

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

Subjective well-being consists of life satisfaction, the presence of positive experiences and feelings, and the absence of negative experiences and feelings. Each of these three dimensions matters for people's life, and is subject to a different range of determinants.

Definition

Measures of life satisfaction reflect the cognitive evaluation of life as a whole, now and five years from now, made by each person. The measures shown here are based on ladder-of-life questions, which ask respondents to rate their life from the worst (0) to the best (10) level, and refer to the share of people who rate their life (either today or in the future) at step 7 or higher.

Measures of positive and negative experiences and feelings refer to people who declared having experienced six different forms of negative and positive experiences during the previous day. Also shown are two composite indexes of positive and negative experiences, calculated at the individual record level. For each person, the 6 items are recoded so that positive answers are scored as 1 and negative answers (including "don't know" and "refused to answer") as 0; an individual record has an index calculated if it has at least 5 out of 6 valid scores. Each person's composite index is the mean of valid items multiplied by 100, and the country level score shown in the table is the

mean of all individual records for which an index was calculated.

Population shares are calculated as a percentage of all respondents excluding those who refused or did not know how to answer the various survey questions.

Comparability

The data shown here are drawn from the *Gallup World Poll*, and refer to 2009 or the latest available year. The *Gallup World Poll* is conducted in approximately 140 countries around the world based on a common questionnaire, translated into the predominant languages of each country. With few exceptions, all samples are probability based and nationally representative of the resident population aged 15 and over in the entire country (including rural areas).

While this assures a high degree of comparability across countries, results may be affected by sampling and non-sampling errors. Sample sizes are limited to around 1 000 persons in each country.

Overview

On average, around 63% of people in OECD countries reported a high satisfaction with their life, with a higher share (71%) providing a positive evaluation of their life five years from now. Among OECD countries, the share of people reporting high life satisfaction at present ranges between 85% or more in the Netherlands, Denmark and Finland, and 36% or less in Hungary, the Slovak Republic, Turkey, Poland, Portugal and Korea. With the exception of Brazil, the major non-OECD countries shown here report low levels of satisfaction with current life (at around 25% or lower in China, India, Estonia, Indonesia and Russia) but are much more optimistic about their life in the near future.

When looking at positive experiences, close to 90% of the OECD population declare having been treated with respect, and more than 70% declared that they enjoyed something they did on the previous day or that they have autonomy on how they spent their time, while much lower proportions report having learned something (54%), or being proud of something they did (62%).

Among negative experiences, around one third of OECD people report having been worried in the previous day and around one fourth that they experienced some form of pain, while around 10% reported feeling depressed.

Among OECD countries, the composite "positive experience" index is highest in Iceland and lowest in Turkey, while the "negative experience" index is highest in Spain and lowest in Denmark. Across these countries, high values of the positive experience index tend to be associated with high values for life evaluations, while there is only a weak negative correlation between the positive and negative experience indices.

Sources

- *Gallup World Poll*.

Further information

Analytical publications

- Deaton A. (2008), "Income, Health and Well-Being Around the World: Evidence from the Gallup World Poll", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring.



People reporting various positive and negative experiences

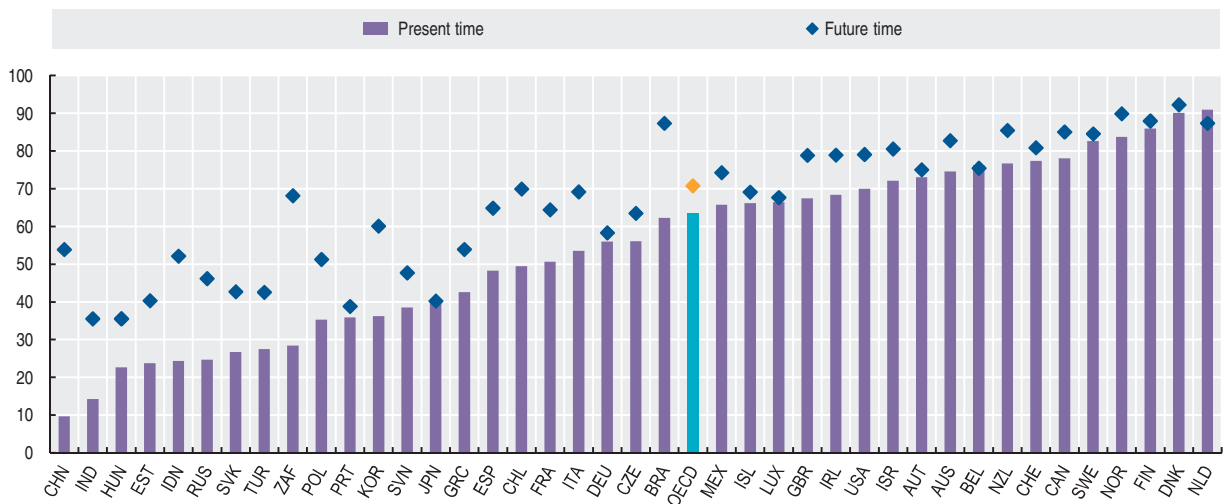
2009 or latest available year

	Positive experiences							Negative experiences						
	As a percentage of respondents						Positive Experience Index	As a percentage of respondents						Negative Experience Index
	Well rested	Treated with respect	Choose how time was spent	Proud of something you did	Learnt or did something interesting	Enjoyment		Pain	Worry	Sadness	Boredom	Depression	Anger	
Australia	65.8	90.6	70.7	73.7	58.9	83.2	74.3	23.0	30.6	17.3	20.3	8.2	17.6	22.1
Austria	73.5	93.8	78.3	63.8	52.7	84.4	75.1	21.2	23.5	16.5	11.6	5.8	12.3	18.2
Belgium	70.6	92.5	82.9	60.6	50.1	79.1	73.7	28.1	33.3	18.6	11.5	8.6	20.7	23.8
Canada	70.0	93.3	75.8	78.6	67.9	87.0	79.8	24.6	37.3	20.7	22.4	9.3	16.2	24.8
Czech Republic	59.8	74.0	54.6	52.2	50.8	77.9	62.2	20.9	33.9	18.8	14.9	13.0	30.9	22.8
Denmark	66.3	96.0	71.9	62.6	61.4	88.8	76.8	21.0	23.7	12.2	12.3	2.9	13.3	15.1
Finland	69.8	93.2	74.0	61.8	57.6	73.2	72.8	17.7	29.1	9.9	18.1	6.5	4.4	15.3
France	64.1	93.2	78.5	49.9	56.0	74.5	72.7	36.0	38.0	22.4	16.0	7.9	30.6	28.5
Germany	66.5	92.9	61.7	56.2	54.7	74.4	73.2	21.8	27.6	18.1	13.7	5.2	16.6	22.0
Greece	57.7	92.0	63.0	45.0	39.5	74.1	66.6	28.5	42.4	18.8	29.1	6.9	15.1	22.9
Hungary	65.2	88.4	..	..	35.8	74.2	64.8	27.6	35.5	23.3	..	26.8	9.2	26.4
Iceland	66.4	97.3	..	..	82.4	86.9	83.3	25.8	24.8	10.9	..	4.7	10.2	17.2
Ireland	70.4	93.6	80.6	75.2	56.2	83.8	77.0	18.8	28.5	22.5	21.6	8.8	19.4	23.0
Italy	64.5	93.5	79.7	63.0	54.4	75.2	73.2	26.3	43.9	25.8	23.7	11.3	13.9	27.2
Japan	76.8	61.2	85.3	46.9	54.7	74.0	69.7	20.5	29.9	12.7	21.8	20.6	14.7	20.7
Korea	75.3	68.9	78.8	62.3	37.9	64.4	61.9	23.9	32.4	14.4	29.7	18.7	15.9	22.8
Luxembourg	63.7	95.5	..	..	56.0	78.8	73.9	26.6	25.3	19.0	..	4.9	27.0	24.0
Mexico	74.3	92.9	76.9	70.0	58.8	85.6	78.0	22.3	33.0	15.6	30.8	12.1	10.3	20.4
Netherlands	67.1	94.3	67.6	65.1	46.6	80.0	72.2	16.3	31.5	13.8	9.5	4.3	9.4	15.8
New Zealand	66.3	91.1	70.5	76.4	70.9	84.6	77.8	23.5	31.4	18.0	24.0	8.8	20.2	23.6
Norway	66.1	91.8	66.8	58.6	63.4	86.1	75.5	16.5	20.5	13.2	22.2	8.1	12.9	16.1
Poland	66.5	94.2	70.6	63.1	43.6	74.0	67.7	17.3	33.5	20.8	22.3	6.2	19.0	19.9
Portugal	71.4	93.2	75.5	57.2	59.4	62.2	72.5	26.0	48.7	33.3	16.2	16.8	11.1	28.4
Slovak Republic	59.2	82.3	60.2	54.6	38.6	74.9	61.1	24.1	39.3	22.9	16.8	12.6	30.8	26.9
Spain	73.3	97.7	84.7	69.5	51.8	59.1	72.0	31.3	51.7	26.1	20.8	12.6	23.0	28.8
Sweden	64.1	94.1	70.0	66.5	61.6	86.8	76.4	22.9	15.9	12.0	19.0	4.4	12.4	15.8
Switzerland	69.8	94.4	70.1	60.3	57.5	86.1	76.4	26.2	32.1	17.9	14.2	4.2	13.8	20.7
Turkey	67.8	68.2	..	..	32.7	47.5	56.5	17.8	31.2	30.6	..	14.4	37.5	28.1
United Kingdom	66.9	91.3	75.6	59.1	54.7	84.3	75.5	24.1	32.5	20.0	27.1	9.0	16.9	23.7
United States	67.5	89.4	71.4	74.2	61.5	84.0	76.3	29.8	38.4	20.9	29.8	13.8	19.3	28.1
OECD average	67.6	89.5	72.9	62.6	54.3	77.6	72.3	23.7	32.6	18.9	20.0	9.9	17.5	22.4
Brazil	68.6	94.3	73.9	75.3	59.6	81.1	76.6	25.9	43.8	20.5	13.9	8.0	17.9	23.9
Chile	70.4	94.5	74.1	68.4	60.7	81.2	77.1	33.1	46.8	23.6	30.6	14.4	21.3	27.4
China	80.7	90.6	82.9	35.5	37.0	83.7	72.8	11.8	25.7	6.8	21.4	7.7	16.3	17.3
Estonia	59.4	88.8	60.4	51.9	45.9	70.1	60.0	20.6	34.6	24.8	17.6	11.8	14.1	20.3
India	66.4	80.7	53.6	33.0	36.6	79.3	67.1	29.6	35.6	25.4	21.5	23.0	29.4	27.8
Indonesia	87.6	94.3	69.9	69.8	55.0	87.3	81.0	16.6	25.2	15.4	31.8	1.2	17.3	13.3
Israel	58.6	75.8	56.2	58.0	49.6	72.2	63.1	38.4	43.2	24.3	31.3	15.0	30.7	31.1
Russian Federation	60.7	90.3	63.6	46.2	36.5	63.2	58.8	22.8	22.8	18.7	18.7	12.1	9.0	15.5
Slovenia	68.2	92.6	66.6	70.4	57.1	58.5	66.2	30.5	51.7	21.2	12.8	7.3	19.0	25.5
South Africa	76.5	82.6	70.6	56.0	48.9	73.5	71.1	25.6	31.0	18.8	22.0	13.5	19.5	23.3

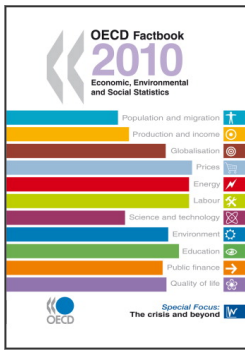
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/826807282861>

People reporting high evaluation of their life as a whole

As a percentage of respondents, 2009 or latest available year



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