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# How Does Culture Explain Various Aspects of Quality of Life?

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## **Abstract**

This analysis puts various aspects of well-being and quality of life into the cultural context focusing on culture as a pattern of values, beliefs and attitudes. The framework including two most well-known modern cultural models will be used as a background: Inglehart's model consisting of self-expression vs survival and secular-rational vs traditional dimensions and Minkov's (revised Hofstede's) model covering individualism vs collectivism and monumentalism vs flexibility dimensions. Happiness, life satisfaction or the perception of the state of health in a population does not depend only on the objective characteristics, like GDP per capita or life expectancy. There is certainly a cultural component involved that has its own influence on how people feel about their quality of life. I will draw data from the WVS about happiness, life satisfaction, and state of health and put them on the background of cultural models as they are, but also as corrected by the level of GDP per capita and life expectancy. The latter indicators show whether people in a particular country over- or underestimate their situation. It appears that when analysing the objective, subjective, as well as corrected data, all are correlated with different cultural dimensions. Hence, how culture really influences happiness and life satisfaction might not be seen at first sight. Moreover, there are many aspects of quality of life, that are not covered with the mainstream indicators of GDP per capita or life expectancy. Various other indicators are included and it appears that those various aspects that hinder the quality of life in different ways, are correlated to different dimensions of culture: each culture has its own problems.

**Keywords:** Cultural Context; Cultural Models; Happiness; Life Satisfaction