

# Research on Life Satisfaction of Urban Residents under the Background of Social Changes

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**Abstract:** Life satisfaction is a comprehensive cognitive judgment of personal life. On the basis of constructing the evaluation system of the life satisfaction index of Chinese urban residents, using the survey data on the life satisfaction of urban residents in the China Comprehensive Social Survey Open Database (CGSS) (2017). The logistic regression model is used to analysis the factor that influence the life satisfaction of the urban residents of two generations. And the factors affecting the life satisfaction of the urban residents of the new and the old generations and the similarities and differences were found, and further suggestions for improving life satisfaction were put forward to make residents have more happiness and harvest something. And a sense of gain, in order to build a harmonious society.

**Keywords:** Urban residents; Life satisfaction; Personal characteristics; Generational differences

## 1. Introduction

"The people's yearning for a better life is our goal." This is not only General Secretary Xi Jinping's sincere warning to all party comrades, but also our party's solemn commitment to the people of the country. The development of our country is for the people, and the development of our country also depends on the people. In a rapidly changing society, we should pay more attention to the life satisfaction of residents. Pay attention to both the efficiency of development and the quality of development. Analyze the factors that affect residents' life satisfaction from multiple perspectives, interpret the new changes in the demands of the new generation of residents, break the inherent cognition, and provide new ideas for improving residents' life satisfaction.

## 2. Literature review and research hypothesis

Life satisfaction is a comprehensive cognitive judgment of personal life. On the basis of constructing a life satisfaction index evaluation system for urban residents in China, using the 2017 survey data on urban residents' life satisfaction in CGSS, a logistic regression model was established to determine the factors that affect the life satisfaction of urban residents of the new and old generations in China. Perform statistical analysis to find out the factors that affect the life satisfaction of the new and old generations of urban residents and the similarities and differences, and further propose suggestions to improve life satisfaction, so that residents have a more sense of happiness and gain, and build a harmonious society.

At present, scholars have different definitions of life satisfaction. Fang Gang and Feng Xiaotian (2009) believe that subjective happiness consists of two dimensions: cognition and emotion. Cognition is the rational or intellectual aspect of subjective happiness. It is often evaluated by life satisfaction, including overall life satisfaction and Specific (special) life satisfaction [1]. Hu Ronghua (2012) believes that subjective quality of life is more important for the evaluation of residents' quality of life, and the analysis results are more realistic. Life satisfaction is an individual's subjective evaluation of the quality of life based on the standard set by ourselves, and it is one of the important indicators to measure the subjective quality of life [2]. Xu Longshun (2017) pointed out that the main influences of individual characteristics on residents' life satisfaction are gender, age, health, marital status, and political outlook. And the life satisfaction is summarized into seven areas of individual characteristics, economy, politics, culture, society, environment, and psychology [3]. Zhao Wenlong (2019) pointed out that social class has a significant impact on individual life satisfaction, and ignoring the social class variable will lead to biased research results. The environment and income are the basic guarantees for all individuals' social life. With the extension of economic inequality to the environmental field, the

impact of environmental and income factors on life satisfaction is becoming an indisputable fact. The amount is not equal to the classes of different social status [4]. Judy (2016) proposed an analysis framework mainly composed of market competition, collective consumption, environmental quality, and individual quality of life, so as to be able to respond to relevant policies and systems, and emphasize social security and social security from a sociological perspective. The impact of fairness and environmental factors on residents' life satisfaction [5]. Hong Dayong (2012) pointed out that the negative impact of environmental pollution on life satisfaction in the objective environmental quality is a consensus reached in the research. The impact of environmental pollution on residents' life satisfaction is mainly through physical health, life span, emotions, etc. Conduction, good environmental quality can improve people's life satisfaction [6]. Chu Deyin (2017) used the instrumental variable method and the fuzzy breakpoint design method to estimate the impact of air pollution on residents' well-being. The study found that after controlling for a series of time and regional fixed effects, the higher air pollution in the region significantly reduced residents' life satisfaction and subjective well-being [7].

The research in this paper is a reflection on the life satisfaction of urban residents under the background of social changes, focusing on the impact of personal characteristics and social environment. Based on the needs of research, based on a literature review of work factors, social security, personal characteristics, and social characteristics, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Hypothesis 1a, when residents sign a labor contract, the stronger the security they get, the higher their life satisfaction. Assumption 1b, the residents who work in state-owned units the higher life satisfaction they have. Hypothesis 2, The life satisfaction of residents who participated in social security was higher than that of residents who did not participate in social security. Assumption 3a, Residents whose social class they self-evaluate are higher are more satisfied with life. Assumption 3b, residents with high marital satisfaction have high life satisfaction. Assumption 3c, healthy residents have high life satisfaction. Hypothesis 4a, residents who have a higher sense of trust in society are more satisfied with their lives. Assumption 4b, residents with high ecological environment satisfaction have high life satisfaction.

It has been 40 years since the reform and opening up, our country's economic level has made a qualitative leap, and the urban infrastructure has also been improved day by day. But this does not mean that the life satisfaction of residents will also increase, especially the new born in the 1980s. As the main force in our country's modernization process, the post-80s generation has grown step by step with the reform and opening up policy. Through the comparison of life satisfaction between different generations, we can have a certain reflection on the thinking of development. Our country has always made it clear that "development is for the people", so it must have a clearer grasp of the demands of residents.

### **3. Data, variables and models**

#### **3.1 Data**

The data used in this article comes from the China Comprehensive Social Survey (CGSS2017) conducted by Renmin University of China in 2017. The survey adopts a probability sampling method of household interviews. The survey objects are those who are 18 years of age and above living in their current addresses. Chinese citizens (no upper age limit). The research object of this paper is urban residents with non-agricultural household registration, and the number of valid samples meeting this condition is 7,983.

#### **3.2 Variables**

##### **3.2.1 Dependent variable**

It is the life satisfaction index. The score of this indicator is 0-10 points. The higher the score, the higher the life satisfaction of residents.

##### **3.2.2 Independent variables.**

First, work variables. 1. Whether to sign a labor service contract. Signed contract = 0, unsigned contract = 1.2, nature of the work. Full-time work=0, part-time work=1. 3. Degree of freedom of work. Autonomous=0, involuntary=1. 4. Whether it is a state-owned enterprise. Yes=0, not=1.

Second, social security variables. 1. Basic pension insurance. Participate=1, not participate=2. 2. Commercial insurance. Participate = 1, not participate = 2. 3. Commercial pension insurance. Participate=1, not participate=2. 4. Medical insurance (New Rural Cooperative). Participate=1, not participate=2.

Third, personal characteristics variables. 1. Social class. Numerical variables, with a score of 1-10. The higher the score, the higher the social class the respondent is in. 2. Family economic status. Numerical variables, with a score of 1-5, the higher the score, the better the economic situation. 3. Personal financial situation. Numerical variables, with a score of 1-5. The higher the score, the better the financial situation. 4. Marriage satisfaction. Numerical variable, with a score of 1-5. The higher the score, the lower the marriage satisfaction. 5. Physical health. 0=unhealthy, 1=healthy.

Fourth, social attitudes. 1. Are you optimistic about the future prospects? Optimism=0, not optimism=1. 2. Do you think most people in society can be trusted? No recognition=0, recognition=1. 3. Social fairness recognition. Unfair=0, fair=1. 4. Satisfaction of ecological environment. Numerical variables, with a score of 1-6. The higher the score, the higher the satisfaction with the environment.

### **3.2.3 Control variables**

1) Gender. Virtual variables (male=1, female=0). 2) Marital status. Dummy variables (unmarried=0, married=1). For the convenience of statistics, unmarried, divorced, widowed and other marital status are uniformly defined as "unmarried". 3) Education level. For the convenience of statistics, whether you have received higher education as a limit, higher education includes colleges (adult higher education, formal higher education), undergraduate (adult higher education, formal higher education), postgraduate and above. No higher education = 0, higher education = 1. 4) Age group. Set the virtual variable with the birth year as the boundary. Residents with a birth date before the 1980s (old generation residents) = 0, and new generation residents = 1.

### **3.3 Model**

This article uses OLS regression model to estimate parameter values. In order to avoid statistical deviation, collinearity has been diagnosed for all regression models, and the variance inflation factor (VIF) of each variable is less than 10, but there is no collinearity problem between the respective variables. The model adopts the stepwise regression method. First, the regression analysis is performed according to the different independent variables, and then all the independent variables are included in the regression model for analysis.

## **4. Analysis of statistical results**

### **4.1 Influencing factors of residents' life satisfaction**

After controlling for personal status (gender, marital status, education status, and age grouping), this study tested the influence of each variable on life satisfaction. Among them, model 1 only contains control variables, models 2, 3, 4, and 5 add work variables, social security variables, social identity variables, and social attitude variables on the basis of control variables, and model 6 includes all independent variables.

#### **4.1.1 The influence of work factors on life satisfaction**

Model 2 shows that whether to sign a labor contract, whether to work full-time, or whether it is a state-owned enterprise has a significant impact on life satisfaction. Specifically, urban residents who work in public-owned units, sign labor contracts, and work full-time have relatively high life satisfaction. Hypothesis 1a has been verified. The unit ownership is the residents of state-owned enterprises, the lower the life satisfaction, hypothesis 1b gets the opposite verification of this variable.

#### **4.1.2 The impact of social security on life satisfaction**

It can be seen from Model 3 that only medical insurance (urban resident medical insurance, new rural cooperative medical insurance) has a significant impact on residents' life satisfaction, and residents who participate in medical insurance have relatively high life satisfaction. This shows that with the improvement of our country's social security system, the coverage and security of services such as pensions and medical care can meet the needs of residents, so there is no need to purchase commercial insurance to transfer risks. At the same time, it can also be explained that the risk

diversification awareness of Chinese residents still needs to be strengthened, and insurance is not regarded as an investment to improve the ability of themselves and their families to resist risks. Assumption 2 is partially verified.

#### ***4.1.3 The influence of personal characteristics on life satisfaction***

Model 4 shows that an individual's social class, personal economic status, and overall family economic status have a significant impact on life satisfaction. That is to say, the capital owned by individuals and the support behind the capital affect the residents' life satisfaction to a certain extent. Residents with higher self-estimation of social status have higher life satisfaction. The overall economic status of the family and the individual's economic status are also the reasons for life satisfaction. In addition, personal health and marital satisfaction of residents have no significant impact on life satisfaction. Hypothesis 3b and Hypothesis 3c have not been verified by this variable.

#### ***4.1.4 The impact of social attitudes on life satisfaction***

From the information provided by Model 5, it can be known that the residents' trust in the society has a positive impact on life satisfaction, and the stronger the trust, the higher the life satisfaction of residents. The higher the degree of satisfaction with the natural environment, the stronger the satisfaction with life. This shows that residents have a higher pursuit of living conditions, and are no longer limited to food and clothing, and they have begun to have higher requirements for the environment. The optimism of the residents themselves and the degree of recognition of social fairness have no significant impact.

#### ***4.2 The new demands of the new generation of residents' life satisfaction***

It can be seen from Table 2 that the impact of work factors on the life satisfaction of the new generation of residents is significantly higher than that of the overall survey group. Among them, whether to engage in full-time work or not has the most obvious impact on life satisfaction. It can be seen that the post-80s group has a high demand for work participation, and full-time work obviously makes them more sense of gain and satisfaction. Work freedom is negatively correlated with life satisfaction. Whether to sign a labor service contract has no effect on the life satisfaction of the new generation of residents.

In terms of personal characteristics, urban residents born in the 1980s also pay attention to their position in the social class. This factor has a significant impact on residents' life satisfaction. The physical health of the post-80s group also affects their life satisfaction. It can be seen that the improvement of living standards and the abundance of social material resources make residents pay more attention to their physical capital. Pay more attention to your own physical health and the lasting development that physical health can bring.

At the level of social attitudes, the difference between the new generation of residents and the overall sample lies in the disappearance of the significant influence of social trust and environmental satisfaction on their life satisfaction. After in-depth exploration of the cause, we can know the rapid development of social division of labor has increased the sense of estrangement between people. The "alienation" of individuals in the process of industrialization increases their sense of loneliness, and the reduction in expectations of trust in strangers leads to trust factors no longer being factors affecting life satisfaction.

### **5. Conclusion and discussion**

In the context of social changes, the life satisfaction of urban residents is not only affected by personal factors, but also by work factors. This article conducts a multi-dimensional analysis of the influencing factors of urban residents' life satisfaction from several common dimensions. Many of them have subverted some inherent cognitions, and have also given us a new understanding and thinking of the demands of residents in the life of the new era.

First, the impact of work factors on residents' life satisfaction. Studies have found that signing labor contracts and full-time work have a significant impact on improving residents' life satisfaction. What is different from previous perceptions is that iron rice bowls like state-owned enterprises have nothing to do with residents' life satisfaction, but also show a negative correlation. It can be seen that the residents' demands for work have undergone a new change. The iron rice bowl has gradually disappeared from people's demands and is no longer a key factor. Under this guidance, employers should standardize the

employment process, sign labor contracts with those who participate in the work, and protect their basic rights and interests. The government should also perform its duty of supervision and punish companies for actions that damage the rights and interests of workers. Standardize the employment behavior of enterprises and protect the rights and interests of workers. The government and enterprises should also take their responsibilities and provide residents with more job opportunities.

Second, social security is one of the demands of residents. However, its impact on the new generation of residents is not obvious. Investigating its root causes, more reasons are because of the sound development of my country's social security system. There is a more comprehensive coverage of people's health and a solid barrier has been established. Therefore, residents no longer consider the availability of medical insurance as a factor affecting their life satisfaction. Some scholars in the academic circle put forward the theory of "high welfare trap", believing that my country's welfare guarantee is too high, and it is easy to breed "lazy people". But in fact, our country's welfare security still needs to be improved, which is prominently reflected in the differences in different regions. The imbalance between regions still needs to be resolved, more people are beginning to pursue high-quality medical conditions, and large hospitals are still overcrowded. Difficulty in seeing a doctor is still a problem that takes a long time to solve.

Third, the relationship between personal characteristics and life satisfaction. Research shows that the social class of an individual is significantly related to the life satisfaction of the residents, indicating that the position of the residents in the society and their sense of self-identity can bring satisfaction. Economy is also one of the factors that affect life satisfaction, whether it is the personal financial situation or the family's financial situation have an impact on residents' life satisfaction. Increasing the income of residents and giving them a better economic foundation is still an issue that must be paid attention to in the future development process. The need to realize self-development allows the individual's various talents and potentials to be fully utilized in a suitable social environment to realize personal ideals and ambitions. Maslow pointed out that this is an individual's personality tendency to pursue the highest achievement in the future, and it is the highest level of human needs.

Fourth, the manifestation of social attitudes and social recognition. Trust is a stable belief that maintains the shared value and stability of society, and is the overall expectation of the trustworthiness of the individual's words, promises, and statements of others. Residents' sense of trust in the surrounding environment and strangers affects their life satisfaction to a large extent. Creating a harmonious environment and enhancing trust between people play an important role in improving residents' life satisfaction. In recent years, with the rapid development of our country's economy, people's material living standards have been improved as never before. People not only require food, clothing, heating and housing, but also demand that they eat well, wear well and live more comfortably, especially the requirements for the living environment. Still needs further improvement.

To sum up, in the context of social changes, analyzing the life satisfaction of urban residents from multiple perspectives can not only provide new guidance for policy formulation in the process of building a harmonious society, but also improve the working environment and commitment of employers. Corporate responsibility has sounded the alarm. Constantly correct and summarize in the process of development. Providing urban residents with a more comfortable and livable environment, and making the people feel more rewarded during the development process.

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Table 1 Regression Model of Influencing Factors of Urban Residents' Life Satisfaction

	Independent variable	Life satisfaction	Life satisfaction	Life satisfaction	Life satisfaction	Life satisfaction	Life satisfaction
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Control variable	gender	0.013	0.007	0.013	-0.007	0.022	0.007
	(Reference group:female)	(0.028)	(0.061)	(0.028)	(0.065)	(0.064)	(0.154)
	marital status	0.000	0.021	0.002	0.017	0.002	0.004
	(Reference group: unmarried)	(0.032)	(0.073)	(0.032)	(0.395)	(0.074)	(0.897)
	Age group	0.003	0.020	0.002	0.019	0.002	0.365
	(Reference group: post-80s)	(0.032)	(0.066)	(0.032)	(0.081)	(0.074)	(0.161)
	education level	0.003	0.002	0.004	-0.006	-0.007	-0.024
	(Reference group: Higher education)	(0.069)	(0.118)	(0.028)	(0.146)	(0.151)	(0.269)
Work	Whether to sign a labor contract		0.132****				0.079*
	(Reference group: no labor contract has been signed)		(0.002)				(0.005)
	Nature of the work		0.154****				-0.011
	(Reference group: part-time job)		(0.005)				(0.019)
	Freedom of work		-0.013				-0.035
	(Reference group: low degree of freedom of work)		(0.005)				(0.018)
	Unit state-owned enterprise or not		-0.039*				-0.016
	(Reference group: non-state-owned enterprises)		(0.002)				(0.005)
Social Security	Purchase urban medical insurance/new rural cooperative medical insurance			0.050****			0.007
	(Reference group: no medical insurance)			(0.002)			(0.019)
	Buy basic pension insurance			-0.013			-0.02
	(Reference group: no endowment insurance)			(0.002)			(0.014)
	Purchase commercial medical insurance			0.009			0.011
	(Reference group: no commercial medical insurance)			(0.003)			(0.011)
	Purchase commercial pension insurance			0.008			-0.023
	(Reference group: no commercial pension insurance)			(0.003)			(0.010)
Personal characteristics	Social class				0.115****		0.105*
					(0.050)		(0.025)
	family's financial situation				0.050*		0.024
					(0.003)		(0.007)
	Personal financial status				0.055*		-0.082
					(0.006)		(0.018)
	Marriage satisfaction				-0.011		0.067*
	(Reference group: dissatisfied with marriage)				(0.010)		(0.281)
	In good health				-0.034		-0.011
	(Reference group: unhealthy)				(0.015)		(0.178)
Social attitude	sense of trust					0.054***	0.339****
	(Reference group: distrust of society)					(0.006)	(0.043)
	Fairness					0.011	-0.027
	(Reference group: think that the society is not fair)					(0.004)	(0.012)
	Optimism					-0.016	-0.045
	(Reference group: Not optimistic about the future)					(0.004)	(0.018)

	Environmental satisfaction					0.151****	0.267****
	(Reference group: dissatisfied with the surrounding environment)					(0.004)	(0.011)

Note: (1) The numbers in parentheses indicate standard errors.(2)\*p<0.1, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*\*p<0.001

Table 2 Regression model of factors affecting life satisfaction of urban residents of the new generation

	Independent variable	Life satisfaction	
		Model 6	Model 7
Control variable	gender	0.007	-0.046
		(0.154)	(0.187)
	marital status	0.004	0.011
		(0.897)	(0.850)
	Age group	-0.024	-0.044
		(0.269)	(0.300)
Work	Whether to sign a labor contract	0.079*	0.001
		(0.005)	(0.007)
	Nature of the work	-0.011	0.154****
		(0.019)	(0.005)
	Freedom of work	-0.035	-0.032*
		(0.018)	(0.008)
	Unit state-owned enterprise or not	-0.016	-0.006
		(0.005)	(0.006)
Social Security	Purchase urban medical insurance/new rural cooperative medical insurance	0.007	0.104
		(0.019)	(0.167)
	Buy basic pension insurance	-0.02	-0.059
		(0.014)	(0.019)
	Purchase commercial medical insurance	0.011	0.159
		(0.011)	(0.203)
	Purchase commercial pension insurance	-0.023	-0.171
		(0.010)	(0.203)
Personal characteristics	Social class	0.105*	0.108*
		(0.025)	(0.031)
	family's financial situation	0.024	0.028
		(0.007)	(0.009)
	Personal financial status	-0.082	-0.057
		(0.018)	(0.019)
	Marriage satisfaction	0.067*	-0.052
		(0.281)	(0.339)
	In good health	-0.011	0.068*
		(0.178)	(0.289)
Social attitude	sense of trust	0.339****	0.340
		(0.043)	(0.166)
	Fairness	-0.027	-0.023
		(0.012)	(0.012)
	Optimism	-0.045	-0.061
		(0.018)	(0.017)
	Environmental satisfaction	0.267****	-0.017
		(0.011)	(0.017)

Note: (1) The numbers in parentheses indicate standard errors. (2)\*p<0.1, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*\*p<0.001