

# Research on the Influencing Factors of Emotional Well-Being of the Elderly in Rural Areas of Shaanxi Province

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**Abstract:** At present, the degree of aging is deepening, and there are problems such as "getting old before getting rich" and "getting old before getting ready". The happiness of the elderly has become a key issue for scholars, and improving the well-being of the elderly has also become a serious challenge facing our country. In recent years, researchers have proposed that the happiness of the elderly in rural areas in our country is lower than that of the elderly in urban areas, but most studies take the elderly in urban areas as the subject of subjective well-being, and few studies focus on the subjective well-being of the elderly in rural areas. Studying the influencing factors of the well-being of the elderly in rural areas can inspire the society to pay attention to the material and spiritual needs of the elderly in rural areas. Based on the CHARLS 2015 national tracking survey data, research the influence of demographic characteristics, health status, intergenerational relationship, economic status, and social factors on the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province, and put forward countermeasures and suggestions to improve the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural areas of Shaanxi Province

**Keywords:** rural elderly, emotional well-being, influencing factors

## 1. Introduction

According to the "2020 National Bulletin on the Development of Aging Business", as of on November 1, 2020, there were 264.02 million elderly people aged 60 and above in the country, accounting for 18.70% of the total population %; the national population aged 65 and above is 190.64 million, accounting for 13.50% of the total population<sup>[1]</sup>. The elderly in rural areas are at the bottom of the vulnerable group, and the number is increasing<sup>[2]</sup>. Therefore, our country should intensify efforts to improve the living standards of the elderly in rural areas and promote the elderly in rural areas to maintain a positive attitude, so as to enhance the happiness of the elderly in rural areas. Emotional well-being includes both positive and negative emotions, and is one of the main indicators to measure the mental health and living standards of the elderly<sup>[3]</sup>. Many scholars are devoted to the research on emotional well-being and its cross-fields, focusing on how to enable the elderly to spend their old age in a healthy and happy life.

Shaanxi Province is located in the central and western parts of my country and is one of the underdeveloped provinces. "Old age before getting rich" is a severe test that Shaanxi Province will face in the future. The well-being of the elderly in Shaanxi Province needs urgent attention<sup>[4]</sup>. Improving the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural areas of Shaanxi Province, enabling them to have a positive attitude towards life and reducing negative emotions has become one of the key issues facing the elderly in Shaanxi Province. Based on the CHARLS national tracking data in 2015, this paper will study the impact of five major categories of influencing factors (demographic characteristics, health conditions, intergenerational relationships, economic conditions, and social factors)<sup>[5]</sup> on emotional well-being. On the basis of basic regression analysis, put forward countermeasures and suggestions to improve the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province.

## 2. The Overall Status

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics on emotional well-being*

Emotional Well-Being Dimension	Positive sentiment		Negative sentiment	
	Effective percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)	Effective percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
2 Very low	23.4	23.4	35.3	35.3
3 Very low	8.5	31.9	12.5	47.8
4 Low	14.0	45.9	13.6	61.4
5 Fair	19.7	65.6	15.3	76.7
6 High	11.1	76.7	6.9	83.6
7 Very high	5.9	82.6	5.6	89.2
8 Very high	17.4	100.0	10.8	100.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

As shown in Table 1, the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural areas of Shaanxi Province is in a general state. 45.9% of the elderly have a low level of positive emotions, and the proportion of the elderly with extremely low positive emotions is 23.4%. At the same time, 61.4% of the elderly have low negative emotions, but 23.3% of the elderly still have high negative emotions, and 10.8% of the elderly have extremely high negative emotions. Therefore, the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural Shaanxi cannot be ignored.

## 3. Basic Regression Results and Analysis

*Table 2: Basic regression results of Ordered Probit Model*

Variable name	Positive sentiment	Negative sentiment
Sex	0.146	-0.097
age	-0.056	-0.182*
education	0.129*	-0.091
marital status	0.111	-0.148
self-assessed health status	-0.357***	0.087
whether there is physical pain	-0.184**	0.631***
difficulty in daily life	-0.138	0.553*
whether to obtain financial support for children	-0.108	-0.142
whether to take care of grandchildren	0.166	-0.443***
frequency of meeting with children	-0.054	0.073
salary income	0.000*	-0.000*
other income	0.000	-0.000*
whether there is pension insurance	0.301*	-0.091
whether there is medical insurance	0.102	-0.122
frequency of social participation	-0.038	0.226***

Note: \*\*\*/\*\*/\* means significant at the 1%/5%/10% statistical level.

Before the regression analysis, this paper tested the correlation coefficient matrix of the independent variables. There is no collinearity problem for each variable. The basic regression results are shown in Table 2.

Demographic characteristics. Gender had no significant effect on the emotional well-being of the rural elderly in Shaanxi Province. Age has a significant impact on the negative emotions of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province. The older the elderly, the lower the negative emotions. Therefore, increasing age can improve the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province. The mentality may be more mature, so it will feel happier. The educational level has a significant positive impact on the positive emotions of the rural elderly in Shaanxi Province. The higher the education level, the higher the positive emotions and the higher the emotional well-being. Therefore, the educational level can significantly improve the emotional well-being of the rural elderly in Shaanxi Province. Generally speaking, the higher the education level, the higher the social status and wage income, the better the living conditions and living environment of the elderly in rural areas, and the higher the emotional well-

being. Marital status does not significantly affect the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province.

**Health Conditions.** Self-assessed health has a significant impact on the positive emotions of the rural elderly in Shaanxi Province. The better the self-assessed health, the higher the positive emotions. Therefore, the self-assessed health can significantly improve the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province. According to previous research conclusions, for the elderly in rural areas, physical health has the greatest impact on their well-being. The self-evaluated health status is the subjective assessment of the elderly on their own health, which can reflect the physical condition of the elderly, as well as whether the elderly are optimistic and positive will affect the happiness of the elderly. Whether there is physical pain distress will significantly affect the positive and negative emotions of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province. Having physical pain distress will reduce the positive emotions of the elderly and increase the negative emotions of the elderly, thereby reducing the emotional well-being of the elderly. The reason is that physical pain will affect the rest, diet, and social participation of the elderly to a certain extent, and may also cause emotional fluctuations in the elderly and reduce their emotional well-being. The degree of difficulty in daily life will significantly affect the negative emotions of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province. The greater the degree of difficulty in daily life, the higher the negative emotions of the elderly, so the level of emotional well-being decreases. It can be explained that the greater the obstacles in daily life, the more likely the elderly's ability to live independently will be restricted, and the more they need the care of others, which is not conducive to the physical and mental health of the elderly.

**Intergenerational Relations.** Whether receiving financial support from children will not significantly affect the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province. Whether or not taking care of grandchildren has a significant impact on the negative emotions of the elderly in rural areas in Shaanxi Province, and taking care of grandchildren can significantly reduce the negative emotions of the elderly, thereby enhancing their emotional well-being. It can be explained that in recent years, most young children choose to go out to work, and many elderly people in rural areas have become empty-nest elderly. The company of grandchildren at this time may alleviate the loneliness of the rural empty-nest elderly, thereby enhancing their emotional well-being. The frequency of meeting with children does not have a significant effect on the emotional well-being of the elderly in rural areas of Shaanxi Province.

**Economic Situation.** Wage income has a significant impact on the positive and negative emotions of the rural elderly in Shaanxi Province. The increase in wage income will make the elderly more positive and optimistic, so the increase in wage income will enhance the emotional well-being of the rural elderly in Shaanxi Province. Other income will have a significant impact on the negative emotions of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province. The economic income of the elderly in rural areas of Shaanxi Province is generally low. Therefore, under such a situation, improving the economic income of the elderly can ensure their living conditions and quality. Especially for the elderly and sickly, economic income is the treatment of disease and the foundation of daily health and rehabilitation.

**Social Factors.** Whether there is endowment insurance has a significant impact on the positive emotions of the rural elderly in Shaanxi Province. The positive emotions of the elderly with endowment insurance are higher, so the elderly with endowment insurance have higher emotional well-being. The reason is that under the trend of population aging before getting rich, for rural areas with a high poverty rate, the new rural insurance has alleviated the poverty of the rural elderly to a certain extent. When the basic living needs of the elderly in rural areas are guaranteed, they will pursue higher-level needs. Therefore, the happiness of the elderly in rural areas can be improved. Whether or not there is medical insurance has no significant effect on the emotional well-being of the rural elderly in Shaanxi Province. For the elderly in rural areas, the reason for not participating in medical insurance may be the poor economic status, and the elderly do not have the economic conditions to receive timely medical treatment. The frequency of social participation has a significant impact on the negative emotions of the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province. The higher the frequency of social activity participation, the lower the negative emotions of the elderly. Therefore, the frequency of social activity participation can improve the emotional well-being of the elderly. The reason is that the elderly in rural areas actively participate in social activities. On the one hand, they can increase communication and deepen their relationship with old friends, and at the same time, they can meet more new friends, and even meet some young friends. On the other hand, the elderly in rural areas can participate in social activities to achieve self-worth and broaden the social network, and these aspects are closely related to happiness.

## 4. Suggestions

### 4.1 *Suggestions at the Government Level*

Obtaining endowment insurance can significantly improve the subjective well-being of the rural elderly in Shaanxi Province. The coverage of endowment insurance in Shaanxi Province is relatively extensive. In 2010, 2,831,600 people participated in the new rural insurance in 11 national pilot counties in Shaanxi Province, and 580,000 people received pensions. The insurance participation rate was 67%, and the benefit rate reached 85%. However, the problem of urban and rural disunity is more serious, and the pension amount varies greatly. The government should raise the level of overall planning, appropriately raise the level of pensions, implement pension subsidy policies, and strengthen assistance and support for the poor and elderly in rural areas, so that the living conditions of the elderly in rural areas can be maintained at a certain level. At the same time, rural areas of Shaanxi Province can provide learning opportunities such as high-level agricultural talent training, technology opening and technical consulting services for the rural elderly in good health, so that the elderly can have more job opportunities through agricultural learning, thereby improving the quality of life and improving the emotional well-being level.

### 4.2 *Recommendations at the Community Level*

First, improve rural community medical care. Elderly people in rural areas travel relatively long distances to urban hospitals and may not receive timely treatment. Professional medical staff and medical equipment should be widely deployed in rural communities in Shaanxi Province, and medical staff should be trained in medical knowledge and skills, so that the elderly in rural Shaanxi Province can carry out daily health care and treatment in the villages. At the same time, rural community hospitals should conduct physical examinations for the elderly on time, visit more elderly people with physical pain and difficulties in daily life, and conduct home treatment. Secondly, strengthen the construction of elderly care facilities and services in rural communities. The Shaanxi Provincial Government should build small fitness venues and leisure venues in rural areas with a large population according to the economic conditions of different villages, so that the nearby elderly rural people can easily exercise and exercise. At the same time, the Shaanxi provincial government should build parks and activity rooms for the elderly in rural areas with more activities according to actual conditions, so as to increase the social participation rate of the elderly and improve their emotional well-being.

### 4.3 *Suggestions at the Family Level*

Pay attention to the psychological status of the young elderly. From the above empirical evidence, it can be seen that the emotional well-being of the young elderly in rural Shaanxi Province is low. Most of the elderly in rural areas do not have jobs, and they need to face more housework responsibilities and more life pressures. Younger elderly can live independently and are often neglected by their children. Therefore, when children take care of their elderly parents, they should pay more attention to the younger elderly, pay attention to the psychological conditions of these groups, and solve their psychological problems.

### 4.4 *Recommendations at the Individual Level*

The elderly in rural areas should change some traditional concepts, actively understand leisure and entertainment activities, contact the entertainment projects set up in the villages, and make full use of the facilities for elderly care activities set up by the government, so as to improve their mental health. Empty-nest and widowed elderly are prone to loneliness, the company of grandchildren can fill the elderly vacancy. Therefore, the elderly can take care of their grandchildren voluntarily and if their physical ability allows, improve its emotional well-being.

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