Well-being in Ageing Societies: The Individual

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Overview

1. Subjective well-being
2. Subjective well-being in Germany
3. Psychological factors affecting well-being
4. The role of culture
5. Future directions
Subjective well-being: Framework model
(Eid, 2008)
Life satisfaction: Germany
German Socio-economic Panel Study (Böhnke, 2010)

[Graph showing life satisfaction in West Germany and East Germany from 1990 to 2008]
Life satisfaction: German Ageing Survey 2008
Means and 95% confidence intervals
Positive affect: German Ageing Survey 2008
Means and 95% confidence intervals

very often

often

sometimes

rather seldom

never

Positive Affect

West-East

West

East

Age

Mean
Negative affect: German Ageing Survey 2008
Means and 95% confidence intervals

very often

often

sometimes

rather seldom

never
Life satisfaction: Closeness to death
German Socio-economic Panel Study (Gerstorf & Wagner, 2010)
### Important factors affecting well-being

(e.g., Brandstädter, 2011; Eid & Larsen, 2008)

#### Subjective well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genes</th>
<th>Affect regulation</th>
<th>Psychological (eudaemonic) well-being</th>
<th>Personal Strengths</th>
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#### Personality
- Extraversion
- Sociability
- ...

#### Life events
- Coping

#### Individual goals and goal regulation
- Goal setting
- Assimilation
- Accommodation
The role of culture?

Subjective well-being

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Individual goals and goal regulation

• Goal setting • Assimilation • Accommodation
Role of Culture: Norms for Emotions

1. Feeling rules (Hochschild, 1979)

2. Display rules (Ekman & Friesen, 1975)

3. Ideal affect (Tsai et al., 2006)
Affect Valuation Theory (Tsai et al., 2006)

- Actual affect
  - Temperament
- Ideal affect
  - Culture
    - Norms
    - Feeling rules
    - Display rules
Affect Valuation Theory (Tsai et al., 2006)

Actual affect —> Mental health —> Ideal affect

Mental health
Depression
Subjective well-being
Ideal affect / Desirability of emotions
(Eid & Diener, 2001; Tsai, 2007; Scheibe et al., 2012)

• Western cultures favor high-arousal positive affective states (e.g., excitement, enthusiasm)
• Eastern cultures favor low-arousal positive affective states (e.g., calm, peacefulness)
• Western cultures generally favor positive emotions
• Eastern cultures do not favor pride and contentment so much
• Eastern cultures favor negative emotions such as guilt, shame and sadness more than Western cultures
• Eastern cultures favor emotional neutrality more than Western cultures
• Eastern cultures are more heterogeneous with respect to emotional norms
Future directions

• Cross-cultural research
  • Inter- and intracultural differences
• Norms for ideal well-being and ideal ageing
• Interactions between culture and the individual