

Sociocultural Foundations of Psychological Well-Being among Ethiopian Adults

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Abstract : Most of the studies available on adult psychological well-being have been centered on Western countries. However, psychological well-being does not have the same meaning across the world. The Euro-American and African conceptions and experiences of psychological well-being differ systematically. As a result, questions like, how do people living in developing African countries, like Ethiopia, report their psychological well-being; what would the context-specific prominent determinants of their psychological well-being be, needs a definitive answer. This study was, therefore, aimed at developing a new theory that would address these socio-cultural issues of psychological well-being. Consequently, data were obtained through interview and open ended questionnaire. A total of 438 adults, working in governmental and non-governmental organizations situated in Addis Ababa, participated in the study. Appropriate qualitative method of data analysis, i.e. thematic content analysis, was employed for analyzing the data. The thematic analysis involves a type of abductive analysis, driven both by theoretical interest and the nature of the data. Reliability and credibility issues were addressed appropriately. The finding identified five major categories of themes, which are viewed as essential in determining the conceptions and experiences of psychological well-being of Ethiopian adults. These were; socio-cultural harmony, social cohesion, security, competence and accomplishment, and the self. Detailed discussion on the rationale for including these themes was made and appropriate positive psychology interventions were proposed. Researchers are also encouraged to expand this qualitative research and in turn develop a suitable instrument tapping the psychological well-being of adults with different sociocultural orientations.

Keywords : sociocultural, psychological, well-being Ethiopia, adults

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