

Research on the Relationship between Self Concept and Subjective Well-being of Normal University Students

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Abstract

In order to get a deep understanding of the relationship between self concept and subjective well-being of normal university students, improve the level of normal university students' subjective well-being, strengthen the normal university students' education and training, this paper adopted the Tennessee self concept scale and Index of well-being scale to test a random sample of 234 students in China West normal university. The results showed that normal university students have a clear self concept and are at a high level of subjective well-being. In addition to self-criticism, normal university students' various dimensions of self concept and subjective well-being were significantly positively correlated. The psychological self, self identity and moral self factor included in Normal university students' self concept have significant regression effect with subjective well-being.

Keywords: normal university students; self concept; subjective well-being

1. The Problem Emergence

In Higher Normal Colleges and universities, students after graduation undertake special missions to shape our motherland's future, so their mental health and happiness sense quality will affect quality education. As a special group of college students, the students from normal universities have a career orientation for educators, however, while their ideological and moral qualities receive attention from society, their mental health is often neglected. In this current climate of quality education, attention should be paid to the self-concept and subjective well-being of normal university students.

Subjective well-being is an important parameter in psychology to reflect the individual's life quality in the society. Zheng Xue (2001) defined subjective well-being as an evaluation of an individual's overall life according to standard by himself, which is a comprehensive and important psychological index. ^[1] Diener (1984) proposed three characteristics of subjective well-being, namely the subjectivity, stability and integrity. ^[2] Self-concept as an important part of personality and it is the one of the most important research fields of psychology. Shavelson (1976) pointed out that the self-concept is an individual's self perception which is the interpersonal interaction experience between self property and social environment. ^[3] Burns summarized the function of self-concept: To maintain the inside consistency of the individual, to determine the individual's interpretation of the experience and affect the level of expectations of the individual. ^[4]

Many research results showed that an individual's self-concept and subjective well-being is significantly positively correlated. Students from normal universities have a clear career orientation, we wanted to know whether their self concept is clear, their subjective well-being is guaranteed, or their self concept has a positive correlation with subjective well-being. This paper aimed to help normal university students have a better understanding and control of themselves, improve their subjective well-being gradually by

studying the relationship between self-concept and subjective well-being of normal university students. At the same time, higher normal colleges and universities should strengthen the education and training of students to help their overall growth in the future.

2. Research Objects and Methods

2.1 Research Objects

This paper randomly selected 250 students from China West Normal University as the research objects. This study issued a total of 250 questionnaires: 241 were recovered with 7 invalid questionnaires and 234 valid questionnaires. So its validity was 93.6%. Among them, there were 44 boys and 190 girls; 123 majored in Arts and 111 in Science; 78 were from cities and 156 were from the countryside; 99 were from one-child family and 135 were children with siblings.

2.2 Research Tools

2.2.1 Tennessee Self Concept Scale

Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCs) is compiled by the American psychologist H.Fitts 1965. The table has a total of 70 items, using a five point score, made by three dimensions including the content of self-concept (the physical self PH, the moral self ME, the psychological self PER, family self FA, social self SO), the structure of self-concept (self identity ID, self satisfaction SA, self action B), and comprehensive condition of self-concept (total score of self TOT and self-criticism SC). Research showed that the table had a high reliability and validity. The Cronbach Alpha was 0.944 and Spearman Brown split half reliability coefficient was 0.966. [5]

2.2.2 Index of Well-being Scale

Index of well-being scale is compiled by Campbell. The table consists of two parts including sentiment index scale and life satisfaction questionnaire, a total of 9 subjects with seven point score for each question. Scores ranged from 2.1 to 14.7. Research showed that the retest consistency coefficient of the scale was 0.849[6], and the consistency coefficient of the overall sentiment index and life satisfaction was 0.55. [7]

2.3 Statistical Methods

This paper analyzed the data of questionnaires by using SPSS17.0 including the test of independent samples, analysis of correlation and regression analysis.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 The General Situation of Self-concept and Subjective Well-being of Normal University Students

Table 1 The General Situation of Self-concept and Subjective Well-being of Normal University Students

	N	minimum	maximum	averages	Standard deviation
PH	234	25	58	46.24	5.258
ME	234	32	56	48.88	4.715
PER	234	30	56	43.98	4.610
FA	234	33	60	50.23	5.681
SO	234	25	59	45.38	5.522
SC	234	18	49	31.79	5.338
ID	234	70	117	98.14	7.935

SA	234	61	104	82.77	7.039
B	234	64	106	85.58	9.052
TOT	234	207	315	266.50	20.137
Sentiment index	234	1.750	7.000	5.193	0.937
Life satisfaction	234	1.1	7.7	5.514	1.279
Index of well-being	234	2.975	14.700	10.707	1.972

Investigation and study of normal university students’ self-concept and subjective well-being showed that the highest self-concept was 315 points, the lowest was 207 points, the averages was 266.50 and standard deviation was 20.137. The results illustrated that students from normal university have a clear self-concept. And the highest index of subjective well-being was 14.7 points, the lowest 2.975 points, the average number was 10.707, and standard deviation was 1.972, which indicated students’ subjective well-being is in a high level.

3.2 The Differences Compared between Self-concept and Subjective Well-being

3.2.1 A Comparison of Gender Differences in Self-concept and Subjective Well-being of Normal University Students

Table 2 A Comparison of Gender Differences in Self-concept and Subjective Well-being of Normal University Students

	Boys	Girls	T value
PH	45.59±6.428	46.39±4.957	-0.907
ME	46.66±5.171	49.39±4.462	-3.546**
PER	44.32±4.748	43.90±4.586	0.541
FA	48.89±5.150	50.54±5.765	-1.750
SO	45.34±5.426	45.39±5.558	-0.052
SC	32.27±6.617	31.68±5.010	0.664
ID	95.00±9.296	98.87±7.425	-2.962**
SA	83.52±5.857	82.60±7.288	0.783
BTOT	84.55±10.375	85.82±8.735	-0.842
Sentiment index	263.07±21.007	267.29±19.903	-1.255
Life satisfaction	5.01±0.975	5.23±0.925	-1.430
Index of well-being	5.52±1.452	5.51±1.239	0.063
	10.53±2.205	10.74±1.917	-0.636

Notes: * means P<0.05, * * means P<0.01.

This paper compared gender differences in self-concept and subjective well-being of Normal university students by using independent samples t, and the results showed that the moral self (t=-3.546, P < 0.01) and self identity (t=-2.962, P < 0.01) have significant gender differences. However, there were no significant differences between other factors of self-concept and subjective well-being. Female students have higher index of subjective well-being than male students. (10.74>10.53).

3.2.2 A Comparison of Major Differences in Self-concept and Subjective well-being of Normal University Students

Table 3 A Comparison of Major Differences in Self-concept and Subjective well-being of Normal University Students

	Liberal arts	Sciences	T value
PH	46.61±4.802	45.83±5.716	1.135
ME	48.83±4.706	48.93±4.746	-0.160
PER	44.27±4.348	43.66±4.883	1.012
FA	50.12±6.071	50.35±5.239	-0.308
SO	45.93±5.232	44.77±5.789	1.623
SC	31.33±5.013	32.30±5.656	-1.382
ID	98.08±8.510	98.21±7.283	-0.121
SA	83.63±6.920	81.83±7.079	1.962*
B	85.39±8.856	85.79±9.300	-0.339
TOT	267.10±20.760	265.83±19.496	0.480
Sentiment index	5.39±0.924	4.97±0.904	3.530**
Life satisfaction	5.45±1.266	5.59±1.294	-0.853
Index of well-being	10.84±1.988	10.56±1.951	1.084

Notes: * means P<0.05, and ** means P<0.01.

This paper compared major differences in self-concept and subjective well-being by using independent samples t. The results showed that there were significant differences in the self satisfaction (t = 1.962, P < 0.05) and sentiment index (t=3.530, P < 0.01) , but other factors of self-concept did not have significant differences. This study showed that students majored in Arts had a higher total scores in self-concept than students majored in Science, and students majored in Arts had a higher index of well-being. (10.84>10.56)

3.2.3 A Comparison of Birthplace Differences in Self-concept and Subjective well-being in Normal University Students

Table4 A Comparison of Birthplace Differences in Self-concept and Subjective well-being in Normal University Students

	The Urban	The Rural	T value
PH	45.87±5.914	46.42±4.908	-0.755
ME	48.76±5.223	48.94±4.456	-0.260
PER	43.91±4.833	44.01±4.509	-0.160
FA	49.87±5.681	50.41±5.691	-0.683
SO	46.51±5.436	44.81±5.495	2.237**
SC	31.94±5.329	31.72±5.358	0.294
ID	98.23±9.551	98.10±7.023	0.110
SA	83.63±6.876	82.35±7.102	1.316
B	85.00±9.295	85.87±8.944	-0.694
TOT	266.86±21.650	266.31±19.407	0.195
Sentiment index	5.30±0.922	5.13±0.942	1.273
Life satisfaction	5.46±1.389	5.54±1.223	-0.476
Index of well-being	10.76±2.028	10.68±1.949	0.294

Notes: * means P<0.05, and ** means P<0.01.

This paper compared birthplace differences in self-concept and subjective well-being of normal university students by using independent samples t. The results showed that social self ($t=2.237, P < 0.01$) had significant birthplace differences with no significant differences in other factors of self-concept. Urban students had a higher index of subjective well-being than rural students ($10.76 > 10.68$).

3.2.4 A Comparison of One-child Family in Self-concept and Subjective well-being of Normal University Students

Table 5 A Comparison of One-child Family in Self-concept and Subjective well-being of Normal University Students

	One-child	Non-only child	T value
PH	46.32±5.335	46.18±5.220	0.209
ME	49.08±4.917	48.73±4.573	0.568
PER	44.55±3.980	43.56±4.995	1.673
FA	51.07±5.418	49.61±5.809	1.948*
SO	46.05±5.215	44.89±5.706	1.595
SC	31.78±5.316	31.80±5.374	-0.031
ID	98.73±8.541	97.71±7.462	0.968
SA	83.83±6.230	82.00±7.505	1.975*
B	86.29±8.965	85.06±9.113	1.030
TOT	268.85±20.253	264.77±19.951	1.535
Sentiment index	5.32±0.848	5.10±0.989	1.725
Life satisfaction	5.54±1.276	5.49±1.286	0.310
Index of well-being	10.86±1.843	10.59±2.060	1.018

Notes: * means $P < 0.05$, and ** means $P < 0.01$.

This paper compared one-child with non-only child in self-concept and subjective well-being by using independent samples t, and the results showed that he family self ($t=1.948, P < 0.05$) and self satisfaction ($t=1.975, P < 0.05$) had significant differences in one-child family. however, there were no significant differences in other factors of self-concept and subjective well-being. The only-child students had higher index of well-being than non-only child students ($10.86 > 10.59$).

3.2.5 A Comparison of Self Identity level in Subjective Well-being of Normal University Students

Table 6 A Comparison of Self Identity level in Subjective Well-being of Normal University Students

	Sentiment index	Life satisfaction	Index of well-being
Low-medium group	-0.537***	-0.497**	-1.034***
Low-high group	-1.186***	-1.263***	-2.449***
Medium-high group	-0.649***	-0.766***	-1.415***

Notes: ** means $P < 0.01$, and *** means $P < 0.001$

To further investigate how self-concept affects subjective well-being, this paper put the self-concept scale scores in ascending order: the group of low self-concept including 27% normal university students (63 people, 207-256 scores), the group of high self-concept including 27% normal university students (63 people, 279-315 scores), and the last group of medium self-concept (107 people, 257-278 scores), and used One - Way ANOVA to analyze these three different self-concept groups of normal university students. The results showed that the main effects of self-concept were significant and the subjective

well-being differences were in every two groups among the low, medium and high groups.

3.3 Analysis of correlation of Self-concept and Subjective Well-being

Table 7 Analysis of correlation of Self-concept and Subjective Well-being

	Sentiment index	Life satisfaction	Index of well-being
PH	0.448**	0.280**	0.394**
ME	0.256**	0.191**	0.246**
PER	0.495**	0.439**	0.520**
FA	0.410**	0.331**	0.410**
SO	0.492**	0.273**	0.411**
SC	-0.102	-0.010	-0.042
ID	0.428**	0.400**	0.463**
SA	0.443**	0.294**	0.401**
B	0.423**	0.286**	0.387**
TOT	0.514**	0.389**	0.496**

Notes: * means P<0.05, and ** means P<0.01

This paper used Pearson Product-moment Correlation method to calculate coefficient between self-concept and subjective well-being of normal university students. The results showed that every factor of self-concept except self criticism had significantly positive correlation with subjective well-being. What’s more, the coefficient between the total scores of self concept and sentiment index were 0.514, the coefficient between the total scores of self-concept and life satisfaction were 0.389, and the coefficient between the total scores of self-concept and index of well-being were 0.496 (p<0.05). The negative correlation coefficients between self criticism and three dimensions of subjective well-being were 0.102, 0.010, and 0.042, but the negative correlation coefficients were not significant.

3.4 The Regression Analysis between Self-concept and Subjective well-being of Normal University Students

Table 8 The Regression Analysis between Self-concept and Subjective well-being of Normal University Students

Dependent variable	Independent variable	R	R ²	Correction R ²	F	B	T
Index of well-being	constants	0.520	0.270	0.267	85.869***	-1.379	-0.990
		0.551	0.304	0.298	50.411***	0.175	5.821***
		0.564	0.318	0.310	35.813***	0.078	4.020***
						-0.066	-2.216*

Notes: * means P< 0.05, ** means P< 0.01, and *** means P< 0.001

Predictive variables: Psychological Self, Self Identity, Moral Self

Dependent variable: index of well-being

This paper used the index of well-being as the dependent variable and used factors of self-concept as independent variables to do the regression analysis gradually. The results showed that: psychological self, self-identity, and moral self were all entered into the regression equation, which indicated that psychological self, self-identity and moral self had predictive function on subjective well-being. They

could explain 31.8% overall changes of subjective well-being. And $F=35.813$, $\text{sig}=0.000<0.05$, so the regression equation was effective. Regression equation was: index of well-being = $-1.379 + 0.175$ psychological self $+0.078$ self-identity -0.066 of moral self.

4. Discussions

4.1 Analysis of Self-concept of Normal University Students

The results showed that the highest total scores of self-concept was 315 points, the lowest was 207 and the average number was 266.50, and the standard deviation is 20.137, indicating that the normal university students had a clear self-concept. Normal university students have significant differences in gender, major, birthplace and whether they come from the only-child family, which means the gender differences between moral self and the self identity, the major differences between moral self and self satisfaction, and birthplace differences between social self and moral self, and the only-child differences between family self and self satisfaction. Restricted by the traditional moral concepts of school, family and society, females are described to have higher requirements on morality. Female students from normal university have a higher moral self than male students, while male students from normal university have more self identity than female students. Students majoring in Arts in normal university were more interested in what they learned and had a better control of their orientation of future careers. Therefore, they had a higher level of self satisfaction. Urban students from normal university had superior economic conditions, and they were rich in opportunities for contact with the outside world, so it was easier for them to adapt to the complicated society than the rural students. So they had a higher level of social self. Normal university students who are the only-child in the family were regarded as the pearl on the palm and they were took good care of and they received a lot of love from parents, so they had a higher level of family self and self satisfaction.

4.2 Analysis of Subjective Well-being of Normal University Students

The results showed that the highest index of well-being is 14.7, the lowest is 2.927, the average number is 10.707, and the standard deviation is 1.972, which indicated that they were in a high standard of subjective well-being. The subjective well-being had significant differences in majors especially in sentiment index with the results that the sentiment index of students majoring in Arts is higher than that of the students majoring in Science. However, there is no difference in gender, birthplace, and the only-child family. Many research results showed that the subjective factors like personality, ways for attribution and ways to handle and objective factors like social supports, life events and economic would affect the subjective well-being. Normal students majoring in Arts had higher subjective well-being than that of students majoring in Science. The reason may be that the career fields of subjects like Chinese and English are broader compared with subjects like Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. Students majoring in Arts like Chinese and English have better choice and have priority in career so that they could strengthen their confidence and study motivation, experiencing higher subjective well-being. However, by comparisons, normal students majoring in Science have keen interests in study, when considering about the employment rate, they would engage in the work they do not like, so it is the reason why their subjective well-being decreased.

4.3 Correlation Analysis between Self Concept and Subjective Well-being

The results indicated that every factor of self concept was positively related with three dimensions of subjective well-being except for self criticism. It was negatively related with these three dimensions, but the negative correlation coefficient was not very obvious. In brief, the clearer the self concept was for

normal university students, the stronger the subjective well-being was for them to experience. Normal university students just entered the university campus and they are in the turning period of their life. Because their self concepts have some certain deviation, they are lack of life experience, and they feel lonely in many situations, not finding the meaning and values of life. At this time, they need to have a deep introspection of themselves and correct their cognitive deviation gradually to have a comprehensive understanding and have a clear and accurate perception of themselves under the guidance of teachers and parents. Only so can they establish the right self concept, please themselves better, and experience higher subjective well-being.

4.4 Regression Analysis between Self Concept and Subjective Well-being

The results showed that we made the subjective well-being index as the dependent variable and the factors of self-concept as independent variables for regression analysis, and a regression equation was obtained: subjective well-being index = -1.379 + 0.175Psychological self + 0.078self identity - 0.066 moral self. That is to say, the self concept has significant regression effect on subjective well-being for normal university students, and psychological self contributes the most to the subjective well-being of normal university students. This may because the students begin to live an independent university life. And their focus on external things gradually turn to the internal self and emotion, making them focus more on their psychological feelings and inner experience with high standards to demand themselves. They give themselves more encouragement and recognition with a positive attitude so that the subjective well-being increases gradually.

5. Conclusions

First, the self concept of normal university students is accurate and clear, and students are at a high level of subjective well-being.

Second, normal university students have significant differences in gender, major, birthplace and whether they come from the only-child family, which means the gender difference between moral self and the self identity, the major difference between moral self and self satisfaction, and birthplace difference between social self and moral self, and the only-child difference between family self and self satisfaction

Third, the subjective well-being has significant differences in majors especially in sentiment index with the results that the sentiment index of students majoring in Arts is higher than that of the students majoring in Science. However, there is no significant difference in gender, birthplace, and the only-child family.

In addition, every factor of self concept is positively related with three dimensions of subjective well-being except for self criticism. It is negatively related with these three dimensions, but the negative correlation coefficient is not very obvious.

Lastly, the self concept has significant regression effect on subjective well-being for normal university students, and psychological self contributes the most to the subjective well-being of normal university students.

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