

## Individual Well-Being of the Elderly in Surabaya–Indonesia and Hangzhou–China

Setiasih and Adi Satria Indramawan

Faculty of Psychology  
Universitas Surabaya

Xuejiao Chen

School of Politics and Public Administration  
Zhejiang University of Technology

Various researches indicate that the increase of age is not in parallel with the increase of well-being, similarly cultural pattern influences individual life quality. The problem revealed in this study was whether there is a (significant) difference between the well-being of elderly individuals in Surabaya-Indonesia and Hangzhou-China. The sample of this research ( $N = 193$ : Indonesia = 102, China = 92) is 60-year-old or over seniors, both men and women living in Surabaya and Hangzhou, collected by the incidental sampling technique. The collection of data was using Psychological Well-Being Scale (Diener et al., 2009). The result of this study shows that there is a significant difference of well-being between respondents in Surabaya and Hangzhou. In general, there is a bigger opportunity to achieve the self-potentials of respondents in Hangzhou, making their well-being level higher than the respondents in Surabaya. Furthermore, the differences of the results are further discussed.

*Keywords:* well-being, the elderly, Surabaya-Indonesia, Hangzhou-China

Berbagai penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan usia tidak sejalan dengan peningkatan *wellbeing*, demikian pula pola-pola budaya memengaruhi kualitas hidup individu. Permasalahan yang diungkap dalam penelitian ini adalah apakah ada perbedaan *wellbeing* antara individu lanjut usia (lansia) di Surabaya-Indonesia dan di Hangzhou-Cina? Sampel penelitian ini ( $N = 193$ : Indonesia = 102, China = 92) lansia berusia 60 tahun atau lebih yang tinggal di Surabaya-Indonesia dan di Hangzhou-Cina, yang diambil dengan teknik *incidental sampling*. Pengumpulan data menggunakan *Psychological Well-Being Scale* (Diener et al., 2009). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan ada perbedaan *well-being* antara lansia di Surabaya-Indonesia dan di Hangzhou-Cina. Secara umum, dengan budaya yang berbeda lansia di Hangzhou mempunyai pengalaman dan cara yang berbeda dalam memenuhi kebutuhan, merealisasikan potensi maupun memberikan penilaian terhadap kualitas hidupnya. Selanjutnya dibahas perbedaan-perbedaan dalam hasil tersebut.

*Kata kunci:* *wellbeing*, lansia, Surabaya-Indonesia, Hangzhou-Cina

The decrease of fertility number, the improvement of health, and the increase of life expectancy are the factors contributing to the dominant number of the elderly. According to Pirkel (2009) for the first time in history, the number of 65-year-old or over individuals exceeds the number of children under five years old. Pirkel stated that in 2009, the global population of 60-year-old or over individuals was 680 million or 11% of the total of world population. It is predicted that in

2050 individuals aged 60 or over will increase from 680 million to two billion, increasing from 11% to 22% of the world population.

According to Pirkel, (2009) currently Japan has the highest elderly population in the world. This number of population will increase from 27% to 44% in 2050. China will have an increase of population aged 60 or over for 30%, from 109 million to 350 million. Tira (2012) said that Indonesia with a life expectancy of 72 years is predicted to have a high increase of the elderly population to 40 million in 2025, moreover in 2050 the number of the elderly is predicted to reach 71.6 million people.

The research conducted by Lee, Baretto, and Frazier (2004) shows that there are differences of life

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Setiasih Go, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Surabaya, Jalan Raya Kalirungkut, Surabaya 60293. E-mail: setiasih\_siegit@yahoo.com

satisfaction and well-being spheres between individuals in young adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood. From this research result, it can be seen that personal growth, purpose in life, and life satisfaction of late adults are lower compared to individuals in young adulthood and middle adulthood.

The decrease of well-being and life quality of individuals caused by the decline of physiological and psychological functions can also be produced by the change of social condition, like the deteriorating relationship between individuals or family members. The result of cross-cultural researches shows that there is a relationship between specific cultural factors and the well-being, for example the research of Suh, Diener, Oishi, and Triandis (1998) shows that the group norm in terms of life satisfaction has a stronger correlation with the life satisfaction of individuals who adopt a collective culture rather than individualist culture.

Thus, well-being is a complex concept and it relates to the fulfillment of the psychological function conducted by individuals (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, Ryan and Deci (2001) state that psychological well-being is a realization and fulfillment of natural potential possessed by individuals whom are able to fully function and feel happy.

There are several concepts of well-being, which generally can be distinguished into two, the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The hedonic approach sees well-being as happiness or hedonic pleasure. In this approach, the well-being can be attained through the fulfillment of desires (needs) or individual satisfaction. According to this approach, the fulfillment of well-being can be expressed in many forms and variations, including the physical, desire, or personal interest. According to the eudaimonic approach, individuals feel the state of well-being if they can fulfill their potential and live according to their "true self" or value, not only fulfilling their needs according to hedonic approach.

Well-being in this research is based on the positive human functioning approach proposed by Diener et. al. (2009) and it is stated as the psychological well-being. As for its aspects are meaning and purpose, supportive and rewarding relationships, engaged and interested, contribute to the well-being of others, competency, self-acceptance, optimism and being respected.

The psychological well-being concept proposed by Diener et. al. (2009) is a development of the well-being concept proposed by Ryan and Deci (2001), also Ryff and Keyes (1995) that has six dimensions, including: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose

in life, positive relation with other, autonomy and environmental mastery.

Explanation about each dimension from Ryff and Keyes (1995) is as follows: self-acceptance is a self-accepting attitude towards every life aspect, including the positive and negative aspects. Self-acceptance also includes the positive feeling towards past experiences, including the pleasant and unpleasant ones. Personal growth is the desire to develop oneself, to be aware of one's potential, and to be open to new experience. Purpose in life includes the belief that life always has meaning and purpose, as well as the ability to direct oneself towards life purpose. Positive relation with others is the ability to feel quality relationship with others, and the ability to understand and trust other people. Autonomy is a form of independence. In other words, one must be able to manage and evaluate oneself and to stand up for oneself against environmental influence. Environmental mastery is one's capacity to handle life effectively.

Besides those six dimensions of well-being in their concept of psychological well-being, Diener et. al. (2009) also adds the concept of "engagement and interest," and "optimism" from Csikszentmihalyi (1990); the concept of "optimism" from Peterson and Selgman (2004); and the concept of "feeling respected" from Maslow (1958). Diener's aim to propound the concept of psychological well-being is to get a comprehensive overview about the individual's well-being.

Diener's (1984) study on several researches shows that there are several factors affecting well-being:

(a) earning. The research of Seghieri, Desantis, and Tanturri (2006) shows that there is a positive relationship between the earning and well-being. Ryff et al (cited in Ryan & Deci, 2001) reveals that social economic status is related with the dimension of self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery and personal growth.

(b) demographic factors, such as: age, sex, occupational status, education, religious factor, and marital status. Age has a positive correlation with the index of general well-being. Ryff (1989) found that there is a difference of psychological well-being between different age groups. Individuals in late adulthood have lower psychological well-being scores compared to the purpose in life and personal growth dimensions. Individuals in middle adulthood have higher scores in the environmental mastery dimension. Individuals in young adulthood have lower scores in autonomy and environmental mastery dimensions, but higher in personal growth dimension. The decrease of

well-being is parallel with the age of individuals (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, as cited in Diener, 1984). Women, both married and unmarried, feel happier and more satisfied compared to men (Wood, Rhodes, & Whelan, 1989).

(c) social contact, life events that occur in individuals' life and personalities. Diener's (1984) study on several researches reveals the connection between social activity and well-being, even though the influence of social activity on well-being is still unclear. According to DeNeve (cited in Ryan & Deci, 2001) genetic factor influences the well-being and the existence of well-being is relatively stable. The aim of this research is to determine whether there is a difference between the well-being of elderly individuals in Surabaya-Indonesia compared to the elderly individuals in Hangzhou-China.

## Method

The sample of this research are individuals aged 60 or over, both men and women living in Surabaya and Hangzhou. The sampling technique used is accidental sampling. The total number of participants is 193: Indonesia = 102 people, China = 92 people.

The instrument used in this research is Psychological Well-being scale (PWB scale) from Diener et al. (2009). The scale consists of eight items, which show important aspects of human functioning, including positive relationship, feeling of competence, and meaning and purpose of life. Each item has seven answer choices that range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. All items are in the form of positive statements, the score ranges from eight (strongly disagree) to 56 (strongly agree). High score indicates that respondents see themselves as positive in various forms of functionality. The research result of Diener et.al. (2009) with  $N = 568$ , Cronbach's Alpha = .86. The correlation of PWB scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) = .62.

The PWB scale of Diener et al. (2009) used in this research is in English, therefore the scale must first be

translated into bahasa Indonesia for the data collection in Indonesia, and then translated into Chinese for the data collection in China. In order to see the difference of well-being between the elderly in Surabaya and Hangzhou, the obtained score of PWB would be analyzed with t-test for independent sample.

Besides using PWB scale for the instrument of research, open questionnaire was also used to reveal the demographic data of respondents (like age and sex). The demographic data obtained were analyzed descriptively.

## Results

The test result of the instrument shows that the psychological well-being scale is classified as reliable (Cronbach's Alpha for Surabaya-Indonesia respondents = .852 and Hangzhou-China respondents = .866), with the corrected item-total correlation coefficients for the respondents of Surabaya-Indonesia between .461 - .701 and for the respondents of Hangzhou-China from .440 - .772.

The result of data analysis with independent sample t-test shows that there is a significant difference of well-being between the respondents in Surabaya-Indonesia and Hangzhou-China ( $t = -10.400$ ;  $p < .005$ ). The average value of well-being of the respondents in China ( $mean = 41.109$ ;  $SD = 4.710$ ) is higher than the average value of well-being of the respondents in Indonesia ( $mean = 33.531$ ;  $SD = 5.351$ ).

There are more female respondents in Surabaya-Indonesia, with the age ranging from 60-64. Most of the respondents are high school graduates, married and have three children. At present, the majorities of the respondents are retired (not working), living with partners and children. On the other hand, there are more male respondents in Hangzhou-China, with the age ranging from 60-64 who completed the university. Most of Chinese respondents are married and have one child. At present, they are still working and living with their partners. The detail of demographic data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Demography Sample Data (N=193)*

Variable	Category	Indonesia (N = 101)	China (N = 92)
Sex	Male	42 (41.6%)	65 (70.7%)
	Female	59 (58.4%)	27 (29.3%)
Age	60-64 years	31 (30.7%)	23 (25.0%)
	65-69 years	30 (29.7%)	18 (19.6%)
	70-74 years	19 (18.8%)	22 (23.9%)
	75-79 years	13 (12.9%)	17 (18.5%)
	80-84 years	7 (6.9%)	6 (6.5%)
	85-89 years	1 (1.0%)	4 (4.3%)
	90-94 years	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.2%)
Education	No Education	1 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	Don't Graduate Elementary School	11 (10.9%)	0 (0.0%)
	Elementary School	9 (8.9%)	0 (0.0%)
	Middle School	23 (22.8%)	1 (1.1 %)
	High School	34 (33.7%)	4 (4.3%)
	University	23 (22.8%)	49 (53.3%)
	No Answer	0 (0.0%)	38 (41.3%)
Occupational status	Retired/Not Working	76 (75.2%)	21 (22.8%)
	Working	25 (24.8%)	45 (48.9%)
	Not Answering	0 (0.0%)	26 (28.3%)
Marital status	Married	72 (71,3%)	83 (90,2%)
	Unmarried	3 (3.0%)	6 (6.5%)
	Divorced	26 (25.7%)	0 (0.0%)
	Not Answering	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.3%)
Number of children	0	5 (5.0%)	11 (12.0%)
	1	11 (10.9%)	39 (42.4%)
	2	16 (15.8%)	30 (32.6%)
	3	28 (27.7%)	5 (5.4%)
	4-5	25 (24.7%)	6 (6.5%)
	6-10	16 (15.5%)	1 (1.1 %)
Economic status	Lower	46 (45.5%)	30 (32.6%)
	Middle	34 (33.7%)	44 (47.8%)
	Upper	21 (20.8%)	10 (10.9%)
	Not answering	0 (0.0%)	8 (8.7%)
Living with	Alone	7 (6.9%)	5 (5%)
	Partner	23(22.8%)	40 (43.5%)
	Partner + Children	40 (39.6%)	12 (13.0%)
	Children	18 (17.7%)	8 (8.7%)
	Elder (brother + sister)	4 (4.0%)	3 (3.3%)
	Partner, children + other people	4 (4.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	Other people	5 (5.0%)	7 (7.6%)
	Not answering	0 (0.0%)	17 (18.5%)

## Discussion

The research result shows that there is a significant difference of well-being between respondents in Surabaya-Indonesia and Hangzhou-China ( $t = -10.400$ ;  $p < .005$ ). In this case, the well-being average of respondents in China (41.109) is higher than in Indonesia (33.351). Ryan and Deci (2001) stated that psychological well-being is a realization and fulfillment of natural potential of individuals, making the individuals able to fully function and feel happy. According to the concept of Ryan and Deci, Diener et.al. (2009), it was stated that psychological well-being basically is about how far individuals can actualize their potential and resources. Based on this notion, it can be interpreted that the elderly, the respondents of this research, in Hangzhou can better actualize their potentials and are happier than the elderly in Surabaya.

The demographic data of research respondents shows that more respondents in Hangzhou are 70-years-old and over (55.4%). The majority of respondents are male, have a university educational background, and currently are still working and living with their children. The university educational background enables them to be working at the age of 60 or over. The financial security, caused by the actively working respondents, the lower burden of child-care (the number of children 0-2 is 86.8%) and currently 43.5% of the respondents are still living only with their partners, thus helping the respondents to maximize their potential.

The majority of respondents in Surabaya are female, with the age ranging from 60-69 (60.4%). Among the respondents, 33.7% have high school educational background, 43.6 have junior high school to no educational background, and 75.2% are retired (not working). Given the age range, the respondents in Surabaya have a higher opportunity to be active, but their lower educational background hinders them to be actively working (retired).

The condition of the retired respondents does not seem to go along with their financial needs, in this case the considerable number of children (67.9% of respondents have more than two children), 25.7% of the respondents in Surabaya are divorced, and 39.6% of the respondents are living with their partner and children. In general, this demographic condition does not support the respondents to maximize their potential and capability.

In accordance with the concept of psychological well-being from Diener et. al. (2009) the demographic

condition of the respondents in Hangzhou is more supportive in building a positive self-view, especially in terms of self-acceptance, autonomy, optimism, personal growth, purpose of life, and effective life management, compared to the respondents in Surabaya. Researchers (the authors) hypothesized that the inequality of the demographic conditions, in this case age and economic status affect the individual well-being. The hypothesis of the researcher is based on the research result of Seghieri, Desantis, and Tanturri (2006), Ryff (1989); Ryff et al (cited in Ryan & Deci, 2001), (Campbell et al. as cited in Diener, 1984).

Psychometrically, the difference of the research result may be caused by the measuring instrument factor. Since the original measuring instrument is in English, the measuring instrument must first be translated into bahasa Indonesia for the data collection in Surabaya. The same procedure must be done for the data collection in Hangzhou, that the measuring instrument must first be translated into Chinese. In accordance with the custom in Surabaya-Indonesia, researches unintentionally used the answer choices ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree in five scales. Whereas in Hangzhou, the answer choices ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree were in seven scales (same as the original version). According to the researches, both measuring problems could influence the collected research result.

## Conclusion

According to the result of data analysis, it can be concluded that the respondents in Hangzhou see themselves to be more positive compared to the respondents in Surabaya. That kind of perspective made the respondents in Hangzhou having bigger opportunities to maximize their potential and resources. This condition made the respondents in Hangzhou to feel more contented and happy about themselves and the environment (to feel the well-being).

Demographically, the majorities of the respondents in Hangzhou are males, older than 70 years old. They have a university education background and still actively working. The majorities of the respondents in Surabaya are females, with the age ranging from 60-70. They have a high school education background and a lot of them are currently retired. The demographic condition differences open the possibilities of different potential actualization.

The unequal demographic condition between two

groups of respondent is the weakness of this study. Another weakness is translating the measuring instrument (English into Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Indonesia into Chinese) as well as the unintentional negligence of the researchers (inequality of answer choices range for the measuring instrument in Hangzhou-China (1-7) and Surabaya-Indonesia (1-5).

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