

The Relationship between the Degree of Urban Development and Human Happiness

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Abstract—This paper analyzes the relationship between the degree of urban development and human happiness comparing Shanghai with Anqing. In order to make people happier and build a pleasing city which can provide people with more security and more comfortable environment, a survey via questionnaires was conducted in 2017 among residents in Shanghai and Anqing respectively. Through the detailed statistical analysis from the result of questionnaire survey, we find the degree of human happiness in Anqing is higher than that in Shanghai. It is of great significance in studying human existence and sustainability.

Keywords—*human happiness, urban development, Shanghai, Anqing*

I. INTRODUCTION

As the British Philosopher Humeonce said, “The great goal of all people’s endeavor is to attain happiness”[1]. And Daniel Kahneman, a famous professor at Princeton University, believes that happiness is the ultimate goal and motivation of human behavior[2]. Throughout history, the pursuit of happiness is the eternal theme of human life. Since the industrial revolution[3], human society has experienced the fastest economic growth. People felt that the growth of economy led to a drop in happiness levels in face of the rapid increase of wealth, and began to reflect the index—Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that measures all aspects of the whole society probably because of environmental pollution and energy shortages causing uncomfortable living environment for people. The study and measurement of well-being were promoted by many sociologists and economists, and the connotation and manifestation of the human well-being were revealed. A report published by Economic Vision indicated that happiness was only a comprehensive indicator, reflecting the overall progress of society and the all-round development of the individual[2]. Apart from economy, they are also related to individual culture, psychology, personality, emotion, thought, experience, spirit, consciousness and other factors, affecting the degree of human happiness. Furthermore, we give the definition of happiness here: happiness is the level of assessment of the overall quality of life, in other words, how much people love their lives [4].

Since 1960s, the abroad study of happiness has started. The review written by Vanner and Wilison was a symbol, which mainly focused on the concept of rationality, sensibility, Christianity and utilitarian happiness, and involved social, economy, environment and so on in 1967[1]. In 2002, the

psychological professor at the Prince university, Neil Kahneman, one of the Nobel laureates in economics, advocated “Gross National happiness scale”[1]. He thought that “happiness index” can become the standard of measuring the development level of a country as “Gross Domestic Product”.

Nowadays, many researches have pointed out that GDP can’t measure the degree of human happiness, because the degree of human happiness is a sophisticated system with multilayered and multidimensionality and the date on happiness came from self-reports of individuals’ feelings of well-being, and each person is free to define happiness as she or he sees it[5]. Moreover, GDP is limited to a single economic dimension, the per capital output of goods and services. Finally, happiness, unlike GDP, is a measure with which most people can identify.

With the continuous development of science and technology, advanced transportation and various intelligent household appliances have brought a lot of convenience to people’s life and have improved people’s quality of life. Furthermore, social welfare security system, social justice, employment, education and other aspects have been improved and enhanced. However, the modern generation is unsatisfied with their present life and they usually feel stressful and unpleasant because they have to face the great competitive pressure in employment and the housing problem in big cities [6][7]. Therefore, the topic of human happiness is increasingly concerned and studied by more and more experts.

The purpose of this article is to study the relationship between the degree of urban development and human happiness by means of questionnaire survey in different cities. From the result of questionnaire survey, we can research the relationship between the degree of urban development and human happiness, analyze the reasons and give some practical suggestions.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Background

Shanghai is the largest central city in China and it is one of the greatest metropolitan in the world. Shanghai possesses the developed economy, convenient transportation, advanced technology and prosperous trade. In 2015, the GDP of Shanghai was 2.51 trillion yuan and per capital GDP was 10.38 million yuan.

Anqing is located in the southwest of Anhui province and it is one of the central cities, especially a famous national historical cultural city and an excellent tourist place. In 2015, the GDP of Anqing was 1.61 trillion yuan and per capital GDP was 2.98 million yuan.

In conclusion, although we don't show the enough evidence to illustrate the degree of development of two cities here, we can't deny that Shanghai is more developed and advanced than Anqing from the economic prosperity of the cities in all aspects.

B. Participants

A standard questionnaire was sent randomly to different people, which was responded by 300 persons. Half of them are in Shanghai and the others are in Anqing. Among the respondents, males account for 42.11% and females account for 57.89% in Shanghai while 56.86% and 43.14% in Anqing. In regard to age, people under 18 years old are 1.32% in Shanghai and 1.31% in Anqing and ranging from 18 to 27 are 55.26% in Shanghai and 88.24% in Anqing. In addition, people between the ages of 27 to 40 are 20.39% and 9.8% in Shanghai and Anqing respectively. And people over 40 are 21.05% and over 60 are 1.97% in Shanghai. On the contrary, only 0.65% people are over 40 in Anqing.

C. Procedure

In this paper, we study the relationship between the degree of urban development and human happiness through questionnaires which are comprised of 39 questions designed for anonymous response.

In 2006, White, a professor in the University of Leicester, suggested that "happiness index" was related to health, wealth and education[1]. In 2013, Columbia University issued a report named "2013 Global Happiness Index", and it involved education, health, environment, inclusiveness, inner happiness and living standards. Chinese scholars studied the domestic happiness index since 1980, including variety of fields such as economy, psychology and sociology [8][9][10][11].

According to the above explanation, we study the "happiness index" based on economy, culture, ecology and social construction. The questionnaire context involving the urban satisfaction of individuals, the realization satisfaction of self-value, the present life satisfaction of persons and the degree of happiness was established to collect the data.

Questionnaires are comprised of 39 questions designed for anonymous responses including gender, age, occupation, academic background and satisfaction with city and life. Q1 to Q6 intended to know respondents' basic information referring to gender, occupation, age, and education. Q7 to Q10 attempted to know the respondents' satisfaction with the municipal infrastructure construction. Q11 to Q35 aimed to measure satisfaction with personal life and internal needs. Subjective well-being was investigated in Q36 to Q39.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We divided this context into five small parts because the questionnaire has too many questions compared with the general to make readers clearer and easier to understand.

A. Basic introduction of the questionnaire

The respondents of questionnaire are consisted of 42.11% males and 57.89% females in Shanghai while 56.86% males and 43.14% females in Anqing respectively. In Shanghai, 36.84% are married and 61.18% are unmarried, along with minority of people, 1.97% are divorced. In Anqing, 12.42% are married and 87.58% are unmarried. Besides that, the one thing is that nearly same percent of two cities' respondents are not local people. In Shanghai, people have different educational backgrounds. There are 11.18% of people even without bachelor degree and 24.34% with bachelor degree. Majority of people, 51.32%, are masters and 7.89% are doctors. But in Anqing, most of people, 65.36%, are undergraduates and 14.38% are of masters' degree.

B. The Satisfaction of the Urban Development Factors

TABLE I. SUMMARY OF SATISFACTION WITH THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Items	Shanghai	Anqing
<i>The satisfaction with urban economic development</i>		
Satisfied	32.89%	11.76%
Indifferent	63.16%	66.01%
Unsatisfied	3.95%	22.22%
<i>The satisfaction with urban security</i>		
Satisfied	63.82%	23.53%
Indifferent	35.53%	67.97%
Unsatisfied	0.66%	8.5%
<i>The satisfaction with urban sanitation</i>		
Satisfied	41.45%	22.22%
Indifferent	55.26%	65.36%
Unsatisfied	3.29%	12.42%
<i>The satisfaction with urban medical services</i>		
Satisfied	32.89%	16.99%
Indifferent	59.21%	73.86%
Unsatisfied	7.89%	9.15%

Table I indicates people's acceptance to their own urban development including economy, security, sanitation and health care in two cities. Through the comparison of data collected, we sum up that the four aspects of Shanghai are more advanced than those of Anqing and it is in agreement with our previous assumption. It also means that the objective

conditions of human happiness have something to do with infrastructure construction and various facilities.

We also find that 43.42% of the people in Shanghai are high-salary which is three times as much as that in Anqing, which is applied to the analysis of the questionnaire. But almost of people (65.79% in Shanghai and 78.43% in Anqing) in both cities are not content with their income. We also acknowledge that 61.84% of people in Shanghai are keen to their jobs while 38.16% dislike their jobs. To our surprise, almost half of them in Anqing are bored with their jobs.

C. The Satisfaction of Some Aspects about Life

TABLE II. SUMMARY OF SOME FACTORS ABOUT LIFE SATISFACTION

Items	Positive		
	Shanghai		Anqing
Lifestyle	63.82%	>	47.71%
Tired	63.16%	<	49.02%
Fulfillment	71.05%	>	52.29%
Plans	65.79%	>	58.17%
Promotion	37.5%	---	37.25%
Freedom	56.58%	<	60.78%
Success	20.39%	---	20.26%
Pressure	32.89%	---	32.68%
Sports	52.63%	---	51.63%
Reading	66.45%	>	54.25%
Activities	28.29%	<	41.83%
Relationship	94.74%	>	89.54%

^a. explanation: The sign of ">" means that the correspondent condition in Shanghai is better than Anqing; the sign of "<" means that the correspondent condition in Shanghai is worse than Anqing. The sign of " --- " means that the correspondent condition in Shanghai is consistent with Anqing.

Q11 to Q35 are summarized in Table II. The leftmost items mean that some factors about life satisfaction and the expression of Positive in Table II means that respondents satisfy with their conditions. For example, the word "tired" is stand for a question: Are you feel tired in your daily life? And the answer is that 63.16% of people in Shanghai are tired with their lives while 49.02% of people in Anqing. Those items including lifestyle, fulfillment, plans, reading and relationship in Shanghai are better than those in Anqing. But two items, tired and activities, in Shanghai are worse than those in Anqing.

In general, on the one hand, the respondents in Shanghai are more satisfied with their lifestyles, more willing to make plans due to fast pace of life in order to finish the jobs punctually and more like reading in their spare time because of working requirements possibly. On the other hand, people in Shanghai are more tired and unavoidably do something that they are reluctant to do as a result of the intense competition and work stress so as to less activities.

D. Factors of Happiness Interested by People

Since we have learned that not everyone is happy, now, we should explore what the main reasons can make people enjoyable. We got some factors most valued by respondents such as doing something which you love, having a mental and physical health and getting along well with families and friends. Fig. 1 shows that most of people think good health and happy family are the most important.

Accordingly, we promote that people should do some sports regularly to keep fit, communicate more with families and accompany them on holidays rather than work. Parents had better encourage children to insist on something that they are interested in. Only everyone has a healthy mindset and attitude to everything happening in our lives can we be happier and happier.

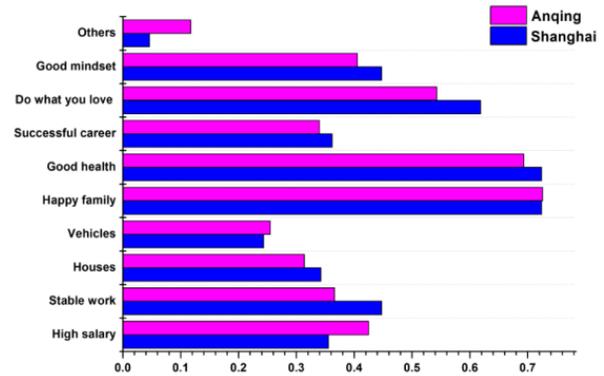


Fig. 1. Factors of happiness

IV. FINAL RESULT

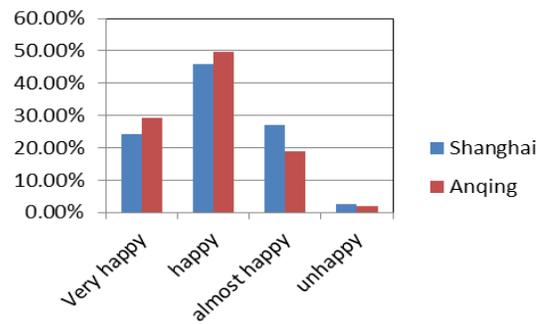


Fig. 2. Statistical findings

In accordance with Fig. 2, it shows that 24.34% of people in Shanghai and 29.41% of people in Anqing are really very happy with their lives. 46.05% of people in Shanghai and 49.67% of people in Anqing are happy. On the contrary, 26.97% in Shanghai and 18.95% in Anqing are almost happy respectively. There are 2.63% of people in Shanghai and 1.96% of people in Anqing who are painful and bored with their situations. They feel unhappy with their lives. Thus, it is not difficult to find that people in Anqing are happier than those in Shanghai even though the hardware facilities in Shanghai are better than those in Anqing.

From our perspective, there are several reasons for this result. Firstly, people in Shanghai haven't enough leisure time to relax themselves due to fierce competition and work pressure, leading to excessive physical and mental strain so as to cause some diseases. Secondly, people are so acquainted and far-sighted in Shanghai because of the influence of this city that they have higher demands on their lives and careers, but it is cruel that most of their desires don't come true in the real world.

Although many factors result in this consequence that people in Anqing are happier than those in Shanghai, some practical suggestions should taken in Anqing such as raising awareness of life-long learning and focusing on personal inner needs and spiritual development, broadening world views and so on. With respect to Shanghai, people need to cultivate the ability to adapt to nervous and fast atmosphere quickly, learn how to keep balanced between work and life and learn how to measure gains and losses.

In addition, both of the local governments should immediately revise and improve the related social regulations and systems such as social security system, pension insurance system, housing allowance, employment equality, etc. Besides, people are responsible for their individual development like keeping reading, doing some exercises, and participating in all kinds of courses to enrich their intrinsic value. Above all, it would be great if people have positive attitudes toward world and life all the time.

V. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study is to explore that what kind of city is suitable for human to live happily, comfortably, safely, healthily and sustainably. In light of this paper, we make a bold conclusion that it can't show the more advanced urban development is, the more pleasant people are because happiness closely links with various subjective factors. However, people weren't pleasure and happy without good infrastructures and economic fundamentals.

Overall, we can't decide what kind of city is appropriate for people to live. It is worth to say that people are unity of natural and social in essence and their demands for material and immaterial are diverse. They have internal and external demands. For one thing, happiness is a kind of subjective feeling that is influenced by one's own world outlook, philosophy and values system. People wouldn't be happy to a large extent when they have the problem of food and clothing. For another, people's life becomes more and more prosperous and the level of life improves increasingly with the development of economy as well as all aspects of society. It can't be denied that the advancement of science and technology such as artificial intelligence (AI) makes people's lives easier and more convenient. But one thing that human being is born with desire should not be ignored, and people

will pursue the spiritual satisfaction after the life condition can be met.

In my opinion, the urban development and the degree of human happiness have no necessary connection according to the above analysis, but the city must be developed and more suitable to live on condition that people are very happy and content with their lives. To some extent, this paper has significance in guiding how to build a satisfying and sustainable city and push people to think that how to keep balanced between human happiness and urban development.

Although the questionnaire of this study refers to almost every aspect, it still has many limitations. Hence the results of the study should be treated with caution. Further research is recommended to analyze, on a large and more balanced scale, the relationship between the degree of urban development and conditions of human happiness.

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