

The subjective well-being status and influencing factors of Jiaying university undergraduates in the post covid-19 era

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ABSTRACT:

Subjective well-being is a key index to measure the quality of life of individuals and groups. university students' subjective well-being is a comprehensive reflection of their campus life quality and mental health level. The level of subjective well-being of university students directly affects the level of mental health. The purpose of this study is to investigate the subjective well-being of Chinese college students in the post-COVID-19 era, and what are the main factors affecting the subjective well-being of university students? In this study, face-to-face interviews were used to collect information and convenient sampling techniques were adopted. The results show that the subjective well-being index of university students in Hakka area of China is relatively low. The results show that the main factors affecting the subjective well-being of university students in China include academic stress, interpersonal stress, employment stress and financial stress. According to the above analysis results, the subjective well-being of undergraduates in the post-COVID-19 period is relatively low. Academic stress, employment stress, interpersonal stress and economic stress are the main factors that affect undergraduates' subjective well-being. In future research, we can use experimental and intervention research and other methods to conduct more in-depth research on subjective well-being. In addition, the student management departments of universities should pay more attention to the subjective well-being of undergraduates. Group training can be used to improve undergraduates' ability to resist stress, so as to enhance their subjective well-being.

Keywords: Academic stress, Interpersonal stress, Employment stress, Economic stress, Subjective well-being

I. INTRODUCTION

As the main force of socialist modernization, contemporary undergraduates' understanding of subjective well-being and their value orientation directly represents the mainstream direction of society. Therefore, it is very important to understand the current situation of contemporary undergraduates' subjective well-being and find efficient ways to strengthen the education of undergraduate subjective well-being. By analyzing the factors that affect the subjective well-

being of undergraduates, improving the ability of undergraduates to obtain subjective well-being and further enhancing the subjective well-being of undergraduates play a crucial role in improving the mental health education of undergraduates.

At the beginning of 2020, a sudden pneumonia-liked virus spreads rapidly in China creating a challenge. The virus was deadly across different countries before it subsided following an effort from different parts of the world (Zhang, et al., 2021). China eventually entered the "post-COVID-19 era", but that does not mean that the epidemic was completely eradicated and recovered. The epidemic may break out on a small scale and repeatedly at given time and will last for a long time due to the influence of foreign repatriation and seasonality (Zhang & Ma, 2021). The cognitive level and personality characteristics of university students are still in the developing stage, and their mental state is more likely to be affected by major public health events such as the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic. As a result, university students are prone to anxiety, panic, and other negative emotional experiences, which will have a negative impact on their physical and mental health (Xu, et al, 2021).

Subjective well-being is an important psychological indicator to evaluate and measure the level of individual mental health and quality of life. The level of individual subjective well-being plays an important role in the academic performance, mental health and social adaptation of undergraduates (Xu, et al, 2021). Subjective well-being is an individual's holistic evaluation for their life quality, including life satisfaction and emotional experience. Life satisfaction is an individual's overall satisfaction with their quality of life. Emotional experience includes positive emotion and negative emotion (Li, 2022). Recently years, undergraduates' suicide, self-harm, depression and other negative events occur frequently, which has aroused wide concern from all walks of life. Improving undergraduates' subjective well-being is of great significance to stimulate their positive drive and guide their overall physical and mental health development (Feng& Fan, 2023). According to previous studies, the main factors affecting undergraduates' subjective well-being include academic stress, interpersonal relationship (Ni & Wang,2023) and employment. Recently, undergraduates' suicide, self-harm, depression, and other negative events occur frequently, which has aroused wide concern from all walks of life. Improving undergraduates' subjective well-being is of great significance to stimulate their positive drive and guide their overall physical and mental health development (Feng& Fan, 2023). According to previous studies, the main factors affecting undergraduates' subjective well-being include academic stress, interpersonal relationship (Ni & Wang,2023), employment stress (Tian, 2019) and so on.

Stress is an abnormal reflection of physiology and psychology. It is a state of psychological tension that occurs when an individual is faced with an environment that is difficult to adapt and cope with (Wu, 2023). Under the influence of many stress factors such as family environment, lifestyle, personal thought, academic level, learning environment and social environment, there are obvious differences in the understanding and feeling of the concept of subjective well-being. Moderate stress is beneficial to physical and mental health, but excessive stress will have adverse effects on physical and mental health (Yao & Xue, 2021), and further affect the subjective well-being of undergraduates. The study of Hamiti (2023) shows that the academic stress of undergraduate students is significantly negative in relation to their subjective well-being, that is, the greater the academic stress, the lower the subjective well-being of postgraduate students. However, excessive employment stress will also lead to the decrease of students' perception of subjective well-being, the loss of hope for life, and even the psychological fear and disease of undergraduates (Chen, 2019). In addition to that, interpersonal stress can reduce subjective well-being. Interpersonal relationships are an

important factor affecting the subjective well-being of undergraduates. Harmonious interpersonal relationships have a positive impact on the subjective well-being of undergraduates, while bad interpersonal relationships are likely to cause anxiety, depression, and other bad emotions (Wu & Wan, 2023). Further to that, the study of Wu et al. (2023) shows that the greater the family economic stress, the lower the current and future well-being level of junior high school students. The above related research results show that various kinds of daily stress faced by undergraduates have a certain impact on subjective well-being.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the subjective well-being of Chinese undergraduates in the post-COVID-19 era and the main factors affecting their subjective well-being. In addition, this study intends to provide answers to the following two research questions:

RQ1. What is the state of subjective well-being of Chinese undergraduates in the post-COVID-19 era?

RQ2. What are the main factors affecting the subjective well-being of Chinese undergraduates?

The research results can further explore the subjective well-being of Chinese undergraduates in the post-COVID-19 era, explore the main stress undergraduates face in daily life, and analyze the main factors affecting the subjective well-being of Chinese undergraduates. This can enable university management departments and educators to have a deeper understanding of undergraduates' mental health status, provide reference data for universities' mental health education courses and psychological counseling department. This can provide certain ideas for student education and psychological intervention under public health emergencies and enable undergraduates to understand their own subjective well-being status.

The study will contribute to the understanding of undergraduate subjective well-being of students in China and determine the factors that that impact upon the subjective well-being of Chinese undergraduate students.

The study discussed the introduction of the study in section 1. Then section 2 discussed the literature review of the study. Thereafter, section 3 outlined the method of the study. Section 4 highlighted the result before discussing the result in section 5.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theory

This study uses the interaction theory of personality and environment to support the main factors affecting the subjective well-being of university students in Hakka area of China in the post-COVID-19 period. The theory was proposed by Diener, Larsen and Emmons (1984). According to this theory, individuals experience different levels of subjective well-being. This is not only closely related to the characteristics, but also may be affected by the living environment, and the two interact to affect subjective well-being (Niu, 2020). In the post-COVID-19 era, contemporary university students are faced with a variety of more complex stresses, such as academic stress, employment stress, interpersonal stress, economic stress, etc., which have adverse effects on individual subjective well-being (Li, 2021; Yao & Xue, 2021; Wu & Wan, 2023; Wu et al., 2023). For example, the emergence of mixed online and offline teaching methods after the epidemic makes students face more complex learning methods, thus increasing their academic stress. The emergence of the epidemic has made artificial intelligence develop more rapidly, such as the emergence of robots replacing manual labor in restaurants and hospitals, which has reduced many jobs and made university students face greater employment stress; The economic impact of various industries after the epidemic has made many families face tight economic problems, and the economic income of many part-

time students also was affected. Thus, the university students are facing greater economic stress. The therefore, of these stresses may also affect the interpersonal stress of university students, and therefore affect the subjective well-being of university students. In this study, the interaction theory of personality and environment is used to explain why stress has an impact on university students' subjective well-being.

B. Academic stress

Academic stress refers to the tension, anxiety and other negative emotional experiences that students feel when they encounter bottlenecks or difficulties in the learning process, mainly from the external environment and personal expectations of one's academic abilities (Wang, 2021). As the post-COVID-19 era dawns, the hybrid teaching method combining online teaching and offline teaching has become the mainstream teaching mode in universities (Xue, Fu & Li, 2021). The flexible and diversified hybrid teaching method has a large degree of freedom. Students lacking autonomy are easily distracted and have poor learning results, which leads to greater academic stress on university students. It is easy to cause anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and other negative emotions in adolescents (Yu, 2022), thus affecting the subjective well-being of university students.

C. Employment stress

Employment stress is the internal and external stress caused by employment situation of an individual. Thus, the changes and reaction processes of individuals in physiology, and behavior is eminent (Liu, 2023). Since July 2020, Chinese government departments have formulated a series of policies on epidemic prevention and economic development, since the economy has gradually recovered. However, in the long run, the employment stress of undergraduate graduates will continue for some time, and the supply side of graduating students still maintain a strong growth trend. However, the ability to absorb undergraduate graduates for employment may be slower than the transformation of economic development mode and the transformation and upgrading of industrial structure, so that full employment cannot be achieved (Yu, 2022). Some studies have found that the greater the employment stress, the more prominent the psychological problems of undergraduate students, thus affecting the subjective well-being (Yao & Xue, 2021).

D. Interpersonal Stress

Interpersonal stress refers to the stress individuals feel in the process of interpersonal communication with others (Liu, Zhang, Liu, He & Zhu). Or a state of mind that occurs when one believes that one's needs and values are not fulfilled, or they are threatened in the course of interpersonal communication. Interpersonal stress negatively affects life satisfaction (Zhang & Luo, 2022). Previous studies have shown that bad interpersonal relationships are easy to cause depression, anxiety and other bad emotions, which may lead to depression and social phobia in severe cases, and good interpersonal relationships can improve the subjective well-being level of undergraduate students (Wu & Wan, 2023).

E. Economic stress

Economic stress is an individual's subjective assessment of their own economic situation, as well as their perceptions of economic sources, and worries, it also includes expectations of future economic conditions (Liu, 2022). Since most undergraduate students usually do not have a stable economic income during their school years, family socioeconomic status is usually used to measure the socioeconomic status of undergraduate students (Zhu & Liu, 2019). It is found that family economic stress cannot negatively predict the current happiness of junior middle school students, but also negatively predict the future well-being of junior

middle school students (Wu et al., 2023). The greater the family economic stress, the higher the level of teenagers' negative emotion and the lower their individual life satisfaction (Mistry, Benner, Tan & Kim, 2009). Family economic income is significantly and positively correlated with life satisfaction and well-being. The higher the family income, the higher the well-being of undergraduate students. (Zhang, Wei, Meng & Zhang, 2023).

III. METHODS

A. Research design

The purpose of this study is to investigate the subjective well-being of Chinese undergraduates in the post-epidemic period and the main factors affecting their well-being. After entering undergraduate life, undergraduates are faced with more and more kinds of stress, and these stresses have invisibly affected their subjective well-being. Therefore, a comprehensive and in-depth investigation is needed to understand their subjective well-being and the main factors affecting their subjective well-being. Therefore, based on the following reasons, this study chooses the qualitative research method to conducted a face-to-face interview :

(a) Subjective well-being is a very popular research topic, but the social environment in different periods determines that undergraduates have different well-being states, so it is unique and innovative to choose Jiaying University undergraduates as research objects in the post-epidemic period.

(b) Interview is a low-cost research method, and face-to-face one-on-one interviews with respondents can provide a deeper understanding of the well-being of undergraduates in the post-pandemic period while ensuring their privacy.

B. Participants

A total of 20 interviewees (8 male interviewees and 12 female interviewees) are selected from Jiaying University in Guangdong Province, China, ranging in age from 18 to 23, freshman to senior, and from various disciplines and majors.

C. Data Collection

This study collected data using convenience sampling techniques in identified target groups. According to the collected data, this paper collates and analyzes to understand the subjective well-being status and main influencing factors of Chinese students. We randomly interviewed 20 students of different majors from different faculty, and designed interview questions in advance. The interview questions can be divided into five categories (see Table 1).

Table 1. The different parts of interview questions.

Part	Description
A	Respondents' Demographic
B	Influencing factors of subjective well-being
C	Current status of academic stress
D	Current status of employment stress
E	Current status of interpersonal stress
F	Current status of economic stress

Source: Developed for this research

D. Procedure

Contact the interviewees in advance, highlighting the importance of participating in the research. After the interviewees accept the interview, the designed questions will be sent to the interviewees in paper form in advance, so that they can be familiar with the interview questions in advance and agree with the interviewees on the interview date and place. The

data collection period was from February 2023 to March 2023. All respondents were interviewed anonymously in the office of the school administration, and each interview was conducted on a one-to-one basis. The interview process is as follows: First, the interviewees introduce themselves, including their age and major; Secondly, the respondents were asked designed questions, which were answered according to their personal situation, and the relevant interview contents were recorded. Finally, all interview contents are classified and summarized, and relevant analysis is carried out.

IV. RESULTS

Results were arrived at from the research conducted and the interview that was carried out in the conduct of the research study. The research found that most of the interviewee have a degree of subjective well-being of undergraduates at the middle or lower level, and most interviewees believe that there are many influencing factors that can affect their own subjective well-being. Among these influencing factors, various stresses from daily life have more influence on the subjective well-being of undergraduates. This study identified subjective influencing factors that has the highest mention rate. These are academic stress, interpersonal stress, employment stress and economic stress.

A. Demographic Profile

Undergraduates from Jiaying University were selected as the research objects in this study. A total of 20 Undergraduates participated in one-on-one face-to-face interviews, and the interview time for each subject was 30-40 minutes. The subjects of respondents include humanities, education, arts, social Sciences, engineering, etc. The demographic profiles of respondents are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Respondent profile.

Items	Description	Frequency	Percent (%)
gender	Male	8	40%
	female	12	60%
Grade	First year	3	15%
	Second year	5	25%
	Third year	7	35%
	Fourth year	5	25%
Residence	Rural	14	70%
	Urban	6	30%
Subject	Humanities	4	20%
	Education	2	10%
	Arts	3	15%
	Social Sciences	1	5%
	Science	2	10%
	Law	1	5%
Subject	Engineering	3	15%
	Psychology	2	10%
	Business Administration	2	10%

Source: Developed for this research

B. Academic stress

In conducting the interviews with 20 undergraduate students, half of them said they faced a lot of academic stress, The main reasons are too much homework, weak foundation, inadaptability to various teaching methods, etc. These stresses lead to students' negative

emotions and thus affect their subjective well-being (Hamiti, 2023). The other of the students said they used music, sports and talk to relieve negative emotions and bring well-being when faced with great stress. This is consistent with previous research. Moderate stress helps individuals adapt to the surrounding environment, but too much stress can have adverse effects on the body and mind, leading to anxiety and other psychological problems, and reduce individual well-being. (Ni & Wang, 2023).

C. Interpersonal stress

Undergraduates' subjective well-being is easily affected by interpersonal relationships, including friends and family relationships. Student relations and relations with teachers and students, etc. Among the undergraduates interviewed, 13 interviewees said they had no interpersonal stress, but 7 interviewees said they faced great interpersonal stress. When interpersonal stress is high, they have a lower sense of collective belonging, experience fewer positive things than those with low interpersonal stress, and thus have a lower sense of happiness (Wu & Wan, 2023). Harmonious interpersonal relationship can improve the subjective well-being of undergraduates (Wang, 2019).

D. Employment stress

Twelve of the 20 interviewees said they faced a lot of employment stress. In addition, third - and fourth-year students have more employment stress than first - and second-year students. The reason is the poor national economic situation in the post-COVID-19 period, the lack of solid professional knowledge, and the lack of good family background and social contacts. Faced with the severe employment situation, undergraduates inevitably have strong pessimism, which affects their subjective well-being (Wang, 2018).

E. Economic stress

After conducting the interview with the 20 undergraduate respondents, 14 out of them said that they don't have any Economic stress, but 6 out of them said that they are faced with economic stresses, which is mainly due to the low economic income of their families and the low education level of their parents. The greater the family economic stress, the higher the level of current negative emotion experienced by the adolescents, and the lower the current life satisfaction (Wu, Gai, Li, Gu & Wang, 2023), thus affecting subjective well-being. Previous studies have shown that adolescents' subjective well-being is positively correlated with their family socioeconomic status (Ou, Feng, Luo & Wu, 2022), and family socioeconomic status is a positive environmental factor affecting undergraduate students' subjective well-being (Zhao, Huang & Chen, 2019).

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the analysis conducted, subjective well-being of undergraduates in the post-COVID-19 period is relatively low, and the main factors affecting the subjective well-being of the undergraduates include academic stress, interpersonal stress, employment stress and economic stress. Based on the above findings, Research results are usually different in different situations. Therefore, the stress of undergraduates in different learning stages has certain timeliness. The study suggested that future research can explore horizontal research, and also distinguish groups from the perspectives of grade and serving as student leaders. Experimental methods, survey methods, qualitative research, intervention research and other research methods can also be used to study the subjective well-being of undergraduates and the influence of different factors on their well-being, so as to better explore the crucial impact of different variables on the undergraduates' subjective well-being. Due to the large individual differences among undergraduates, the influencing factors of everyone's subjective well-

being are also different, and the same individuals have different perceptions of stress at different stages. The student management departments in universities should pay great attention to the subjective well-being of undergraduates, improve their mental health through group counseling and training, guide them to actively cope with the stress and challenges in life, and improve their ability to resist stress and subjective well-being.

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