? Everyone is looking forward to the day when they will finally get happiness. Everyone also has their own unique understanding, pursuit and realization of happiness. Therefore, in different times and different cultural backgrounds, happiness is a lifelong theme that is more valued by mankind and constantly pursued and strived for. Psychologists mainly measure and describe people's spiritual experience, and study the internal regularity of its occurrence. Since the 1980s, Chinese scholars have carried out in-depth research on it, but at this time it is still in an infancy

period, and it is mainly aimed at the middle-aged and elderly. The research on the subjective well-being of young people, especially college students, has been carried out since the middle and late 1990s. So far, the research on this issue has made considerable progress. As the future and hope of a country, as the builder and successor of a nation's economy and culture, the study of college students' subjective well-being has both theoretical and practical value. This paper reviews the relevant research results on the subjective well-being of college students that have existed in China at present, with the purpose of finding some rules from them, so as to conduct a substantial and in-depth discussion on the subjective well-being of college students at the academic level. On the practical level, it can provide a more scientific and efficient way for college students to carry out mental health education, so as to promote the all-round development of college students.

2. Meaning of subjective well-being

Happiness is the deep measure of social development. When people reach a certain standard of material life, they begin to attach importance to the need for self-realization, and happiness becomes a more valuable one among many life goals. Therefore, subjective well-being has been widely concerned by scholars at home and abroad since its birth. However, there is no consensus on its definition, including: subjective well-being in the sense of quality of life, subjective well-being in the sense of emotion, subjective well-being in the negative sense, and subjective well-being in the sense of psychological development. The more satisfied people are with their living conditions, the more they can treat everything in life with a positive attitude, and the higher the experience of subjective well-being will be, and vice versa. Therefore, most researchers prefer to accept the definition of American scholar Diener (1984): "subjective well-being" is an assessment of one's overall quality of life according to self-set standards. It is mainly composed of three dimensions: life satisfaction, positive emotional experience and negative emotional experience. According to Diener's theory, people's happiness has three characteristics: subjectivity, integrity and relative stability. Therefore, college students' subjective well-being refers to their subjective feeling of their own quality of life.

3. Influencing factors of college students' subjective well-being

3.1 Objective influencing factors

3.1.1 Demographic variables

According to the existing research, demographic variables (gender, age, race, economic status, education level, urban-rural differences, etc.) have a certain impact on the subjective well-being of college students, but this has little explanatory effect on the change of subjective well-being, and the relevant research conclusions are controversial. At present, domestic scholars have formed some preliminary understanding about whether the economic level affects the relationship between subjective well-being. Some domestic scholars believe that the level of family income has a direct impact on their subjective well-being. The results showed that the lower the education level of students, the lower their subjective well-being. Low-income college students, whether self-efficacy or social support index, are lower than average students. This means that poor economic conditions not only make college students lack confidence, but also make them lack support in society. Therefore, they feel more negative emotions, which reduce the subjective well-being index. In addition, Zhu Xiaowen and Liu Jiatong explored the psychological and behavioral mechanisms of the impact of subjective socio-economic status on college students' happiness in their research, and found that subjective socio-economic status and other factors, such as self-esteem, online and offline peer interaction, have an impact on college students' happiness. At present, many studies on the impact of gender on college students' subjective well-being are still controversial. This different argument is due to the different perspectives observed by each other. The former is more inclined to the biological gender perspective, while the latter is more focused on the perspective of social roles and social status, or the difference caused by incomplete measurement tools and methods. Therefore, it is difficult to determine which is higher or lower in the comparison of subjective well-being of men and women (Zhu Xiaowen & Liu Jiatong, 2019).

3.1.2 Social support

It mainly includes support from parents, teachers, people of the same sex and different genders. Most psychologists believe that individuals with better social support have higher subjective well-being, life satisfaction and positive emotions, while lower negative emotions (Lei Hui, Li Jingxuan, & Zhang Xiaocui, 2022). A harmonious family environment and good interpersonal relationships have a great impact on our lives. If you often accuse or criticize others in social relations, it will not only destroy the harmonious relationship with others, but also make you experience more negative emotions. On the contrary, people who have close or high-quality interpersonal relationships have higher levels of happiness. In addition, good interpersonal relationships have a good protective effect on people's self-esteem. Foreign studies also show that social support has a positive effect on the improvement of individual physical and mental

health and subjective well-being. This conclusion has also been confirmed by relevant research in China. For example, the research done by Wang Xiangdong shows that social support has a significant impact on personal physical and mental health; Xin Ziqiang, Chi Liping and others found that the use of support and interpersonal support can better predict the positive, negative and happy emotions of individuals; Han Xu and others found that social support can not only have a direct impact on college students' subjective well-being, but also have an indirect impact on their self-efficacy. Social support plays a positive role in improving college students' self-healing ability and maintaining their mental health. A sound social support system can make individuals understand things more objectively and reduce the generation of negative attitudes (Han Xu, Wang Lei, & Kong Ming, 2022).

3.1.3 Life events

Life events refer to the sum of all kinds of stressful stimuli or changes in social life generated by people in the family, work, study and social support system. If people are in this state of tension or change for a long time, they will enter a state of stress, which will affect people's subjective well-being. Life is really composed of many small events and different environments, and these small events can have a great impact. If the individual's acceptance of small events does not meet the psychological expectations, it will cause psychological imbalance, thus reducing their subjective well-being. Such problems as failing the exam, boring courses, disharmonious dormitory relationships, and excessive pressure from all parties will affect the subjective well-being of college students (Hong Rong, 2019).

3.2 Subjective factors

3.2.1 Personality characteristics

A large number of studies have found that there are many factors that affect subjective well-being, and personality is the most reliable and powerful predictor of subjective well-being (Wu Lvmin, 2021). At present, when domestic scholars study the subjective factors affecting subjective well-being, especially personality factors, they mostly use the Eysenck Personality Survey and the "Big Five Personality Scale". Zhou Hengcai and Quan Hongyan studied subjective well-being with the Big Five Personality Scale, and the results showed that neuroticism and rigor were significantly correlated with the three dimensions of subjective well-being, while extraversion, openness and pleasant were only significantly positively correlated with positive emotions. From the perspective of personality psychology, personality refers to the internal tendency of individuals in behavior, which is manifested as the integration of abilities, emotions, needs, motivations, interests, attitudes, values, temperament, personality and physique when individuals adapt to the environment. It is a kind of self with dynamic consistency and continuity, and it is a kind of distinctive psychosomatic organization formed by individuals in the process of socialization. From the definition, we can see that personality is composed of many specific aspects, such as self-esteem, self-worth, self-efficacy, self-concept, self-disclosure, etc. Domestic scholars have done a lot of research on the relationship between personality characteristics and subjective well-being, and have achieved certain results (Huang Ziyun, Zou Shuai, & Wang Yansong, 2022).

3.2.2 Attribution method

Attribution is a cognitive activity, which determines the cause of a certain behavior result through internal processing processes such as perception and reasoning. American psychologist Weiner divided attribution into two types, one is internal reason, and the other is external reason. Internal reasons refer to the reasons that exist inside the individual, such as personality, emotion, motivation, quality, attitude, mood and effort level; External causes refer to the external conditions for the occurrence of behaviors or events, including environment, luck, influence of others, and difficulty of work tasks. On the basis of Weiner, Roth will call those who tend to attribute internally as internal controllers and those who tend to attribute externally as external controllers. The internal controller believes that "man can conquer nature", and the external controller always believes that everything is caused by the external environment, which is a typical "environmentalist". However, the occurrence and development of anything is not determined by unilateral own efforts or external environment or accidental opportunities, but is the result of the joint action of these two factors. In addition, different social roles will make everyone have their own and different attribution methods. College students have little social experience and their outlook on life and values are not very mature. Therefore, they are more vulnerable to external environmental factors when analyzing problems. In other words, college students tend to attribute success or failure to external factors.

4. Shortcomings and prospects

4.1 Further improve the tool for measuring college students' subjective well-being

At present, most of the subjective well-being scales of college students in China are imported from abroad and ap-

plied after modification, and there are many versions. In addition, due to the cultural differences between China and the West, there will be some deviation in the understanding of happiness. In addition, it is the scale prepared by domestic scholars or master students themselves in the process of research. The scale prepared by each person is based on their own research needs. There is no unified standard or framework. This is also the reason why many domestic research conclusions are different. Therefore, it is impossible to conduct a comprehensive and scientific evaluation of college students' subjective well-being. Therefore, it is very necessary to develop a set of college students' happiness evaluation tool with high reliability and validity that is relatively unified under the same standard and framework and suitable for China's national conditions.

4.2 We should further expand our research horizons and pay attention to the depth and breadth of research

Among the existing research results, most of the subjects involved are college students from a certain region, a certain university or some universities. However, China is a vast country with many nationalities, and college students from different regions and nationalities may have certain differences in their subjective well-being. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance the ecological validity of the research on college students' subjective well-being. In addition, especially in recent years, with the continuous development of the digital society, there is a close relationship between the new media environment and college students' subjective well-being. Therefore, future researchers should strengthen comprehensive research in multiple fields. Our research methods should be more diversified, break through the traditional mechanical research methods, and use the concept of open system to carry out systematic research from the multiple factors, multi-level and other composite perspectives that affect the subjective well-being of college students, so as to better improve the ecological validity of the research on the subjective well-being of college students. We believe that in the future, more and better results will be presented to the world.

4.3 Pay attention to the intervention research of college students' subjective well-being

At present, people's research on college students' subjective well-being is mostly carried out from the perspectives of demographic variables, life events, personality, self-esteem, etc., while little attention is paid to other key factors such as emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, cognitive model, etc. Therefore, future research can be carried out from these perspectives, both subjective and objective factors, and explore the mechanism of each influencing factor on subjective well-being, so as to propose a set of operable theoretical models for future intervention research to improve college students' subjective well-being.

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