

Study on the Life Satisfaction of the Chinese Elderly

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Abstract: According to the results of my country's seventh census, the national population aged 60 and above is 264 million, accounting for 18.7% of the total population, of which the population aged 65 and above is 190 million, accounting for 13.5% of the total population. The total elderly population is larger than the population of some countries. Because the life satisfaction of the elderly is one of the important components of people's happiness, and the life satisfaction of the elderly is affected by the living pattern. However, with the development of the times, the living pattern of the elderly in China has also changed. Based on the data of the China General Social Survey in 2017, this paper adopts the OLS and two-stage least squares method to empirically analyze the causality of the living pattern on the life satisfaction of the elderly, and uses instrumental variables to test the robustness and the elderly's life satisfaction. Differences were analyzed for heterogeneity, and structural equations were used to analyze the mechanism of influencing channels. The empirical results show that living with children can improve life satisfaction and reduce loneliness in the elderly. Heterogeneity analysis showed that the impact of living patterns on life satisfaction of the elderly was inconsistent due to differences in gender, relationship with children and social status of the elderly. Through the mechanism analysis, it is concluded that living with children will increase the children's economic support for the elderly and have a positive impact on life satisfaction. impact on the relationship.

Keywords: Lifesatisfaction, Livingpattern, Aging.

1. Introduction

The elderly group is one of the important groups that cannot be ignored. According to the results of the seventh census of my country, there are 264 million people aged 60 and over in the country, accounting for 18.7% of the total population, of which 190 million people are aged 65 and over. Accounting for 13.5% of the total population, the total number of elderly people in China is larger than the total population of some countries. It is estimated that the population aged 60 and above will exceed 300 million in 2025, 400 million in 2033, and reach a peak of 487 million in 2053, which is larger than the current population of the United States. Therefore, issues related to the elderly have received attention from all walks of life. Widely concerned, improving the life satisfaction of the elderly in our country is an important topic of this era.

Since China began to implement the "one-child" policy in 1978, the number of newborns in my country has dropped sharply and China is now facing the problem of population aging. The result of a couple having fewer children is that they may only have one child, daughter or son, and slowly The local Chinese society has gradually agreed on the responsibility of supporting parents, whether it is a daughter or a son. China is now facing the era of "silver hair China" that "the country is not rich, but the people are old first". pressing issues that every family is facing.

The living intention of the elderly is an important factor in determining the living arrangement of the elderly, which can directly or indirectly affect the life satisfaction of the elderly. Maintaining the family system satisfies the interests of the elderly and the government. From the perspective of the government, it may be restricted by financial and pension mechanisms and other related reasons. However, the government has not fully considered the negative aspects of this advocacy. Influence. In particular, are older people better off living with their children? Existing literature and real-life experience have shown that the life satisfaction of the elderly

is closely related to their living patterns. After retirement, the elderly will gradually reduce their social interactions and increase their interactions with their children. This paper aims to study the impact of the living pattern of the elderly living with their children on life satisfaction based on the current national conditions of our country, in order to provide a basis for the arrangement of the living style of the elderly of different ages in my country, the mode of providing for the elderly and the children's relationship with the elderly. Provide advice and suggestions on practical issues such as caring, and comprehensively improve the life satisfaction of the elderly in our country.

2. Variable Identification and Descriptive Statistics

This article uses the statistical analysis method, and the data studied come from the survey data of China General Social Survey (CGSS) in 2017, with a total of 12,583 samples in this year. The questionnaire of the China General Social Survey mainly consists of three parts. Part A includes social demographic attributes, housing issues, health, migration, lifestyle, social attitudes, class identity, political participation and behavioral attitudes, personal cognitive ability, labor market, Social security, family, part C is the International Social Survey Project (ISSP) including social network, network society, part D East Asia Comprehensive Social Survey (EASS) includes family questionnaire, household consumption expenditure, hope/optimism, subjective well-being.

At present, 60 years old is regarded as the cut-off point of the elderly is recognized by the world, "the elderly are people who are 60 years old and above". In our country, the standard for defining the age of the elderly is also 60 years old. This article selects the elderly who are 60 years old and above as samples according to our country's standard.

The Satisfaction with Life Index (SWL) was developed by Adrian White, a social psychologist at the University of

Leicester. Scholars at home and abroad have a consistent view on life satisfaction: life satisfaction is the overall cognitive evaluation of one's own living conditions in most of the time or a certain period of time according to the standard one chooses, and loneliness is a kind of closed psychology. Reflection, feelings of loneliness and depression occur when a person feels isolated or excluded from the outside world. The explained variables of this paper are the life satisfaction of the elderly and the loneliness of the life of the elderly. The life satisfaction of this paper will be from four dimensions: happiness cognition, self-social situation cognition, life joy cognition, and pride level. The weighted average is used to calculate the satisfaction degree of the elderly with life. The loneliness in the life of the elderly is mainly measured by the elderly's self-perception of their own loneliness problems.

Living with children (assigned to 1) and living alone or with a spouse (or partner) (assigned to 0). Living with children includes three-generation families in which the elderly live with their children and grandchildren, two-generation families in which the elderly only live with their children but not with their grandchildren, and the elderly only live with their grandchildren but not with their children. Live

in a split-generation family. For the sake of simplicity, the above three situations will be collectively referred to as "living with children" in the following sections; empty nesters are defined as the elderly living alone or only with their spouses, that is, "pure old households".

The living pattern of the elderly may have an impact on the life satisfaction of the elderly, but the life satisfaction of the elderly may in turn affect the decision of the elderly to choose their own living pattern. Logically speaking, the residence pattern and the life satisfaction of the elderly are mutually causal, so it is necessary to add instrumental variables to solve the endogeneity problem.

According to the World Health Organization's age division of the elderly, 60-75 years old are young elderly people. According to Chen (2008), the elderly in this part generally have strong independent living ability and social communication ability, and a high level of health. Its subjective evaluation and cognition of the outside world are more positive, and it has a clearer ability to express emotions and thoughts. The table below reflects the characteristics of the sample as a whole in this paper.

Table 1. Objective description table of sample characteristics

variable	mean	sd	max	min	number
age	68.11	6.337	94	60	9315
Number of children	2.15	1.17	9	1	9315
marital status	0.812	0.391	1	0	9315
income	885.97	1561.51	50000	0	9315
Gender	0.912	0.512	1	0	9315
Region (urban and rural)	0.77	0.42	1	0	9315

This paper mainly selects 9,315 samples with childbearing behavior and whose children are still alive. Table 1 describes the objective characteristics of the samples. First of all, from the perspective of age groups, the mean age of the sample is 68.11 years old, and 99.5% (two standard deviations) of the samples belong to the range of young and elderly people we defined above. The degree and personal subjective sense of accomplishment have a certain degree of accuracy, which can reduce the possibility of measurement errors. , community status, and personal subjective sense of accomplishment have a certain degree of accuracy, which can reduce the possibility of measurement errors. Secondly, from the perspective of the number of children, the average value is 2.15 children. Combined with the age of the samples, it can be seen that most of the samples have experienced family planning, and more than 50% of the samples have more than two children, which is consistent with the use of instrumental variables in our previous article. conditions of. Furthermore, we analyzed the marital status of the samples and found that the mean value was 0.812, indicating that 81.2% of the samples were married, while 18.8% of the samples were divorced or widowed, indicating that controlling the emotional state between partners has empirical significance. Thirdly, there is an obvious male bias in the gender of the samples in this paper, 91.2% of the samples are male samples, and gender heterogeneity analysis is needed to further analyze the impact of the co-living status with children on their own life satisfaction. Levels of variability related to the explanatory power of loneliness.

Based on the cohabitation status of different children and parents in the CGSS questionnaire, we generated the

percentage of the number of children cohabiting with their parents to the total number of children born to their parents. The higher the ratio, the greater the proportion of their children cohabiting with their children. The figure below shows the frequency distribution of this variable.

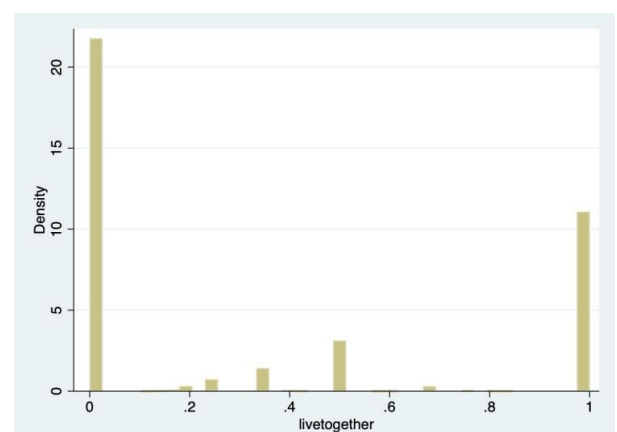


Figure 1. Histogram of the frequency distribution of the elderly living with their children

From Figure 1, it can be found that more than 20% of the samples have no children living with them, and more than 10% of the samples have all their children living with them. There is a strong variance between the core explanatory variables, which is conducive to Significant regression results were obtained. The following article will compare the frequency distribution histograms between groups according to different

birth numbers, urban-rural differences, and sample gender.

This paper mainly takes the elderly's satisfaction with life and the subjective cognition of loneliness as the explained variables, while controlling the elderly's own subjective cognition of the relationship between partners, their

subjective cognition of their social status, The subjective cognition of oneself, and the subjective cognition of one's own physical health. The following table reflects the subjective descriptive statistical characteristics of the main sample in this paper.

Table 2. Subjective description table of sample characteristics

variable	Mean	sd	max	min	number
satisfaction with life	4.23	0.94	5	0	9315
loneliness	0.77	1.12	7	0	9315
partnership	4.22	1.19	5	0	9315
healthy	4.58	1.92	7	0	9315
subjective perception of personal achievement	3.87	1.24	5	0	9315
Subjective cognition of personal social status	3.35	1.18	5	0	9315

According to Table 2, it can be found that the overall sample has a high degree of satisfaction with life, a low awareness of loneliness, and a relatively positive subjective awareness of the partnership relationship. Self-awareness is more positive, while the individual's position in the community is relatively conservative relative to other subjective measurement variables. This article will focus on analyzing the relationship between the living patterns of parents and children in the sample on the subjective cognition of life satisfaction of the elderly and their subjective cognition of their own loneliness.

3. Empirical Analysis

The relevant empirical research analysis in this paper will mainly focus on four parts: baseline regression, robustness test, heterogeneity analysis, and mechanism test. The main regression equation based on this paper is:

$$y = \beta_0 + \alpha_1 x_i + \sum_{j=2}^k \alpha_j D_j + \sum_{p=1}^n \psi_i E_i + \sigma_i \quad (1)$$

Among them, Y is the explanatory variable focused on in this paper, that is, the life satisfaction and subjective loneliness indicators of sample individuals; X is the explanatory variable that this paper focuses on, that is, the variable of the co-living pattern of sample parents and children; D is the control variable group included in this paper. Objective control variables such as: age, gender, marital status, income level, urban and rural dummy variables; E is the fixed effect group used in this paper, mainly using the fixed effect of provinces. Since the CGSS collected samples from 25 provinces in 2017, In order to avoid the problem of multicollinearity, fixed utility items of 24 provinces were generated. Among them, β_0 is the intercept item; α_i are the coefficients of the pattern that the elderly live with their children; α_j is the coefficient of the control variable; ψ_i is the coefficient of the fixed effect; σ_i is the residual item.

The following table shows the regression results of the sample life satisfaction and sample loneliness indicators using the OLS least squares method with the addition of the provincial fixed effect.

Table 3. Life Satisfaction Benchmark Regression Results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Residential mode	0.036* (1.91)	0.042** (2.36)	0.056*** (3.16)	0.055** (2.16)
age	Y	Y	Y	Y
number of children	Y	Y	Y	Y
social insurance	Y	Y	Y	Y
marital status	Y	Y	Y	Y
gender	Y	Y	Y	Y
Income level	Y	Y	Y	Y
marital status	Y	Y	Y	Y
self-esteem		Y	Y	Y
perception of self-achievement		Y	Y	Y
perception of partnership		Y	Y	Y
Province fixed effect			Y	Y
Observations	13287	13287	13264	7111

Note: $P_r(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000$, this number is the P value. When the P value < 0.01 , it means that the test is significant at the 1% level, marked ***. When $0.01 < P \text{ value} < 0.05$, it means that the test is significant at the 5% level, marked **. When $0.05 < P \text{ value} < 0.1$, it means that the test is significant at the 10% level, marked with *.

Columns (1) to (3) add objective control variables, subjective perception control variables, and provincial fixed effect items to all samples in turn, and the regression results

show that the regression results are all significantly positive. Column 4 is regression for rural samples, and its coefficient is significantly smaller than that of the full sample, indicating

that the impact of co-living on the life satisfaction of rural samples is less than that of urban residents.

Table 4. Benchmark regression results for loneliness

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Residential mode	0.001 (0.05)	-0.024 (-1.19)	-0.049** (-1.98)	-0.03 (-1.03)
age	Y	Y	Y	Y
number of children	Y	Y	Y	Y
social insurance	Y	Y	Y	Y
marital status	Y	Y	Y	Y
gender	Y	Y	Y	Y
Income level	Y	Y	Y	Y
marital status	Y	Y	Y	Y
self-esteem		Y	Y	Y
perception of self-achievement		Y	Y	Y
perception of partnership		Y	Y	Y
Province fixed effect			Y	Y
Observations	13287	13287	13264	7111

Columns (1) to (3) are the regression results for all samples. It is found that after controlling all control variables and province fixed effects, the coefficients are significantly negative, indicating that living together will reduce the loneliness of the elderly. Column (4) performs regression on rural samples, and its coefficient is significantly smaller than that of the full sample, indicating that co-living has less impact on the loneliness of rural samples than urban residents.

However, from the logic of economics and sociology, there are serious self-selection problems in the way of living for children and the elderly: for example, as parents grow older, children will have a greater chance of forming their own family and living apart from their parents; and the higher the income level of parents, the parents will have lower motivation to obtain housework and economic support from their children, and parents will choose a living pattern independent of their children; in addition, if the health of the elderly is better, The cost of children taking care of their parents will decrease, thereby increasing their willingness to live with their parents; finally, compared with rural areas, the replacement cost of children living alone away from their parents in urban areas is relatively high, which relatively

reduces the children's independent living costs. There may be serious endogeneity problems between willingness and other control variables. Therefore, in order to solve the above-mentioned endogenous problems, this paper will use the instrumental variable method for robustness testing.

The first child was a son and the son has survived to this day. For the elderly over 60 years old in the sample, when they were in the childbearing age, China had not yet implemented the family planning policy, and according to the medical development at that time, the sex of the fetus was determined by B-ultrasound. The technology is not yet mature, and there are even fewer people who can use this technology. Therefore, we consider the sex of the first-born child to be a random event. At the same time, affected by the traditional value of the eldest son inheriting the family business and taking care of his parents in traditional Chinese culture, if the first child is a boy and has survived to this day, the elderly are less likely to choose the living mode of living alone. Drawing on the existing practice, this paper uses the instrumental variable of the sex of the first child of the elderly to solve the biased estimation caused by the endogeneity in this paper.

Table 5. Robustness test results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Residential mode	0.083** (2.05)	0.102*(1.74)	-0.05*** (-2.95)	0.039 (0.59)
age	Y	Y	Y	Y
number of children	Y	Y	Y	Y
social insurance	Y	Y	Y	Y
marital status	Y	Y	Y	Y
gender	Y	Y	Y	Y
Income level	Y	Y	Y	Y
marital status	Y	Y	Y	Y
self-esteem	Y	Y	Y	Y
perception of self-achievement	Y	Y	Y	Y
perception of partnership	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province fixed effect	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations	13287	7111	13264	7111
F value	3170.6	1643.7	3170.6	1643.7

The explained variable of columns (1)-(2) is life satisfaction, where column (1) is tested for all samples; column (2) is tested for rural samples, columns (3)-(4) The explained variable is loneliness, column (3) is tested for all

samples, and column (4) is tested for rural samples. The test results are basically consistent with the baseline regression, and its F value is greater than the common standard of F=25, passing the weak correlation test.

This paper will mainly examine the following three mechanisms. First, living together with the elderly will improve children's financial support for their parents, enhance children's support for the elderly in daily housework activities, and enhance the emotional relationship between children and the elderly. Contact, so as to achieve the

effectiveness of improving the life satisfaction of the elderly and reducing their loneliness, then this article will examine these three channels in turn. First, this paper examines the impact of residential mode on the above three types of support linkages.

Table 6. Test results of residential mode influencing channels

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Residential mode	0.92***(185.72)	-0.23***(-3.43)	0.01 (0.66)	1.13**(94.5)	-1.58*** (-10.45)
age	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
number of children	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
social insurance	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
marital status	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
gender	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Income level	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
marital status	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
self-esteem	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
perception of self-achievement	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
perception of partnership	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province fixed effect	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations	13264	13264	8317	13264	13264

Column (1) reports the impact of residence mode on economic support, and in column (4) a robustness test is performed using instrumental variables, and the results are all significantly positive, indicating that children living with their parents will increase their economic support for their parents. Column (2) reports the impact of living mode on housework support, and in column (5) a robustness test is performed using instrumental variables. The result is

significantly negative, indicating that children living with their parents will reduce their parents' housework. Column (3) reports the effect of residence mode on the parent-child relationship, and the results are not statistically significant.

Secondly, this paper analyzes the impact of two mechanisms on the satisfaction and loneliness of the elderly. Tables 7 below report the results of the regression.

Table 7. Regression results of channel influence mechanism

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
financial support	0.05*** (2.88)		0.05*** (2.83)	-0.03* (-1.66)		-0.03* (-1.71)
housework support		0.001 (0.8)	0.002 (0.91)		-0.003 (-1.12)	-0.003 (-1.18)
age	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
number of children	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
social insurance	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
marital status	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
gender	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Income level	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
marital status	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
self-esteem	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
perception of self-achievement	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
perception of partnership	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Province fixed effect	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations	13277	13277	13277	13277	13277	13277

Columns (1) to (3) report the impact of the two channels on satisfaction. It can be found that financial support has a positive and significant impact on the satisfaction of the elderly, while housework support has no significant impact. Columns (4) to (6) report the impact of the two channels on loneliness. Financial support has a significant impact, while housework support has no significant impact.

To sum up, the co-living of children and the elderly improves the life satisfaction of the elderly and reduces the loneliness of the elderly by increasing the financial support of the children for the elderly.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the data from the China General Social Survey in 2017, this paper analyzes the impact of the living pattern of the elderly on life satisfaction. Using the OLS least squares method to carry out the regression results shows that under the condition of controlling other variables and provincial fixed effects, the living pattern of the elderly and their children will have a positive effect on the life satisfaction of the elderly samples. The loneliness of the elderly and the life satisfaction of the elderly are inhibitory, so this paper also

analyzes that the living patterns of the elderly and their children will have a negative impact on the subjective loneliness of the elderly samples. In view of this, the following suggestions are made:

1. Suggestions at the national level. Faced with such a large group of elderly people, the country needs to build a pension system that is more suitable for the elderly in China. With the changes of the times, it is even more necessary to continuously improve the pension system.

2. Suggestions on the social level need to promote China's "filial piety culture", advocate that everyone care for their parents, respect the elderly, and call on children to fulfill their due obligations to their parents. The advantages and benefits of the living mode of living.

3. Suggestions at the personal level. In the choice of the living mode of home-based care, both parties need to make full consideration. Both the elderly and their children need to fully consider their parents' marital status, gender, health, and parent-child relationship. Combined with comprehensive factors such as parents' own social achievements, combined with their own actual situation, they can make a decision on the living mode that maximizes the benefits

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