

The Quality of life and Positive Psychology

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Abstract:

Psychologists have, for a long time, neglected the positive aspects of personality, and all their focus has been on the negative ones, until recently the focus on studying the quality of life, and its associated dimensions and variables, has been stressed in positive psychology. The latter is the field that emerged to stress the scientists' emphasis on the importance of adopting a positive view when looking at life instead of the exaggerated focus that psychologists have given to the negative aspects, in order to present a new scientific trend focusing on human capabilities and aspects of strengths and virtues, which have an effective role in developing positive traits of human beings. Therefore, through this study, we will attempt to shed light on the concept of quality of life and addressing the role of positive psychology in achieving the quality of life.

Keywords : Quality of Life; Positive Psychology.

ملخص:

لقد أغفل علماء النفس ولفترة طويلة الجوانب الايجابية في الشخصية وكان كل الاهتمام بالجوانب السلبية، إلى أن ظهر مؤخرا في مجال علم النفس الايجابي الاهتمام بدراسة جودة الحياة وما يرتبط بها من أبعاد ومتغيرات، وهو المجال الذي جاء استجابة لتأكيد العلماء على أهمية تبني نظرة ايجابية عند النظر إلى الحياة كبديل للتركيز المفرط الذي أولاه علماء النفس للجوانب السلبية منها، ليقدم اتجاهها علميا جديدا يركز على الامكانيات البشرية وجوانب القوى والفضائل الانسانية، التي لها

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دور فعال في تنمية الخصال الايجابية في الانسان. وعليه فإننا نحاول من خلال هذا المقال تسليط الضوء على تحديد مفهوم جودة الحياة والكشف عن دور علم النفس الايجابي في تحقيق جودة الحياة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جودة الحياة-علم النفس الإيجابي.

- Introduction:

Positive psychology is considered as the preventive and curative approach to discover and develop human abilities, including prevention and treatment of an illness, so long as it focuses on the strengths of personality rather than weaknesses, and on opportunities rather than obstacles. Therefore, the researcher in this broad field finds a variety of topics which, although they seem to be different, still leads to the same goal, namely the human development. This scientific intervention sheds light on the topic of quality of life and the role of positive psychology in activating the individual's life. In the same context, the quality of life is a multi-dimensional and relative concept that its meaning differs from one person to another according to the criteria they adopt to evaluate one's life and its needs, which are often affected by many factors; such as, the ability to think, the ability make decisions, the ability to control, the ability to manage the surrounding pressures, physical and mental health, economic conditions, religious beliefs, and cultural values through which the individual determines the most important things that bring them quality and happiness in life. What follows are some of the definitions of some researchers who are interested in the topic of quality of life, its dimensions, then comes the focus on the integrative perspective and the Arab perception of the quality of life in particular; and after that comes the presentation of a point, as important as the previous one, which is measuring the quality of life, and finally the way how to improve the quality of life through positive psychology.

1- Concepts and Definitions:

1-1 **Quality (linguistically):** the word quality (الجودة) in the Arabic dictionary is derived from the verb (جود) which means to make good and (وجداد الشيء جودة) means to become good. (ابن منظور، 1993:215).

1-2 **Quality of life (conventionally):** There have been many definitions that have dealt with the concept of quality of life, the most important of which are the following -mentioned according to their chronological order :

- The quality of life is the quality degree of the material and social services provided to members of society, and the extent to which these individuals are aware of the ability of services to satisfy their different needs, and it is also stated that the individual cannot be aware of the quality of the services provided to him in isolation from the individuals with whom he interacts (friends, colleagues, siblings, relatives and others). That is to say, the quality of life is related to the physical and psychosocial environment in which they live (عادل الأشول، 2005: 11).
- In another definition, the quality of life is self-feelings of personal happiness, self-satisfaction, and being satisfied with the important aspects of a person's life, and this happiness is the result of a person's self-esteem, which is the basic thing when judging the quality of life (أبو سريع وآخرون، 2006).
- Al-Khanji (2006) adds that quality of life can have different meanings. it can mean living at the highest level of material well-being for some people while living in safety and sufficiency for others, as long as individuals have their own experiences and characters, as well as their environment and surroundings and how they affect the role of the quality of life and the way how it can be reached
- (خالد محمد الخنجي، 2006: 29)

After mentioning the various definitions of the quality of life, according to different researchers. The dimensions of the quality of life will be addressed in the following part.

2- Dimensions of quality of life: in the same context, the researchers differed in identifying the dimensions of the quality of life which are addressed according to each researcher as follows:

HananMagdi (2009) adds that there are three dimensions to the quality of life, which are as follows.

- **Objective quality of life:** which represents the material support provided by society, in addition to the personal social life of the individual.
- **Subjective quality of life:** which means how each individual feels about his/ her own good life or how satisfied with it, and then comes the feeling of happiness as a result.
- **Existential quality of life:** it means the depth of a good life within the individual, and through which a harmonious life can be lived. And this leads to the ideal level of satisfying his biological and psychological needs, as well as living in harmony with the ideas and religious values of their society.(حنان مجدي، 2009: 63)

According to Abu Sareeh and others (2006), the quality of life is based on the integration of objective and subjective indicators of personal happiness, taking into account that the impact of objective aspects depends on self-assessment. Thus, to measure the objective aspects, the existing or available status is compared with the minimum standards of living status. They also stated that the quality of life, which is a multidimensional concept, covers at least five areas:

- Physical satisfaction
- Material satisfaction
- Social Satisfaction
- Emotional satisfaction
- Personal Activity.(أبو سريع وآخرون، 2006: 206)

Wider et al (2003) states that it is conventionally known that there are four main dimensions of the quality of life:

- **Physical dimension:** it is related to diseases which have to do with symptoms.

- **Functional dimension:** it is related to the medical care and the level of physical activity.
- **Social dimension:** it is specific to communication and social interaction with the surroundings.
- **Psychological dimension:** it is related to cognitive functions, emotional state, the general perception of health, psychological health, life satisfaction, and happiness. (Wider et All,2003).

And Jackson Graig, A(2010) labeled the dimensions of the quality of life as (the 03 Bs), which are as follows:

- Being
- Belonging
- Becoming

In the same context, the two students displayed a table for more detail on '3Bs' as developed by (2010) A, Jackson Graig

Table No. 01: Dimensions of Quality of Life details by A, Jackson Graig

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The field	Sub dimensions	Examples
Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - physicalBeing - PsychologicalBeing - Spiritual Being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a- Physical ability to move and do motor activities. b- Nutrition methods and types of food available. c- Freedom from anxiety and stress. d- The individual's mood (comfort/discomfort). e- Having hope for the future. f- The individual's own ideas of right and wrong.
Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Physical Belonging - Social Belonging - Community Belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a- The place where the individual lives b- The individual's own ideas of what is right and wrong. c- Approach to the members of the family in which the individual lives. d- Having close friends or friends (strong social relations network) e- Availability of opportunities to obtain specialized professional services (medical, social, etc.) f- Financial security.
Becoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leisure Entertainment - Growth Becoming - Partial Becoming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a- Outdoor recreational activities (hiking ...) b- Recreational activities at home (media and entertainment). c- Improving physical and psychological efficiency. d- The ability to cope with changes and life challenges. e- Doing things around the house. f- Having a job, or going to school.

The dimensions of the quality of life have been identified in detail so far in the previous part, but the following part will be devoted to the theoretical interpretation of the

quality of life through the integrative perspective quality of life and the Arab perspective. Therefore, the two participated students preferred to choose them since they are the most comprehensive among all the theories of the quality of life.

3- Integrative perspective on the quality of life: This perspective is detailed as follows:

Anderson theory (2003): Anderson put forward an integral explanation of the concept of quality of life by taking into consideration the concepts of happiness, the meaning of life, the biological information system, realizing life, and the fulfillment of needs, as well as other objective factors, as an integrative theoretical framework for the interpretation of quality of life.

Anderson stated that an individual's perception of life makes him personally evaluate what is going on around him, and enables him to construe ideas that lead to life satisfaction. He also pointed out that there are three combined attributes that lead to the feeling of quality of life. They are as follows:

- The ideas related to the personal goal that the individual wants to achieve.
- The existential meaning that describes the relationship between ideas and objectives.
- Personality and inner depth. (Ventegodt, 2003: 14)

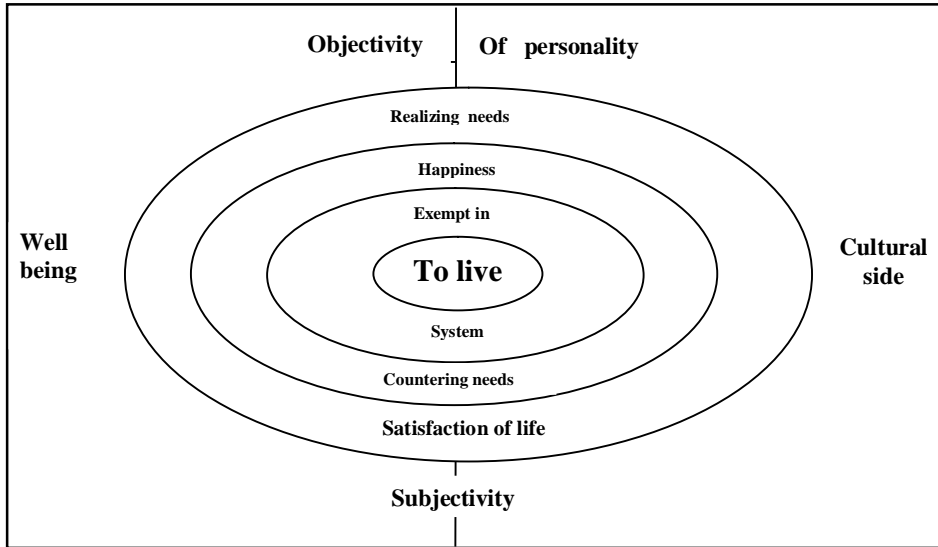
In the light of these attributes, the integrative perspective theory sets out the following indicators of the quality of life:

- A- It is the feeling of satisfaction that indicates the quality of life, and this feeling is achieved by the following:
- Setting realistic goals that can be achieved.
 - We are seeking to change the reality which is around us, according to our goals.
- B- Satisfying needs does not necessarily lead to the individual's satisfaction and to the sense of the quality of life, as long as it is a relative thing that varies according to individuals and their different cultures.

C- Exploiting one's capacity for creative activities, good social relationships, meaningful goals, as well as the family, which makes one feel the meaning of life, makes the individual feel the sense of the quality of life. (Anderson, 2003: 27)

Accordingly, the following figure illustrates the concept of the quality of life:

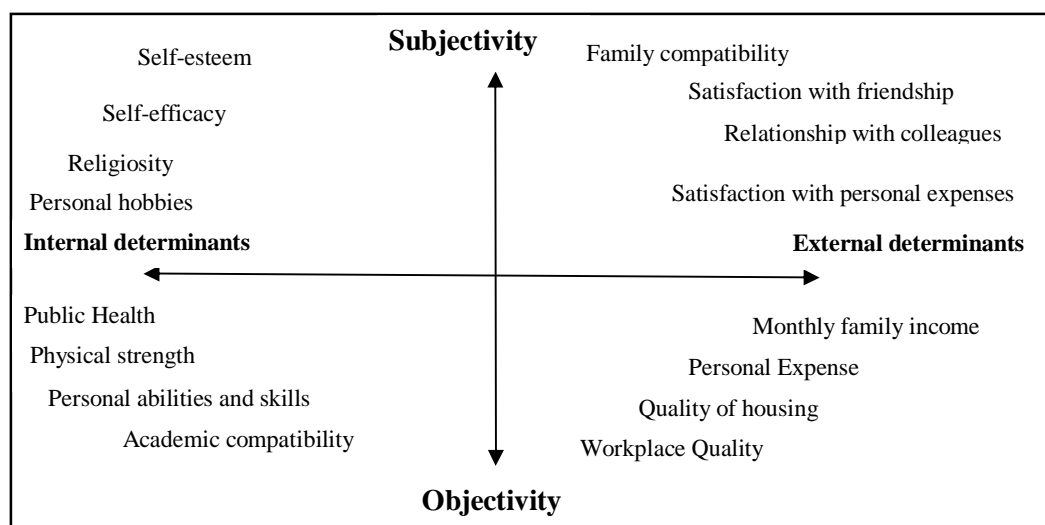
Figure (01): Integrative Perspective on the Quality of Life.



Author's translation, Source: (729:2010، بشرى عناد مبارك)

4- The Arab Theoretical Model of Quality of Life: Abu Sareeh and others (2006) presented a model for measuring and interpreting the quality of life-based on classifying the variables affecting the quality of life, which are displayed in two perpendicular dimensions, as shown in the figure below:

Figure(02): Abu Sareeh and others' vision of the variables of quality of life



Author's translation, Source: (730:2010 ، بشرى عناد مبارك)

After addressing the Integrative Perspective and The Arab Theoretical Model of Quality of Life, we will discuss another point, which is not less important than what has been mentioned so far.

5- Measuring the quality of life: we discuss this point by going through the following elements:

5-1- General measures of the quality of life: they are as follows:

5-1-1- (MOS-SF-36) for measuring the quality of life(the shorted form): it is one the most common measures which is not specific to a particular category, and it is one of The International Quality of Life Assessment (IQOLA) projects.

5-1-2- The World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL): It is a globally used instrument that is part of an ambitious project of the World Health Organization (OMS), which in turn aim sat building an instrument of measuring that takes into consideration the diversity of cultures and the possibility of global comparisons.

The World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL) consists of 100 items. This is the detailed form, and the latest shorted form consists of 26 items, which were prepared and adapted in 15 countries under the supervision of the World Health Organization. The WHOQOL-100 produces scores relating to six facets of quality of life which are: physical

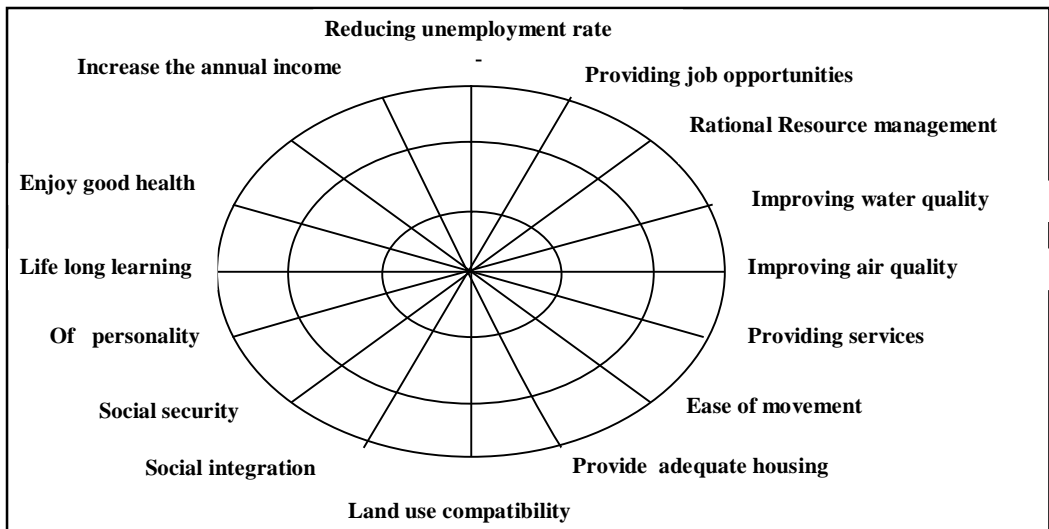
health, mental health, social relations, surroundings, and the spiritual aspect. The WHOQOL-26 produces scores relating to four facets: physical health, mental health, social relations, and surroundings. The WHOQOL-26 (WHOQOL-BREF) is characterized by high satisfactory psychometric properties.

It should also be noted that there are several measures of the quality of life that are characterized by high psychometric properties, including PQWS, IAD2, and SIP.

5-2 Specialized measures of the quality of life: These are the specialized measures prepared for special and sensitive clinical communities (cancer, heart, insomnia, and joint pain patients... Etc.), which are used to accurately measure the impact of a particular disease, the impact of treatment methods or the pathological development on the quality of life of the patients. (72:2009، الأخضر عمران،)

After defining the concept of the quality of life in the context of the field of psychological measurement by discussing the measures of the quality of life, it is clear that the quality of life is a concept that requires a careful and comprehensive measure of the different facets of the individual's life so that the result is objective and accurate tone. Therefore, the researcher preferred to present the following figure, which shows the various facets that should be considered when measuring the quality of life.

Figure (03): Quality of Life Measurements.



Author's translation, Source:(93:2014 ، مريم شيخي)

Last but not least, the two students consider to discuss a point, that is regarded as the Key one in this research paper, which is how to achieve the quality of life through positive psychology.

6- Realizing the quality of life through positive psychology: Positive psychology attempts to achieve the individual's quality of life by suggesting a set of concepts that enrich the science itself as well as being considered as factors to achieve the quality of life. They are mentioned as follows:

6-1- Fostering self-realization and self-image: The concept of self is the individual's judgment of his/herself, and assessing it, its abilities, objectives, and personal merit.

The notion of self consists of a set of factors, the most important of which are: role identification, status identification, social norms, social interaction, language, and social relations.

Seeking to achieve self-realization is the ultimate goal for human beings, and this is what clarifies the relationship between self-realization and the quality of life. (حنان مجدي، 2009)

6-2-Satisfying needs as an essential component of quality of life: Many researchers believe that the essence of the quality of life topic lies in the study of what is satisfactory to human needs, and the economic theory of human requirements.

These human needs and requirements are classified into five gradual levels according to their priority as follows:

- Physiological needs.
- Safety needs.
- Affiliation (Belonging) needs.
- Social needs.
- Self-esteem needs. (العارف بالله الغندور، 1999)

6-3- Fostering positive attitudes towards one's life: The concept of the meaning of life is very important, and Frankel considers that this concept must have meaning under all

circumstances and that this meaning in its turn is under continuous change, but it always exists. Frankel sees that the individual can discover that meaning in their life through three different ways which are as follows:

- Doing something new or looking for something to do.
- Trying some experiences and skills such as doing good, charity, and beauty.
- Meeting with some with high individuation (self-transcendence).

He identified three values through which one can achieve the meaningfulness of life.

These values are as follows:

- **Creative values:** It is about what an individual can get from sensory and moral experiences, as well as what can be obtained through experiencing beauty, or attempts to search for the truth, or getting into relationships such as love and friendship.
- **Experiential Values:** It focuses on relationships—relating to other people, life, and nature with openness and appreciation. This is consistent with the existential theme of being free and open in relating to the world around us. We can find meaning through experiencing beauty, truth, and love, if we are spiritually attuned and meaning minded.
- **Attitudinal Value:** This is all about the attitudes that a person takes towards the suffering that can be faced, such as eating, disease, or death. This value applies to find meaning in times of suffering. One can relate to suffering in a positive way by taking a defiant attitude to confront it, and then finding positive meaning in the negative experience. (حنان مجدي، 77-2009:76)

6-4-Social relationships and social support: Good relationships are one of the most important sources of happiness, such as being married to a good woman, having good friends, having a good relationship with the family members, relatives, co-workers, neighbors, and perhaps one needs to do social skills training that leads to happiness.

In the Kosteky and Lempersstudy (1998), which aimed to identify the impact of family social support on life satisfaction, well-being, and self-realization as the dimensions to measure mental health in a sample of adolescents. The results indicated a negative

correlation between family pressures and negative social support, and between well-being and life satisfaction. (حنان مجدي، 80-2009:79)

6-5- Life satisfaction: Life satisfaction involves a favorable attitude towards one's life rather than an assessment of current feelings. It depends on the comparison of one's own life circumstances to the level that is believed to be ideal. The topic of life satisfaction, as well as the aspects related to it, is regarded as a topic of interest to the psychological health professionals and the mental health ones. In addition, the sense of life satisfaction is considered as an important indicator of good mental health, and thus life satisfaction makes the individual enjoy life and has more desire for life. (مجدي الدسوقي، 1998:158)

In addition to that, World Health Organization (WHO) also describes life satisfaction as an individual's beliefs about life status, goals, expectations, standards, and interests in the light of the cultural context and the values of the society. Thus, this is a broad definition that involves the physical health and mental health, autonomy, social relations, and one's relationship with all components of the environment. (حنان مجدي، 2009:80)

6-6-Psychological hardiness: hardiness is defined as a personality structure comprising the three related general dispositions of commitment, control, and challenge that functions as a resistance resource in encounters with stressful conditions. Thus, it helps provide the motivation needed to turn stressful circumstances into opportunities for personal growth and to live within such conditions successfully.

6-7- Religiosity: religiosity is one of the important factors that influence one's life satisfaction, and religion can be regarded as a value to get the meaningfulness of life, to encounter stress, and to face the suffering. (حنان مجدي، 85: 2009)

6-8- Happiness: happiness is the ability of an individual to have a sense of life satisfaction, self-satisfaction, and being satisfied with others, enjoying life, and expressing positive feelings.

Happiness is a state of fun, joy, and satisfaction that is achieved by satisfying one's motives, and it can reach the level of psychological satisfaction, and thus emotional one that leads to self-realization. Besides, a sense of happiness affects an individual's mental and

physical health. What's more, a sense of happiness is influenced by several things, which are personality integration, self-acceptance, life satisfaction, in times of pressures and suffering. In addition, the sense of happiness is also achieved through loving and interacting positively with them, and by getting into new relationships. Thus, the sense of happiness is a significant part of the individual's sense of life satisfaction, both psychologically or socially. (حنان مجدي، 2009: 87-86)

6-9- Orientation future: future anxiety is one of the types of anxiety. It threatens the individual's life. It is defined as the fear of the unknown caused by the past and present experiences, which makes the individual feel insecure and in risk, and thus instability. This situation may cause some pessimism and despair that may lead to a serious strike, such as depression and serious neuropsychiatric disorders.

The individual often thinks of the future; that is to say, an unknown reality, thus being in a state of constant anxiety and fear. Therefore, the individual must have self-confidence, think only of the present, and be prepared for what is expected to encounter it. One must also be optimist, and realize that one can live this life and achieve a lot of things, and then the quality of life. (محمد الهنداوي، 2011:49)

7- CONCLUSION:

After addressing the topic of the quality of life according to the elements that are considered to be of importance in giving an insight into the topic comprehensively and accurately, we consider providing some recommendations which are as follows:

- The necessity of scientific research interest in the topic of the quality of life both at the theoretical and practical levels.
- The necessity of theoretical research for the topic of quality of life in the Arab world.
- Holding more national and international scientific conferences and writing more on the topic of the quality of life.

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