

A Study on Influencing Factors of Happiness of Urban Low-income Groups

Zhouhe Li*

Ocean University of China Cambridge International School, Laiyang, Shandong, 265200, China

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 6 September 2022

Revised: 16 September 2022

Accepted: 24 September 2022

Published Online: 30 September 2022

Keywords:

City

Low-income groups

Happiness

Factors affecting the introduction

ABSTRACT

With the completion of the strategic vision of building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way in 2020, China's economic development has entered a new normal. The concept of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development will lead China's economic progress and development. However, the development of urban and rural areas and regions in China is still not coordinated, and the sudden COVID-19 outbreak has caused a serious impact on urban low-income groups. Due to the characteristics of poor employment stability, low income and single source, as well as greater family pressure of urban low-income groups, the author focuses on the influencing factors of their feelings of happiness. This paper assumes that the satisfaction degree of residents' needs is positively correlated with residents' feelings of happiness. Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, this paper analyzes the factors that may affect the happiness of urban low-income groups in five levels, and explores the special needs and difficulties of urban low-income groups in the context of the epidemic. So as to find ways to improve the happiness of urban low-income people to provide reference.

1. Research Review

1.1 Research Background

China has achieved success in its strategic vision of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects in 2020. However, as COVID-19 spreads across countries, the situation cannot be taken lightly. China's social and economic development has suffered huge shocks and challenges. At present, China's urban and rural regional development is still not coordinated, and during the epi-

demic, the urban population is seriously unemployed and unemployed, but the impact of the rural population owning land is not as bad as the urban population. Therefore, the probability of urban low-income groups falling into poverty due to the epidemic has also increased significantly while they have not enjoyed the fruits of social development. However, this is not poverty in an absolute sense, but a low-income situation caused by objective reasons in a relative sense. Therefore, it is necessary to list urban low-income groups as research objects. Through literature review, it is found that the definition of low income in

*Corresponding Author:

Zhouhe Li,

Ocean University of China Cambridge International School, Laiyang, Shandong, 265200, China;

Email: 1582212106@qq.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/jesr.v5i3.5042>

Copyright © 2022 by the author(s). Published by Bilingual Publishing Co. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

China has different classification standards according to different economic development situations and different regions. Meanwhile, the urgency of urban low-income group is also very severe. Therefore, this paper will define the urban low-income group based on relevant data ^[1].

1.2 Research Objectives

At present, the standard of living of people in various countries is largely measured by economic conditions. Meanwhile, economic growth is also an important factor to improve individual subjective happiness, and people's happiness is also the ultimate goal of national economic development. In economics, the word "utility" is used to refer to "happiness". Economists believe that the positive development of economy and income will make the production boundary move outward, thus bringing higher utility. In addition to the influence of consumption on individual SWB, income also plays an indirect role on happiness index through health status, political factors and social capital. Therefore, under the dual background of economic development stepping into the new normal and the impact of COVID-19, this paper will take urban low-income groups as research objects to analyze the degree of happiness of this group and what factors are at work. At the same time, the judgment of "Easterlin paradox" and the main reason of "Easterlin paradox" happiness is not only related to income, but also closely related to individual characteristics, social characteristics and other factors ^[2-4].

1.3 Research Significance

1.3.1 Theoretical Significance

Since the 780's of the 20th century, the academic circle has made substantial progress in the study of happiness, for different objects, the influential factors of happiness are also persuasive, but the study of urban low-income groups as a whole, the academic circle has not reached a unanimous conclusion. Therefore, this paper takes urban low-income groups as the research object, and takes happiness as the entry point to study which factors play a role, which is of theoretical significance and also supplements the academic research ^[5].

1.3.2 Practical Significance

Success in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and in the battle against poverty means success in the issue of absolute poverty in China. Low income and relative poverty are on the agenda. On the road to achieve common prosperity, the main body of low-income groups

should be taken into account. However, existing studies generally focus on poverty in rural areas, while ignoring the large range of low-income groups in cities. The research objective of this paper will also be distinguished from the rural low-income groups ^[6]. At the same time, the subjective happiness of urban low-income groups is also a social concern, which is the income gap and income imbalance in the process of people's yearning for a better life. Therefore, the study of this problem is of practical and practical significance to accurately and effectively solve the problems of urban low-income groups. Concept definition and theoretical basis ^[7].

1.3.3 The Connotation of Happiness

Both western and Chinese scholars have different understandings of the definition of happiness. Foreign scholar Diener understood happiness as an individual's subjective feeling about his or her own life state. Andrews, a scholar, judges whether people are happy or not based on their satisfaction with life. If an individual is satisfied with his or her life, he or she will be full of positive emotions, so he or she can be considered happy; otherwise, he or she will be unhappy and negative. Scholar Bradburn divides individual emotion into positive emotion and negative emotion, and believes that individual happiness depends on whether these two emotions can achieve balance, or positive emotion is higher than negative emotion, then individuals can also feel happiness ^[1]. Therefore, I think happiness is a subjective feeling and expression on the psychological level, but it reflects certain objective phenomena.

1.3.4 Related Theories about Happiness

The research on happiness in China began in the 1980s, and foreign theories and scales were mostly used to measure and study, and the academic circle has reached relevant conclusions on the theoretical basis of happiness ^[8].

According to the goal and expectation theory, only when the goal or need is achieved, the individual will have subjective well-being. The expected value theory points out that when people evaluate their subjective well-being, they will compare it with a goal or an expectation in their heart, which is a vertical comparison. When the individual sets a higher expectation, because the current situation and expectation gap is too large to produce disappointment, frustration and other emotions and happiness reduced the situation, and expectations too low to easily achieve there will be no sense of achievement, so it is not easy to feel happy. Only when expectations are properly set can people's success after hard work bring joy and happiness.

1.4 The Definition of Urban Low-income Groups

As of the end of 2020, about 900 million people in China have been classified as low-income groups according to the standard of middle-income group set by the National Bureau of Statistics. According to the standard of monthly income level, 710 million people live below 2,000 yuan. There are 310 million people living under 1,000 yuan. According to data from the Ministry of Civil Affairs from April to June 2021, the average standard of minimum living security for urban residents is 693.5 yuan per month, accounting for 19.34 percent of the median per capita disposable income of urban residents in the first half of 2021. At present, China has the following understanding of low income. The first is to equate low income with poverty, and consider low income as people who cannot meet the basic needs of life. The second is to distinguish poverty from low income, which contains low income or low income contains poverty^[9]. The third is that low income is a relative poverty after absolute poverty. In the statistical Report on the Development of Civil Affairs in 2020, low-income groups are generally defined by government policies. That is, the relevant groups targeted by the government when implementing policies. According to the current policy, low-income groups are composed of subsistence allowance recipients, social assistance recipients and people prone to returning to poverty.

2. Urban Low-income Groups

2.1 The Relevant Influencing Factors of Physiological Needs

2.1.1 Income Level

For the urban low-income groups, the pressure of survival is the biggest pressure they face, which is an important factor affecting individual happiness index. So whether and to what extent Maslow's first need is satisfied will directly affect their feelings of well-being. Urban low-income groups are at the bottom of the society and have a weak right to speak. They make contributions to social and economic development but do not enjoy the fruits of social development well, and are faced with income inequality and widening gap between the rich and the poor. At the same time, inequality has increased due to class consolidation, the household registration system and unequal opportunities, all of which have a negative impact on happiness. On the other hand, the traditional belief that people should suffer from inequality rather than scarcity has made people more sensitive to such inequities. At the same time, in the context of the epidemic, the employment situation is very severe, the unemployment rate is serious,

and the level of work treatment is low. Therefore, the income problem directly affects the subjective well-being of low-income urban groups. The survey shows that in Changzhi, Shanxi Province, for example, the income of low-income groups is generally within the range of 1500-2300, and the income level is not high. People expect better job opportunities and higher and more stable income, but such needs are not well met. Individuals set high goals for themselves to achieve through hard work^[10]. If individuals fail to reach the preset goals, happiness will be affected. Only when individuals achieve success after hard work will joy and happiness be brought. Low income and unstable work situation will greatly affect the happiness index of individuals, and individuals expect equality and fairness of opportunity. In the special and difficult social environment, when the injustice of the individual is serious, the feeling of happiness will be greatly reduced. People hope to gradually narrow the gap and change the inequality through their own efforts, and only when opportunities are equal and the degree of fairness is high, the happiness index of urban low-income groups will rise.

2.1.2 Housing Pressure

According to the survey, more than half of the urban low-income people do not own their own house, either in the form of rent, or live in their parents' house, so it can be known that the urban low-income group is also facing a dilemma in housing conditions. So from Maslow's first level of physiological needs, people's housing needs have not been well addressed. However, there is another situation, in which individuals compare with others, when they reach equilibrium without their own property, they can feel happy for a short time. When they are lower than others for a long time, their happiness index will decline. At the same time, people have negative feelings about the pressure they face when their goal of owning their own property has not been achieved, thus reducing their happiness. People's satisfaction with their living environment is relatively high. For urban low-income groups, the most important thing is to solve the employment difficulties, which can be overcome. Under the background that housing system reform and marketization have promoted the rapid development of real estate industry and real estate financialization has made housing price keep rising, housing difficulty has become an urgent problem to be solved. Therefore, housing difficulty is an important factor affecting happiness^[11].

2.1.3 Other Survival Pressures

Due to the particularity of urban low-income groups,

whether physiological needs are met and the degree of satisfaction directly affect individual happiness feelings, such as transportation problems and price level. Due to high job instability and low salary level, urban low-income people spend more on transportation to a large extent, which affects their feelings of happiness. At the same time, the life pressure brought by the fluctuation of the price level also affects the subjective happiness of individuals. According to the survey, the price rise will increase the living cost of low-income people who originally had a difficult life. Thus the satisfaction will be reduced, and also bring negative emotions.

2.2 Relevant Influencing Factors at the Level of Security Demand

2.2.1 Job Security: Employment Situation

Most of the urban low-income groups are in a vulnerable position in society. Meanwhile, affected by the epidemic, the unemployment rate is also increasing. Therefore, the urban employment difficulties and low income level are important reasons for the emergence of urban low-income groups. According to the survey data, it is found that a large number of people are unemployed, or people outside the system temporarily maintain their livelihood by working, and the employment situation is not stable. Therefore, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the individual's needs for work security have not been met and realized, so the individual's subjective happiness is not high. Academic scholars have concluded that unemployment will increase workers' psychological pain, so happiness will decline; On the other hand, no income or lower income level after unemployment will also affect individual happiness^[12]. Research of existing results also showed a negative correlation between happiness and unemployment, Easterlin, through the survey of people's life satisfaction will be our country in the 1980s why people happiness boost to employment and welfare level, at the same time that the reform of state-owned enterprises and the social security level is not high is the main cause of this century our country most of the people in happiness, Easterlin calculated that China's happiness in the past two decades showed a trend of decline and then rise, which is in line with the changing trend of happiness in countries in transition. Therefore, it is verified that unemployment is also one of the main factors affecting individual happiness, and also the main factor influencing the low happiness of the urban low-income groups studied in this paper^[13].

2.2.2 Health and Safety: Physical and Mental Condition

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory points out that human survival is the most basic and lowest level of needs, so only when people's lower level needs are satisfied, they will pursue higher level needs. Meanwhile, human safety needs are also the most basic needs of human. Physical and mental health is particularly important in the safety needs. In terms of health, it is found through questionnaire survey that most people are relatively healthy. However, academic studies show that health is positively correlated with happiness, and the more healthy the individual is, the happiness index is positively correlated. Due to the poor economic situation of urban low-income groups, there may be insufficient social security for health problems, and the difficulty of seeing a doctor is also an important factor affecting the happiness of urban low-income groups. Therefore, the academic circles believe that physical health and mental health jointly affect individual subjective well-being. At the same time, individual satisfaction with social security also affects individual happiness index. Urban low-income groups are difficult to afford medical insurance due to their economic difficulties, so whether medical problems are guaranteed directly affects their happiness. Secondly, the continuous occurrence of the epidemic has also brought a serious negative impact on people's mental health, which greatly affects the happiness of low-income groups in urban areas.

2.3 The Relevant Influencing Factors of Emotional Needs

2.3.1 Family Relationships

Family status is an important factor affecting people's happiness, and family happiness is also the lifelong pursuit of every family. For urban low-income groups, it is essential to measure the factors influencing their happiness based on family status. Therefore, marital status is an essential variable to examine, and people in good marriages are happier than those in bad marriages or divorced. People's subjective happiness will be compared with their inner goals, and people are more willing to obtain a stable and long-term happy marriage relationship. A good marriage status can improve individual happiness index to a certain extent, and such expectation can better stabilize family relations. Therefore, family relationship is also the main factor affecting the happiness of urban low-income groups.

2.3.2 External Relations

External relations affect individual happiness, which is manifested in the relationship between friends and neighbors. The external relationship of urban low-income groups is more complex, but the research shows that when the neighborhood interaction is good, the individual happiness will rise. Whether an individual is satisfied with a particular situation depends on the situation of others, so whether the external relationship is harmonious also directly affects the individual's happiness feeling. In addition, academic circles believe that when individuals live in a harmonious social relationship and there is no significant difference in income level, the increase of individual family income is positively correlated with happiness. However, there is a negative correlation between family income and happiness when there is a large income gap among families.

References

- [1] Yang, L.X., 2019. Research on common prosperity of low-income Groups. *Social Security Review*. (04), 70-86.
- [2] Wang, H.Y., Wei, H., 2021. Analysis of influencing factors of residents' subjective well-being. *Population and Health*. (10), 33-37.
- [3] Dong, Y.Q., 2021. Society to participate in the influence of the subjective well-being of the elderly research. *Shandong university of finance and economics*. (09), 12-16.
- [4] Xia, Y., 2021. The relationship between subjective well-being and social well-being in China. *Nanjing social science*. (3), 54-63.
- [5] Zhang, L., 2020. Why hasn't economic growth led to increased happiness on the influence factor of subjective well-being review. *Nankai Economic Research*. (04), 24-45.
- [6] Sun, D.Sh., 2020. Research on public service management to improve the well-being of low-income groups. *Employment and Security*. (07), 176-177.
- [7] Feng, Y.Q., Zhang, T.Sh., 2016. Generational differences in perspective of peasant workers' subjective well-being factors analysis. *Journal of Population*. 38(05), 60-69.
- [8] Ning, J., 2016. Study on the influencing factors of farmers' happiness in the process of urbanization. *Tianjin University*. 22(02), 66.
- [9] Cui, H.Zh., 2013. Analysis of influencing factors of subjective well-being of rural elderly -- Based on questionnaire data of rural households in 8 provinces (Regions) in China. (6), 139-160.
- [10] Luo, J., Huang, Y.P., Chen, Zh., et al., 2019. Research on housing Demand and housing supply of urban low-income groups: Based on micro-empirical Investigation. (112), 23-28.
- [11] Guo, Zh.J., 2020. Research on public Service Demand Expression Mechanism of urban Low-income Groups. *Central China Normal University*.
- [12] Wang, K.J., 2019. A theoretical and empirical analysis of influencing factors of subjective well-being. *Journal of Xi'an university of arts and sciences (social science edition)*. 16(02), 45-49.
- [13] Zhao, L.Y., 2019. Public expenditure and farmers' subjective well-being: An empirical analysis based on CGSS data. *Finance and Economics*. (10), 33.