

Measuring Well-being in Azerbaijan: A Literature Review

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Introduction

The concept of *well-being* has different meanings not only in Azerbaijan but also in other cultures. Therefore, the phenomenon of *well-being* is a complex concept that encompasses different emotions, states and situations according to each culture. Cultural norms, values and traditions play an important role in shaping society's perceptions and experiences of *well-being*. In addition, social and psychological factors contribute to the multifaceted nature of *well-being* in Azerbaijan. In addition, Azerbaijan's socio-economic situation, health and education can significantly affect the outcomes of individual *well-being*.

Definition of *well-being*. Each society has certain differences in its culture and customs. Currently, interpretations specific to each country may carry different meanings in other countries. In Azerbaijani culture, the concept of *well-being* can be translated as *happiness* (*xoşbəxtlik*), *welfare* (*rifah*) and *comfort* (*rahatlıq*). However, this understanding varies according to mentalities and understanding of expressions.

The domains of quality of life refer to the factors that determine individuals' *well-being*. Therefore, there is a potential for as many domains of quality of life as there are areas that affect individuals' lives. Some frequently mentioned domains of quality of life and indicators include [3]:

1. Physical *well-being*: health, fitness, daily life activities;
2. Material *well-being*: income, housing, employment, security;
3. Social *well-being*: family, relatives, friends, interpersonal relationships;

4. Emotional *well-being*: trust, self-esteem, satisfaction;

5. Personal development and activities: political freedom, work, education, economic freedom

The words *happiness*, comfort, and ease, which are used as synonyms for *well-being*, are relative concepts. Therefore, these perceptions not only vary between cultures but also among individuals.

Happiness- a concept that reflects the positive effect of individuals. This concept is also important for the individuals' work life which is among the most important of daily activities.[11] *Happiness* is often referred to as hedonic or subjective wellbeing (SWB) in the academic literature.[8]

Well-being is defined as a condition in which individuals experience more positive feelings rather than negative ones and demonstrate sufficient life satisfaction.[15] *Well-being* refers to a person's emotional reactions and judgments about their life activity.[14]

Welfare- Wel fare, or "well in its still familiar sense and fare, primarily understood as a journey or arrival but later also as a supply of food," is where *welfare* gets its name. Although the term "*welfare*" has historically been associated with affluence and happiness, its modern meaning dates back to the 20th century.[7]

Theory of the Schwartz. The Schwartz Theory, proposed by Shalom H. Schwartz, revolves around individuals' perceptions of their own values and their significance in their lives, forming the foundation of the relationship between basic values and "well-being". According to Schwartz [16], adhering to one's principles often leads to enhanced feelings of contentment and fulfillment.

This psychological theory posits that there exist ten fundamental human values that influence behavior across diverse cultures and societies.[16] These values encompass:

1. Self-Direction: Independence, creativity, and freedom of thought and action.

2. Stimulation: Excitement, novelty, and challenges.

3. Hedonism: Pleasure, enjoyment, and sensual gratification.

4. Achievement: Personal success achieved by demonstrating competence according to societal norms.

5. Power: Social status, prestige, and control over people and resources.

6. Security: Safety, harmony, and stability in society, relationships, and the self.

7. Conformity: Restraining actions that may upset or harm others and adhering to social norms.

8.Tradition: Respect, commitment, and acceptance of cultural or religious customs and ideas.

9.Benevolence: Enhancing the welfare of those in personal contact.

10.Universalism: Appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and nature.

Schwartz's theory provides a framework for examining the values considered significant by individuals in Azerbaijan and their association with well-being. It can inform the development and implementation of *welfare* strategies in the country. Utilizing this theory, policymakers can identify key areas for enhancing prosperity in Azerbaijan and devise more effective policy solutions.

Factors affecting *well-being*. It is not possible to measure the average *well-being* level of individuals in a country based solely on income data.[9] So there are a number of factors that determine *well-being*. One of the factors affecting *well-being* is the level of education. Education helps individuals achieve excellence in everything they do. It also leads to the development of individuals in their areas of activity and work environments. It ensures high values, dedication, and standards. As the *welfare* level of countries rises, boys tend to attain higher levels of education, consequently facilitating easier access to education for girls.[18] The dynamics of the level of *well-being* in Azerbaijan is affected by the complex interaction of economic, social and political factors. What is the aspect of social *well-being* of Azerbaijan's economy? Socially, growth and *well-being* signify distinct meanings. *Well-being* is not solely dependent on the healthy functioning of the economic system; more importantly, it is contingent upon the development of institutions such as health, education, freedom, and security. After independence, it has been understood that Azerbaijan's economy has achieved a certain level of economic growth and institutional development and contributed to the content of *welfare*.[17]

Scientific perspectives. Articles examining the level of *well-being* in Azerbaijan have generally been conducted with a focus on the condition of schools and students. These studies have delved into the school environment, the education system, and student demographics. Various methods and techniques have been employed to measure the level of *well-being*. Research has been conducted to identify factors influencing *well-being* and how these factors can be improved. Topics such as academic achievement, emotional *well-being*, and social relationships have been the focal points of these studies. These researches play a special role in better understanding cross-cultural *well-being*.

Academic activities represent an important stage in a person's life and involve a complex interaction of various factors that can significantly affect the general *well-being*

and psychological state of people. At the center of this complex network are the constructs of academic engagement, academic pressure, academic motivation, school satisfaction, life satisfaction, and distress that shape the overall educational experience. Findings regarding the relationship between these concepts provide valuable insights into the interrelationship of these variables and contribute to our understanding of the factors that influence overall adolescent *well-being*. The observed positive correlation supports existing research that individuals who are satisfied with their school experiences tend to exhibit higher life satisfaction.[15]

Psychological *well-being* has numerous advantages, such as providing protection against mental disorders, psychopathology, and physical illnesses.[12]

The measurement of well-being. Investigating people's *well-being* is essential to determining what influences life happiness and quality as well as to lessen negative outcomes for individuals, which raises psychological health levels.[1] In Azerbaijan, there are numerous studies on the level of *well-being*. Most of the research has been conducted among students. Different measurement instruments are used to conduct research in this area. Commonly used tests and methods in *well-being* research include:

1. WHO-5 *Well-being* Index: The World Health Organization devised the WHO-5 Well-Being Index, a five-item assessment aimed at assessing overall well-being. This assessment provides a robust foundation for potential future research pathways concerning the citizens of Azerbaijan. It delves into exploring the correlations among various factors, encompassing social and professional dimensions, and individual well-being. The objective is to pinpoint groups with high levels of well-being and those at risk, enabling the provision of targeted interventions and support systems.[1]

2. Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS): This scale measures an individual's own perceived level of happiness and *well-being* SWB is characterized as a subjective perception and an overall assessment of a person's life. Publications on SWB are becoming more and more common these days.[4]

3. Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS): The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) evaluates an individual's overall life satisfaction. Research has demonstrated that SWLS exhibits strong internal consistency and high temporal reliability. SWLS scores are moderately to highly correlated with various subjective well-being measures and demonstrate an expected association with specific personality traits. The applicability of SWLS scores has been endorsed across different age groups, and potential alternative uses of the scale have been explored.[5] In a study investigating the determinants of life satisfaction among university students in Azerbaijan, this assessment focused on factors such as age, gender, familial relationships, religious convictions, tolerance levels, and

future expectations. The results indicate that age is not a determining factor; instead, trust in family, religious beliefs, and tolerance levels exhibit a positive correlation with students' life satisfaction.[2]

4.Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: This scale measures self-esteem levels. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale, which was first designed to gauge teenage self-esteem, is arguably the most popular self-esteem test for adult populations. Ten components make up the scale, five of which have negative wording. The Guttman-type scale, which consists of items with an ordinal pattern on the attribute, was initially designed, but most researchers now use a 4-point response style that goes from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The commonly used self-esteem scale in psychology research is Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale. The scale offers a quick, simple, and practical way to gauge one's overall level of self-esteem.[13]

The results of the studies indicate that, despite considering various factors such as per capita income, psychological factors, socio-economic, and demographic factors, health remains positively associated with both happiness and the level of *well-being*. [10]

Limitations:

In the article, limitations of *well-being* research in Azerbaijan can be outlined as follows:

1. Cultural differences: The utilization of tests concerning *well-being* concepts may face difficulties due to linguistic and geographical variations, posing challenges in test application.

2. Limited research on demographic data: There is a scarcity of research focusing on demographic information in this context. Most studies have concentrated on adolescents and students, making generalization somewhat challenging. If research is done on this subject, it is possible to fill some gaps in *well-being*.

Conclusion

Research into *well-being* in Azerbaijan uncovers significant discoveries when exploring the factors affecting individuals' life satisfaction. Studies suggest that age, gender, family connections, religious convictions, level of tolerance, and future outlooks all play a role in determining life satisfaction. Of particular note is the discovery that optimism regarding the future significantly influences this satisfaction.

Given these insights, it is suggested that universities enhance the quality of psychological support services available to students. Additionally, the positive impact of increased *welfare* on gender equality in education highlights the inclusive and forward-looking approach of *well-being* research in Azerbaijan.

Moreover, *well-being* research should not exclusively concentrate on economic aspects but also encompass social, cultural, and psychological dimensions. In particular, a deeper exploration of factors like education, family backing, religious tolerance, and optimism is essential for enhancing the *well-being* of young people.

To conclude, these research findings underscore the significance of taking measures to enhance the *well-being* of young individuals.

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Azərbaycanda rifah səviyyəsinin psixoloji tədqiqi istiqamətləri

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Abstract

Bu məqalə Azərbaycanda rifahın akademik qiymətləndirilməsi ilə bağlı mövcud tədqiqat və ədəbiyyatın öyrənilməsinə həsr olunmuşdur. Psixi sağlamlıq, xoşbəxtlik və rifahın müxtəlif səviyyələrini özündə birləşdirən rifah insanların fərdi və sosial inkişafının həlledici aspektidir. Azərbaycanda rifahla bağlı ədəbiyyatın təhlili yolu ilə bu tədqiqat fiziki, emosional, sosial və psixoloji aspektlər kimi amilləri nəzərə almaqla Azərbaycanda rifahın mövcud vəziyyətini işıqlandırmaq məqsədi daşıyır. Bundan əlavə, məqalədə Azərbaycanda rifahın qavranılmasına təsir edən mədəni kontekst və sosial amillər araşdırılır. Mövcud tədqiqat nəticələrini və elmi perspektivləri sintez etməklə, bu məqalə Azərbaycan kontekstində rifahın daha dərinləndirilməsinə töhfə verir.

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