

Research on the Influencing Factors of Chinese Urban Residents' Happiness

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Abstract—This article summarized the influencing factors of urban residents' happiness through interviews and investigations of Chinese urban residents, and built theoretical model of the influencing factors of urban residents' happiness, which is constructed from personal factors, economic factors, social factors, environmental factors, security factors and cultural factors. At the same time, it proposed constructive strategies of how to improve the happiness of urban residents. Happiness is the subjective feeling of the overall level of people's satisfaction with their state of life. The study on happiness helps to understand and improve people's quality of life, and is of great significance to urban development and building a harmonious city.

Keywords—Happiness, Urban residents, Influencing factors

I. INTRODUCTION

China's socialist modernization has made remarkable achievements since the reform and opening up period, the country's comprehensive strength has been greatly enhanced, people's material living conditions have been greatly improved. However, with the sustained rapid growth of the economy, the acceleration of social transformation, the differentiation of social interests, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the conflicts between urban and rural areas, people's index of happiness is far below the economic index. The public's concern for "happiness" is gradually increasing with the proposal of people-oriented scientific development concept and the concept of governance that allow all people sharing the results of reform. Positive happiness is a necessary condition for a better society and a better life, understanding and respecting how people feel and evaluating their lives, then study their influencing factors of happiness scientifically and explore ways to improve it. It is not only a realistic subject that needs to be studied and solved urgently, whether for personal or today's China, but also of great realistic meaning for building a socialist harmonious society.

Happiness refers to the subjective feelings of the overall level of people's satisfaction with their comprehensive state of life in a certain time and space, according to their own standards of value and subjective preferences. The writer carried out long-term theoretical and empirical research on issues that related to happiness and its influencing factors in many fields, such as social sciences field, economics field, psychology field, especially sociology field. Therefore, this article takes Chinese urban residents as the research object, extracts the influencing factors that affecting the happiness of urban residents through interviews and research methods, analyzes and combines various factors to propose constructive strategy of how to improve the happiness of urban residents.

II. OVERSEAS AND DOMESTIC RESEARCH STATUS

A. Review of Overseas Research Status of Happiness

Foreign researches on happiness started earlier, in the 1960s, mainly from three orientations of happiness: subjective, psychological and social happiness to expand research, enriching the concept of happiness from different perspectives, blending and complementarity constituting the overall framework of the measurements of happiness. Diene et al. proposed a multi-level structural model of subjective happiness, which was divided into "three layers and four areas". The first layer is the subjective happiness, which reflects people's overall evaluation of life; the second layer includes both positive and negative emotions, general life satisfaction and it in specific areas; the third layer involves more specific operational elements in the four areas. Ryff proposed a six-dimensional model of the measurement of happiness from the perspective of psychological happiness, including: self-acceptance, functional autonomy, life purpose, personality growth, positive relationship and environmental

control. Keyes proposed five dimensions of happiness measure from the perspective of sociology, including social integration, social identity, social contribution, social realization and social harmony.

The concern for happiness has greatly promoted the social application of happiness research. Foreign scholars have studied the social application of happiness and its influencing factors from the macro, meso and micro levels. Macroscopically, Brund et al pointed out that there are five influencing factors of happiness: personal factors, social demographic factors, economic factors, situational factors and institutional factors [1]. Mesoscopically, Hsee, a professor at the University of Chicago Business School, proposed that there are twelve factors affecting happiness include traffic conditions, speed of development, level of civilization, opportunities for making money, medical level, education level, housing prices, human sentiment, public security, employment environment, and convenience of life, etc. Microscopically, Cummins believes that people's living standards, health status, achievements in life, interpersonal relationships, security status, social participation, and assessments of their future security will affect happiness[2]. Foreign scholars have carried out research on the evaluation of happiness and its influencing factors from multi-level and multiple perspectives, but they have not conducted in-depth research on the happiness of their own regions, due to different national conditions in different countries.

B. Review of Domestic Research Status of Happiness

China's research on happiness started relatively later, compared with foreign countries, starting in the 1980s. But at present, research on happiness and its influencing factors has achieved certain results. From the content point of view, domestic scholars have combined Chinese national conditions and conducted in-depth research based on happiness and evaluation indicators. Xing Zhanjun compiled the "Chinese Urban Residents' Subjective Happiness Scale" (SWBS-CS) from the perspective of experiential subjective happiness in ten dimensions: contentment, mental health, social confidence, growth and progress, goal value, self-acceptance, physical health, mentality balance, interpersonal adaptation, and family atmosphere to measure the subjective happiness of urban residents[3]. Miao Yuanjiang compiled the Comprehensive Happiness Questionnaire (MHQ) from the perspective of integrating the theoretical framework and assessment indicators of psychological happiness and subjective happiness. The research indicates that the factors affecting personal happiness include economic conditions, interpersonal relationships, and personal status[4]. By empirical researches, Yang Fang et al. showed the indicators of happiness include income standards, safety standards, health standards, education standards, social professional standards, ecological standards and cultural standards. From the content point of view, China's current research on happiness and evaluation indicators has been more in-depth, involving a wider range, and more concerned about the happiness of residents. From a geographical point of view, the development of China's regional economic is not balanced. Therefore, some scholars have studied happiness and its influencing factors from a regional perspective. Lifang Yi conducted a survey on the happiness of Nanjing, it found living environment, social pressures and social expectations are the main factors that affect the happiness of Nanjing citizens and he proposed practical comments on the Nanjing urban construction from the economic happiness, livelihood and ecological aspects [5]. Zhang Pei et al. conducted a survey of citizens in Fuzhou and used regression models to analyze the influencing factors of public happiness. The results showed that factors affecting happiness include residents' income, living conditions, family relationships, health status and spiritual and cultural life[6]. Bao Zhao et al. conducted a survey and started research on the factors influencing the happiness of Guangzhou citizens by constructing a structural equation model. The results show that the medical security system, food safety, individual experience of unemployment and the quality of social environment have a significant impact on the public's happiness [7], etc. From the geographical point of view, the existing literature about happiness and its influencing factors mainly gathered in the economically developed cities in southern China and less concerns about it in northern China.

III. ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE HAPPINESS OF URBAN RESIDENTS

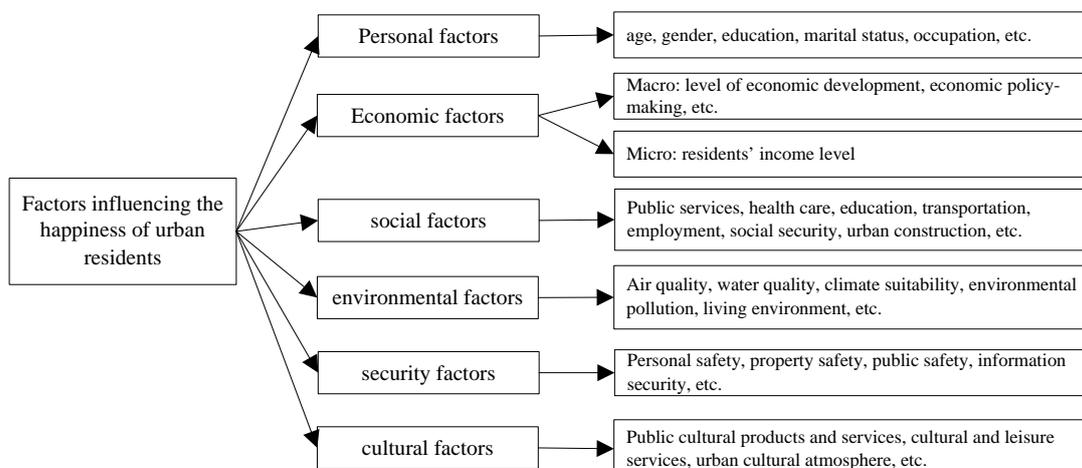


Figure 1. Theoretical model of influencing factors of urban residents' happiness.

This article interviews 100 Chinese urban residents in various age groups and industries through investigation and interviewing method, then conducts research on various aspects of China's economy, politics, culture and environment in recent years. The influencing factors that affecting the happiness of urban residents were analyzed through interviews, and combined with other factors, then constructed the theoretical model of the influencing factors of urban residents' happiness, as shown in Figure 1.

A. Personal factors

Personal factors mainly refer to the relevant attributes of the residents themselves, such as age, gender, education background, marital status, occupation, etc [8]. According to the results of the interviews, people in different age groups have different levels of satisfaction with happiness. The reason is that residents in different age groups have different self-realization goals, and their satisfaction with self-value realization is significantly various. There is no significant difference in the degree of satisfaction of happiness between gender, but some women are more likely to be satisfied than men. Marriage status is an important factor, which has impact on the level of happiness. The happiness of some unmarried and divorced residents is different from those who have happy marriage with a strong sense of happiness. Occupation has an important influence on the satisfaction of urban residents' self-happiness. The sense of happiness is strong when resident's occupation is relatively stable, has low work pressure, as well as some freelancers with stable incomes.

B. Economic Factors

Economic factors are important as safeguards for the happiness of urban residents [9]. Under realistic social conditions, from the macroeconomic perspectives, economic factors mainly include the level of national economic development, the formulation of various economic policies of the country, and various stability policies that promote the development of the national economy, such as fiscal taxes and import ---export tax rates. Macroeconomic factors directly affect the optimal allocation of resources and the level of production efficiency. They also determine the level of a country's economic development and the country's comprehensive strength, which indirectly affects residents' sense of happiness. From a micro perspective, economic factors mainly refer to the personal income level of residents, which directly affects people's happiness. Therefore, economic factors are crucial to the improvement of residents' happiness in both macro and micro.

C. Social Factors

Social factors mainly refer to the factors that affect residents' experience and subjective feelings in all aspects of the city where they live in, normally related to public services, medical care, education, transportation, employment, social security, and urban construction [10]. For example, the degree of civilization of a city, public road traffic, public health services, comprehensive medical services, public entertainment facilities, urban security conditions, employment opportunities, social security policies, compulsory education service levels, urban construction, and so on. Social factors symbolize the comprehensive strength of the country and are important guarantees for the people's material living standards. Good social factors have an important influence on the improvement of residents' happiness.

D. Environmental Factors

Environmental factors are mainly divided into living environment and humanity environment. The living environment reflects the degree to the city where people are living in are suitable for their lives, such as the quality of the air, the quality of the water, the suitability of the climate, the severity of environmental pollution, etc. The environment is the basic guarantee for people's survival. In recent years, the global climate has changed, the indicators of the living environment where people settle have declined because of years of industrial pollution, inadequate environmental protection, improper disposal of household garbage, frequent smog, and severe decline in air quality. Therefore, the overall satisfaction with the living environment is not high in the interviewed population. The humanistic environment is mainly reflected to the urban population density in which people live. At present, with the rapidly development of China's urban construction, a large number of transient population immigrant to first-tier cities and provincial cities, therefore, the relative population density is relatively large, which has a certain impact on residents' lives and transportation. The second and third-tier cities have relatively low density of population and slow pace of life, so they are happier than residents who live in first-tier cities.

E. Safety Factors

Safety factors mainly refer to relevant factors in all aspect that affect the safety of residents' lives, such as personal safety, property safety, public safety, information security, etc. At present, the security of urban cities in China is well, residents live and work in peace, the satisfaction of personal safety, property safety and public safety is about good. However, people pay more attention to information security. Due to the rapid development of the Internet and the popularization of intelligent information, people's life and work are inseparable from informatization. Therefore, people get more focused on the information security. People disclose a large amount of personal privacy when enjoying the convenience brought by information services, and some bad websites leak user privacy for economic benefits, which cause people to have great concerns in information security. Some lawless elements use phishing websites and telecom fraud to defraud private property, causing great social adverse effects. Therefore, people's satisfaction index is relatively low in terms of information security.

F. Cultural Factors

Cultural factors are an important part of the social and humanity environment, an important manifestation of the development of social spiritual civilization, and a guarantee factor for social and economic development and political stability. Cultural factors are mainly reflected in public cultural products and services, leisure facilities, and urban cultural atmosphere. In today's society, the people's living standards have been significantly improved, while material life has been guaranteed, they pursue a higher level of spiritual culture demand. Well cultural factors are conducive for people to establish a correct outlook on life and values. Therefore, good social and cultural factors are of great significance to people's happiness.

IV. IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY OF URBAN RESIDENTS' HAPPINESS

A. Improve the Various Functions of the city

The scientific planning and rational layout of the city are of great significance to all aspects of urban economic development, public management, and environmental protection. The municipal government should focus on its effectiveness, unify planning and layout, rationally allocate resources, take the people as the foundation, and let the city serve the citizens and serve all walks of life. Residents' happiness is a kind of psychological feeling when people are satisfied with all aspects of economic conditions, living standards and social security in the cities where they live and work. When the city's supporting functions, hardware facilities, and urban construction bring convenience to the citizens, it also brings satisfaction to the citizens. Therefore, governments at all levels should respond to the various functions of the city, carry out scientific planning and rational layout, create security conditions for citizens' family life, work and study, travel and entertainment, education and medical care, information security and so on to improve the life quality of residents and enhance their happiness.

B. Improve Urban Economic Development Steadily

The happiness of the residents is inseparable from the economic development. The urban economic level affects the material living standards of the citizens, and material is the basis for improving happiness. Therefore, it is essential to steadily improve the economic development of the city and steadily promote the income of the residents. First of all, the fundamental policies to enhance the citizen's sense of happiness are developing a city's economy, improving the economic situation of the citizens and effectively increasing the income level of the citizens. Second, improve the income distribution system. Development of the economy should be based on the perspective of building a harmonious socialism, focusing on the gap between the rich and the poor, pay attention to the economic security of the disadvantaged groups, improve the economic security measures of low-income groups, implement the group income of the residents in middle and low income, and gradually narrow the income gap. The steady increase in the income of the citizens not only improving the material life, but also growth of the happiness directly.

C. Improve the Quality of the City's Whole People

Building a harmonious city is closely related to the improvement of the quality of the city's people. Therefore, in order to enhance the sense of happiness of residents and build a harmonious city, first is to popularize the correct values to the citizens, starting from the compulsory education of primary and middle schools, cultivating the quality education of children, and strengthening education and publicity among major universities. At the same time, giving positive energy education and life guidance to citizens through community work and street work, which fundamentally establishes the citizens' correct values, outlook on life and world outlook. Seriously implement the guiding ideology of a harmonious society, improve the quality of the city's whole people, and jointly build a harmonious city, fundamentally enhance the happiness of residents.

D. Create Urban Culture Atmosphere

In today's society, people's living standards are generally improved, when they are satisfied with the material living standards, then the demand for spiritual culture will be higher. Therefore, the spiritual and cultural living standards of residents are closely related to the improvement of urban residents' happiness. Thus, the government should actively establish a coordination mechanism for the construction of public cultural service systems, coordinate the construction of service facilities networks, promote the standardization and equalization of basic public cultural services, and integrate the urban culture value into the lives of citizens. Meanwhile, strengthen public cultural service functions, increase cultural input, provide more public cultural products and services to the residents, build various cultural and leisure facilities, and enrich the amateur spiritual life of the citizens. Create urban cultural atmosphere and improve residents' happiness from spiritual level.

V. CONCLUSION

This article summarized the influencing factors of urban residents' happiness through interviews and investigations of Chinese urban residents, and built theoretical model of the influencing factors of urban residents' happiness, which is constructed from personal factors, economic factors, social factors, environmental factors, security factors and cultural factors. At the same time, it proposed a constructive strategy on how to improve the happiness of urban residents. Happiness is the subjective feeling of people's satisfaction with their comprehensive state of life. The study of happiness helps to understand and improve the quality of people's life, and is of great significance to urban development and building a harmonious city.

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