

Life Satisfaction: A literature Review

¹Rituparna Prasoona ²K R Chaturvedi

Abstract

This paper reviews the contributions of earlier study in the area of Life Satisfaction . The attempt is to examine the extent of the knowledge contribution in this study sphere and incorporate significant reviews of the patterns of Life Satisfaction in various domains . The literature looks into the review of studies on finding the exact definition of Life Satisfaction along with its determinants and the concept of subjective well being.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Quality of life, Social Indicators.

1.Introduction

“True happiness comes from the joy of deeds well done, the zest of creating things new. ‘ – Antoine de Saint-Exupery—The little Prince

Embedded in the 18th century Age of Enlightenment, the concept of Life Satisfaction breezed through 19th century as a means for providing people with good life and influenced the development of Welfare State. By the late 20th Century, intellectuals endeavored to find a proper definition of Life Satisfaction, envisioning the components of good life and its measurement. The term Quality Of Life (QOL) was introduced in the 1960s. However, social indicators replaced the traditional economic criteria of welfare and satisfaction by mid 1980's stating that money cannot buy happiness. The early use of the idea was a reproval denoting that there is more to human way of life than material gratification.

Several important books in this area were published, such as ‘The Quality of American Life’ (Campbell et al., 1976), ‘Social Indicators of Well-being’ (Andrews and Withey 1976), ‘The Social Progress of Nations’ (Estes 1984), and ‘Lebensqualität in der Bundesrepublik’ (Glatzer and Zapf 1984) . These accentuated on social relationships, health, work related conditions, personal welfare, liberty, moral values and personality traits as a source of Life Satisfaction .

¹ IILM Graduate School of Management Greater Noida, India

² Professor KIET School of Management Ghaziabad, Indi

2.Literature Review

Definition of Life Satisfaction:

Many explanations and definitions of Life satisfaction can be observed as it is not a very easy to understand notion. Neugarten et al.(1961) calls Life Satisfaction “an operational definition of ‘successful aging’. Life satisfaction for Sumner (1966) is "A positive evaluation of the conditions of your life, a judgment that at least on balance, it measures up favorably against your standards or expectations."

Andrew (1974) states life satisfaction symbolizing an overarching criterion or ultimate outcome of human experience. Life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. It is one of three major indicators of well-being: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Diener, 1984). Life satisfaction is characterized, in agreement with the cognitive theory, as “individual's cognitive judgment about comparisons based on the compatibility of their own living conditions with the standards” (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffen, 1985).

Life satisfaction is believed to have antecedents in the work domain, family domain, and personality traits Ruut Veenhoven (1993) has best summarized Life Satisfaction; “Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as-a-whole.”.Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith (1999) also included the following under life satisfaction: desire to change one's life; satisfaction with past; satisfaction with future; and significant other's views of one's life." life-satisfaction is one of the pointers of ‘apparent’ quality of life along with other indicators of mental and physical health. It is referred as an assessment of the overall conditions of existence as derived from a comparison of one's aspiration to one's actual achievement (Cribb, 2000).

It is assumed that the less the incongruity between the individual's desires and achievements, the more life satisfaction he/she has (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). The Affective theory, on the contrary feels life satisfaction to be an individual's conscious experience as to the dominance of their positive emotions over their negative emotions. In recent research conducted life satisfaction is assessed as the degree of the positive emotions experienced (Frish, 2006; as cited in Simsek, 2011).

Subjective well-being:

Even though much of the current literature on well-being uses terms like happiness, life satisfaction and subjective well-being interchangeably, this is not completely accurate. If well-being is defined or assessed by individuals themselves, it is termed subjective well-being.

Understanding the psychology of Happiness and the concept of subjective well-being was done by Myers, D. G. (1992) New York: William Morrow. Heady, B. and A. Wearing (1992); Argyle, M. (1987) .

According to Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin (1985) recognize three separable components of subjective well-being: positive affect (PA), negative affect (NA), and life satisfaction. Maddox (1987) in the encyclopedia of Aging defines life satisfaction as subordinate construct of subjective wellbeing (SWB), others being happiness, mood and morale. It is contentment with one's life in general. Research points out that there are individual differences in how meaning in life is to one's sense of wellbeing. The determinants of well-being and life satisfaction are highly individualized or personalized. It is to each his own, depending on their value orientations (Oishi, Graessman, 1998; Emmons, 1991)..

Whereas the affective part is a hedonic estimation guided by emotions and feelings, the cognitive part is an information-based assessment of one's life for which people judge the extent to how their life so far measures up to their expectations and bear a resemblance to their envisioned 'ideal' life (Hoorn, 2007). Although researchers have concentrated on the measurement of affective well-being in the past (e.g. using depression scales), the addition of separate measurements of life satisfaction to complement traditional affective measurements has proven useful in understanding and predicting reactions to stressful and challenging events in life (Huebner & Dew, 1996; Bradley & Corwyn, 2004).

Cropanzano and Wright (2001) note, happiness is thought to have “three defining” characteristics: (a) it represents a “subjective experience”; (b) it “includes both the relative presence of positive emotions and the relative absence of negative emotions”; and (c) it “is a global judgment” (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001: 183). As Cropanzano and Wright (2001) note, happiness is considered highly valuable by most people and scarce by many people, suggesting their need to conserve or maintain happiness whenever possible. They term this model of happiness the “re-source maintenance model,” and explain its differential effects for happy and unhappy people

Well-being and quality of life was studied by measuring the benefits of culture and sport , galloway susan (2005). Buetell (2006) suggests that life satisfaction is attributable to a family of personality, genetic, and social-cognitive factors such as goal-directed activity, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental support. Income and Individual happiness became an important part of the study on life satisfaction by a number of theorists like Clark, Andrew E., Paul Frijters, and Michael Shields. 2008; Deaton, Angus. 2008; Di Tella, Rafael, John Haisken–DeNew, and Robert MacCulloch, 2007; Easterlin, Richard A. 1995; Kapteyn, Arie., Smith, James. P. & van Soest, Arthur. 2008. Life Satisfaction was studied as a shift from wealth to well-being by Aknin, L. B., & Norton, D.(2009).

Constituents of Life Satisfaction

In the 1970's, life-satisfaction was a central theme in several American Social Indicator studies. Analysis of the development of life-satisfaction and economic growth in the post-war decades in the USA was done by Easterlin (1974). With economic slowdown various studies in life satisfaction showed that there was discrepancy in job and life satisfaction associated with work-related and extra-workplace (Rice, R. W., Near, J. P., & Hunt, R. G. (1979). With expanding society in terms of money and power and new trends setting in due to globalization there was a rise in materialism and consumerism leading to various studies on Loneliness. It was observed that Loneliness was a hindrance to Life satisfaction. Russell, D., Peplau, L.A., & Cutrona, C.E. (1980). The Satisfaction With Life Scale was defined in detail by Diener, E., R. A. Emmons, R. J. Larsen and S. Griffin (1985).

Outside the United States of America, Glatzer and Zapf (1984) reported studies from the Nordic countries by Allardt (1975). Heady and Wearing (1992) performed one of the first large-scale longitudinal survey on life-satisfaction in Australia. Review studies on cross-national differences in happiness, cultural bias or societal quality were published by Veenhoven (1984), Argyle (1987) and Meyers (1992). "Bottom-up" theories of life satisfaction (e.g., Brief, Butcher, George, & Link, 1993) recommend that life satisfaction represents an overall attitude, composed of components of satisfaction in various domains of life. Andrews & Withey, (1976) state that importance of any one specific life domain of life satisfaction varies by population.

The relations between Income and Life Satisfaction became an important area of study in the early nineties. The relationship between income and subjective well-being whether relative or absolute was a subject of study by Diener, E., Sandvik, E., Seidlitz, L., & Diener, M. (1993). Richard A. 1995 also saw income and Individual happiness as a vital component of Life Satisfaction in the study on Utility Income, Aging, Health and Well-Being. Along with income health also became associated with life satisfaction Kim, O (1997) in his study on older Korean immigrants observed that Loneliness was a deterrent to life satisfaction and also a predictor of health perceptions.

The subjective evaluation of different aspects of life is known to correlate fairly strongly with life satisfaction (Ateca-Amestoy, Serrano-del-Rosal, & Vera-Toscano, 2008; Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Van Praag & Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2004; Van Praag et al, 2003). Evaluations of finance, health, and job satisfaction, together with leisure satisfaction are the four most important correlates (Van Praag et al., 2003). Ateca-Amestoy et al. (2008) and Spiers and Walker (2009) find positive associations between leisure satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Neal et al. (1999) constructed a model based on the assumption that "life satisfaction is functionally related to satisfaction with all of life's domains and subdomains" (Neal, Sirgy, & Uysal, 1999, p. 154). In 2004, Neal and Sirgy (2004) further validated this model by

demonstrating that there is a correlation between satisfaction with leisure life and satisfaction with life in general. Sirgy, Rahtz, Cicic, and Underwood (2000) developed a similar model and included leisure as part of the "global satisfaction with other life domains" (Sirgy & Comwell, 2001; Sirgy et al., 2000).

Rode, Joseph Charles (2002) examined a job and life satisfaction model that included both environmental conditions and personality measures within a longitudinal framework and national representative sample to better understand the relationship of job satisfaction and life satisfaction over time. Satisfaction with Life Index was created calculating, subjective well being on the basis of health, wealth and access to basic education (White, Adrian (2007).

Life Cycle Happiness and its Sources was tried to be found out Easterlin, Richard A. 2006; Van Praag, Bernard M.S., and Ada Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2008) and relationships among stressful life events, temperament, problem behavior was also tried to be studied McKnight, C. G., Huebner, E. S., & Suldo, S. M. (2002). Reschly, A. L., Huebner, E. S., Appleton, J. J., & Antaramian, S. (2008).

Life satisfaction was studied amongst the below poverty line in India , Biswas-Diener, R., & Diener, E. (2001). Satisfaction with Life Index was created calculating, subjective well being on the basis of health wealth , and access to basic education .White, Adrian (2007). Tremblay et al. (2006) examined the role of subjective vitality and the perception of stress as mediators between general life satisfaction and post-traumatic physiological and psychological health. They found that satisfaction with life optimistically predict subjective vitality and negatively predicted perceived stress.

Both resilience as well as perceived positive stress are positively related to life satisfaction (Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010). This demonstrates that life satisfaction increases with an increase in resilience and a decrease of stress. Other conditions that influence life satisfaction include demographic, environmental, and interpersonal factors (Koohsar & Bonab, 2011). Saari and Judge (2004) add that factors such as taking pleasure in life, finding life meaningful, consistency at the matter of reaching goal satisfaction, positive individual identity, physical fitness, economical security, and social relationships are all important life satisfaction indicators.

The twenty first century ushered in specific studies on Life Satisfaction. Ashley D. Lewis, E. Scott Huebner, Patrick S. Malone & Robert F. Valois (2011) tried to find out the various components of Life Satisfaction in particular age groups such as adolescents Kohler et al. (2005), The authors analyze the effects of partnerships and having children on Their results show that the first child increases happiness for women but not for men, and that the magnitude of the effect is considerable (half or more the size of the effect of being in a partnership). Additional children are found to lower female happiness (and do not affect men).

Gender and Life Satisfaction also is an important study on life satisfaction stating the reasons of Life satisfaction among women . The study depicts that women have average level of life

satisfaction at all age levels. It is found that with an increase in age, the overall life satisfaction decreases; whereas, with an increase in personal income, the overall life satisfaction increases. Moreover, with an increase in family income, the overall life satisfaction of women also increases. Calasanti, T. M. (2009); CarmeTraid, W. (2009); Machinov and Fernandez (2012). Muzamil Jan* and TasiaMasood(2008); Saundra HS, Hughey AW 2003. African American Women; Kousha M, Moheen N 2004; KhannaShipra(2015) . The direction of this relationship continues to be a source of debate.

Dispositional explanations, for example, propose a ‘spillover’ (Schmitt & Mellon, 1980) of general affective states of life satisfaction to the job situation (Judge & Locke, 1993; Staw, Bell, & Clausen, 1986). Conversely, Rousseau (1978) and Chacko (1983) contend that job satisfaction had a greater influence on life or non-work satisfaction than vice versa. They argued that this was explained by the valence or value individuals place on work in general. Recent empirical studies by Adams et al. (1996) and Judge et al. (1998) affirm this underlying sequence.

Likewise, Wright and Staw (1999) reviewed expectancy theory, goal-setting theory, and attribution theory, and concluded that each theory predicts that positive mood is related to motivation across a wide range of situations. Empirically, several studies have found a relationship between subjective well-being and individual performance in the work domain (Cropanzano & Wright, 1999; Staw & Barsade, 1993; Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994; Wright & Cropanzano, 1997,2000). However, in their study of CEO life satisfaction and firm performance in small entrepreneurial firms, Daily and Near (2000) found no significant relationship.

3. Conclusion

Life satisfaction has been conceptualized as a cognitive constituent of subjective well-being. High satisfaction suggests that the quality of life, in the population concerned, is good. Low satisfaction on the other hand marks serious shortcomings of some kind. This is consistent with Bradley & Corwyn (2004) who say that life satisfaction reflects both the extent to which basic needs are met and the extent to which a variety of other goals are viewed as attainable. From this perspective it reasonable seems that by realization of more goals, satisfaction with life will also increase.

According to Beutell (2006) it is believed that life satisfaction is related to better physical, and mental health, longevity, and other outcomes that are considered positive in nature. In addition, Chow (2009) argues that improved levels of life satisfaction might give rise to better health in the future.

Recent research, nevertheless, acknowledges that life satisfaction, should be important considerations for organizations (Nadkarni & Stening, 1989). Researchers, are attempting to explain the linkages between life satisfaction with other aspects by proposing that satisfaction in one domain of an individual’s life extends into other areas.

References

1. Gurin, G., J. Veroff and S. Feld (1960.) Americans view their mental health. A nationwide interview survey. New York: Basic Books.
2. Cantril, H. (1965). The pattern of human concern. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press
3. Bradburn, N. M. (1969). The structure of psychological well-being. Chicago: Aldine publishing.
4. Alam, O.G. and Srivastava, Ramji (1971). A manual for Life Satisfaction Scale (L-S Scale). National Psychological Corporation Kacheri Ghat, AGRA (UP).
5. Easterlin, R. A. (1974) Does economic growth improve the human lot? Some empirical evidence. In: David, P. A. and W. R. Melvin (Eds.) Nations and Households in economic growth. New York: Academic press. 89-125.
6. Campbell, A., P. E. Converse and W. L. Rodgers (1976). The Quality of American Life. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
7. Veenhoven, R. (1984). Conditions of happiness. Dordrecht: Reidel, (reprinted 1991 by Kluwer Academic.)
8. Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) The Satisfaction with Life Scale, The Journal of Personality Assessment page 71- 72
9. Veenhoven, R. (1989). How harmful is happiness? Consequences of enjoying life or not. University Press Rotterdam.
10. Veenhoven, R. (1989). Does happiness bind? In: Veenhoven, R. 1989. 44-60.
11. Veenhoven, R. (1990). Inequality in happiness. Inequality in countries compared between countries. Madrid: Paper presented at the 12th ISA conference.
12. Veenhoven, R. (1991) Is happiness relative? Social Indicators Research, 24, 1-34.
13. Schwarz, N. and N. Strack (1991). Evaluating one's life: a judgement model of subjective well-being. In: Strack et al. (Eds.). 27-48.
14. Adams G. A., King, L. A. and King, D. W. (1996,) Relationships of Job and Family Involvement, Family Social Support, and Work-Family Conflict With Job and Life Satisfaction Journal of Applied Psychology Vol. 81 No. 4, 411-420
15. Diener, E., Suh, E.H., Lucas, R.E., & Smith, H.L. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress. Psychological Bulletin, 125, 276-302.
16. Galloway Susan (2005) Well-being and quality of life: Measuring the benefits of culture and sport: a literature review and think piece Scottish Executive Social Research
17. Ashley D. Lewis • E. Scott Huebner • Patrick S. Malone • Robert F. Valois (2011) Life Satisfaction and Student Engagement in Adolescents J Youth Adolescence 40:249–262 DOI 10.1007/s10964-010-9517-6
18. Dr. D.F. Meyer Dr. S.H. Dunga (2014) The Determinants of Life Satisfaction in a Low-Income Poor Community in South Africa J Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences MCSER Publishing, Rome Italy ISSN 2039-2117 (online) ISSN 2039-9340 (print) Vol 5 No; 13
19. Bum J Kim Kristen F Linton Wesley Lum (2015) Social capital and life satisfaction among Chinese and Korean elderly immigrants Journal of Social Work Vol 15 (1) 87-100 sage pub.co.uk/journals permissions.nav DOI 10.1177/1468017313504699
20. Abdullah sürücü 03 june 2014, evaluation of life satisfaction among guidance teachers with respect to certain variables 10th international academic conference, vienna isbn 978-80-87927-02-1, iises necmettin erbakan university ahmet kelesoglu education faculty, turkey

21. [Kim O](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9354113)1Loneliness: a predictor of health perceptions among older Korean immigrants.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9354113>
22. <http://homepages.rpi.edu/~verwyc/TMOH17.htm>
23. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrpdf/rr952.pdf>
24. https://etd.ohiolink.edu!etd.send_file?accession=bgsu1383319235&disposition=inline
25. https://www.academia.edu/1183520/DETERMINANTS_OF_LIFE_SATISFACTION
26. http://www.zeepedia.com/read.php?performance_determinants_of_job_performance_why_i_s_performance_measured_performance_management_human_resource_management&b=33&c=25
27. <https://www.classle.net#!/classle/content-page/determinants-job-performance/>
28. <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/psychology/definition-of-life-satisfaction-psychology-essay.php>