

Moving towards a General Definition of Public Happiness: A Grounded Theory Approach to the Recent Academic Research on Well-Being

Authors : Cristina Sanchez-Sanchez

Abstract : Although there seems to be a growing interest in the study of the citizen's happiness as an alternative measure of a country's progress to GDP, happiness as a public concern is still an ambiguous concept, hard to define. Moreover, different notions are used indiscriminately to talk about the same thing. This investigation aims to determine the conceptions of happiness, well-being and quality of life that originate from the indexes that different governments and public institutions around the world have created to study them. Through the Scoping Review method, this study identifies the recent academic research in this field (a total of 267 documents between 2006 and 2016) from some of the most popular social sciences databases around the world, Web of Science, Scopus, JSTOR, Sage, EBSCO, IBSS and Google Scholar, and in Spain, ISOC and Dialnet. These 267 documents referenced 53 different indexes and researches. The Grounded Theory method has been applied to a sample of 13 indexes in order to identify the main categories they use to determine these three concepts. The results show that these are multi-dimensional concepts and similar indicators are used indistinctly to measure happiness, well-being and quality of life.

Keywords : common good, grounded theory, happiness economics, happiness index, quality of life, scoping review, well-being

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