

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUALITY OF LIFE AND HAPPINESS

CHYKHANTSOVA Olena

In Happiness And Contemporary Society : Conference Proceedings Volume (Lviv, March, 20-21, 2020). Lviv: SPOLOM, 2020. P. 60-62.

ISBN 978-966-919-593-7

CHYKHANTSOVA Olena

PhD in Psychology, Senior Researcher,

Chamaty Laboratory of Psychology of Personality,

Kostiuk Institute of Psychology of NAES of Ukraine (Kyiv, Ukraine)

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Lately the concepts ‘quality of life’ and ‘happiness’ experience great attention from public as well as from academic sphere. ‘Quality of life’ can be understood in three main ways. First, there is the wealth or purchasing power of citizens, and the quality and accessibility of goods provided in the community - including education, healthcare, parks, public roads, air, and water. A supplement to this first category are social and political goods, such as democracy, rule of law, political and religious freedom, the lack of discrimination, and a sense of community. 1962 Abraham Maslow published his book ‘Towards a Psychology of Being’, and established a theory of quality of life, which is still considered a consistent theory of quality of life. So, A. Maslow based his theory for development towards happiness and true being on the concept of human needs. He described his approach as an existentialistic psychology of selfactualization, based on personal growth (Susniene, & Jurkauskas, 2009).

But ‘quality of life’ can also suggest ‘happiness’ - a subjective state of mind. Happiness is more than often considered to be the most important thing in human life. Infinite amount of research has shown that happiness is of high importance in human life (Veenhoven, 2005).

Currently, there is no agreement between researchers in defining ‘happiness’ and its related constructs (Diener, 2014; Veenhoven, 2001). In the literature ‘happiness’ is often called subjective well-being (Diener, 20014; Eid, & Larsen, 2008), and quality of life (Diener, 2014), which suggests that the meanings of happiness may depend on the context (Diener, 20014). Elsewhere, ‘subjective happiness’ was defined as ‘a global evaluatio of life satisfaction’ (Diener, 2014). In the same way, subjective well-being was defined as ‘evaluations of life quality’. These definitions indicate close relationship between the constructs of happiness, subjective well-being, quality of life, and life satisfaction (Medvedev, & Landhuis, 2018).

The terms ‘quality of life’ and ‘happiness’ are often equated. This conceptual connection is more or less implied in the use of words. The phrase ‘quality of life’ suggests that life is good in all aspects. Such a good life must be a happy life. Both terms owe much of their popularity to their suggestion of inclusiveness. They came into use as slogans in discussions. ‘Quality’ of life was contrasted with mere ‘quantity’ of life. ‘Happiness’ was contrasted with ‘successful’ life (Veenhoven, 2001).

The term ‘quality of life’ is used to denotes different meanings. The following three main notions can be discerned: Quality of environment, Quality of performance, Quality of the result. The term ‘happiness’ has been used as a catchword for all above mentioned meanings of ‘quality of life’. There is no universally accepted definition of quality of life. Usually it is referred to the definition of World health organization introduced in 1995 – ‘Quality of life’ is an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their

goals, expectations, values and concerns incorporating physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relations, personal beliefs and their relationship to salient features of the environment quality of life refers to a subjective evaluation which is embedded in a cultural, social and environmental context (World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL). In quality of life research, one often distinguishes between the subjective and objective quality of life. Subjective quality of life is about feeling good and being satisfied with things in general. Objective quality of life is about fulfilling the societal and cultural demands for material wealth, social status and physical well-being (Visser, Oort, Sprangers, 2005)

‘Happiness’ is the degree to which a person evaluates the overall quality of his/her present life-as-a-whole positively. In other words, how much one likes the life one leads (Veenhoven, 2001). Also used in scientific literature an other current synonym to ‘happiness’. It is ‘subjective well-being’ (Diener, 2006; Veenhoven, 2001).

The aim of our study was to analyze the relationship between happiness, subjective well-being and quality of life. The analysis of different researches revealed that ‘Quality of life concept’ and ‘happiness concept’ correlates but are not the same. It is important to mention person whose quality of life index is high can feel unhappy and on the con can be experienced being very poor.

Figure 1 presents a framework which emphasizes the aspects of our research.

With this model it is possible to measure with existing indices what the happiness or well-being level is to a high extend. All ‘Quality of life’ indicators used in this research are intercorrelated. This might explain the fact that it is hard to add up every indicator and implying they are completely independent.

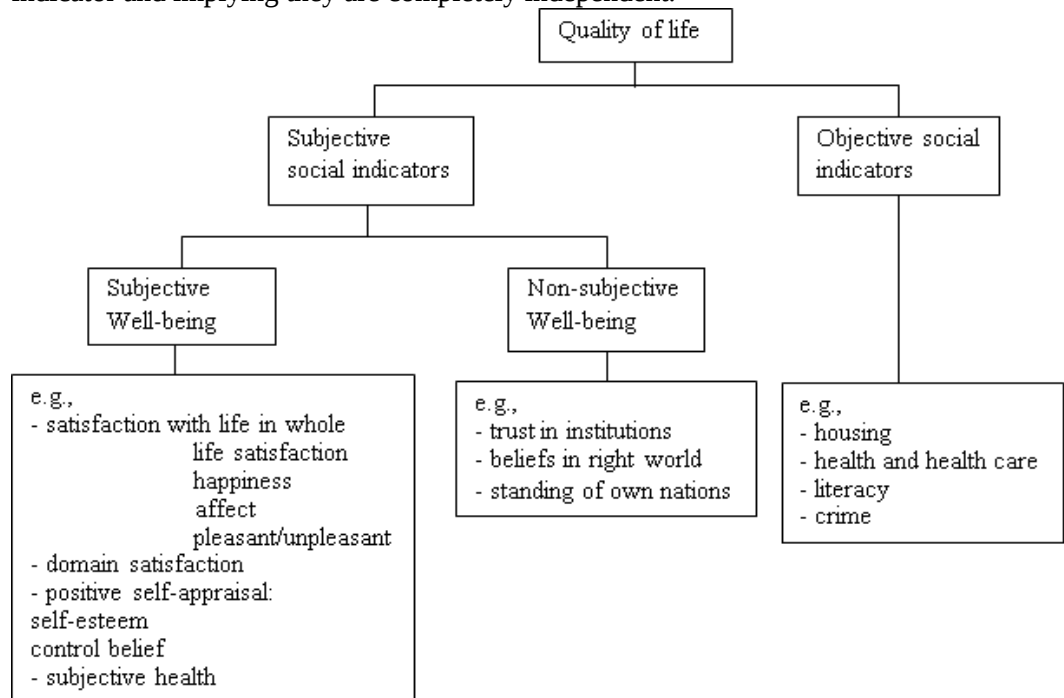


Figure 1. ‘Quality of life’ framework (Schyns, 2003)

After a literature review we can conclude, that the bundle of indicators which has the highest correlation with ‘happiness’ is the model which can be used to predict future outcomes of happiness. Table 1 presents the relationships of the scores from the model with the existing happiness scores.

Table 1.

Correlation matrix of Happiness and Happiness defined by Quality of Life indicators (Stappen, 2012)

	Happiness	Happiness by Quality of life
Happiness	1	0,678
Happiness by Quality of life	0,678	1

As we can see the scores, ‘happiness’ and ‘Quality of life’ are strongly positive related with each other as well.

So, ‘happiness’ is a subjective factor depending on person’s outlook that depends on: meaningful life philosophy and balance of mind, importance of personal financial situation, background, religiousness, understanding of one’s own place in a society. Quality of life concept and happiness concept correlates but are not the same. Person whose quality of life index is high can feel unhappy and on the contrary, happiness can be experienced being very poor (Susniene, & Jurkauskas, 2009). We can suggest that ‘happiness’ is an important indicator in identifying people’s life satisfaction.

It worth to mention that Ukraine has 132 rank out of 155 countries after the World Happiness Report (2019), becoming the most unhappy European state. The following indicators of ‘happiness’ were analyzed: positive affect, negative affect, social support, freedom, corruption, generosity, log of GDP per capita, and healthy life expectancy. So, Ukraine is in the top five of countries with the most negative happiness ranking dynamics in the past 10 years.

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