

Abstract

This study developed and tested a path model of life satisfaction in Hong Kong Chinese elderly. Thirty-two males and 85 females Chinese elderly (mean age = 73.04; S.D. = 7.38) were recruited in local elderly activity centers as participants. The Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Delighted-Terrible Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985; D-T Scale; Andrews & Withey, 1976), and the Life Orientation Test-Revised (Scheier, Carver & Bridges, 1994; Lai, Cheung, Lee & Yu, 1998) were used to assess life satisfaction and dispositional optimism, respectively. In the first part of the study, a pancultural model of life satisfaction of college students, developed by Kwan, Bond and Singelis (1997) was validated. Life satisfaction was significantly predicted by self-esteem and relationship harmony, which in turn were predicted by independent and interdependent self-construals, respectively. In the second part of the study, optimism was found to contribute simultaneously to life satisfaction with self-esteem and relationship harmony. In the third part of the study, self-perceived health and financial conditions were not only found directly to predict life satisfaction, but they also found mediated the effect of optimism on life satisfaction. On the whole, this study indicates that dispositional optimism is a key contributor to the subjective well being of Hong Kong elderly. The implications of these findings to social work intervention are discussed.