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Artículos científicos

Elementos teóricos para la investigación en psicología y calidad de vida

Theoretical Elements for Research in Psychology and Quality of Life

Elementos teóricos para pesquisa em psicologia e qualidade de vida

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Resumen

El objetivo del presente estudio es realizar una revisión narrativa de los avances teóricos y epistemológicos en torno a la investigación en calidad de vida para identificar la incorporación de la psicología a esta línea de investigación. En un primer momento se revisarán los antecedentes que dieron origen al concepto a partir de los aportes que Arthur Pigou realizó desde la economía en 1932, así como el contexto de la Gran Depresión en Estados Unidos y la posguerra. Posteriormente, se analizarán las implicaciones teóricas y epistemológicas que se produjeron a partir de los cambios en la forma de abordar la calidad de vida con la inclusión de indicadores subjetivos, que se sumaron a las mediciones objetivas que tradicionalmente se realizaban. Con la incorporación de mediciones subjetivas se marcó el inicio de la participación de la psicología en los estudios sobre calidad de vida, por lo que se analizan los principales aportes de esta disciplina a este campo. Los aportes de este documento se sitúan en el campo teórico, pues se pretende que este sea una referencia para

estudiantes tanto de licenciatura como de posgrado que inicien su formación en la investigación en psicología y calidad de vida.

Palabras clave: bienestar social, calidad de vida, enseñanza de la psicología, epistemología, investigación psicológica.

Abstract

The objective of this study is to carry out a narrative review of the theoretical and epistemological advances around quality of life research to identify the incorporation of psychology into this multidisciplinary field. At first, the background that gave rise to the concept will be reviewed from the contributions that Arthur Pigou made from the economy in 1932, as well as the context of the Great Depression in the United States and the postwar period. Subsequently, the theoretical and epistemological implications that occurred from the changes in the way of approaching quality of life with the inclusion of subjective indicators, which were added to the objective measurements that were traditionally carried out, will be analyzed. The incorporation of subjective measurements marked the beginning of the participation of psychology in studies on quality of life, therefore the main contributions of this discipline to this field are analyzed. The contributions of this chapter are in the theoretical field, as it is intended that this be a reference document for both undergraduate and graduate students who are beginning their training in the field of research in psychology and quality of life.

Keywords: social welfare, quality of life, psychology education, epistemology, psychological research

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo é realizar uma revisão narrativa dos avanços teóricos e epistemológicos em torno da pesquisa em qualidade de vida para identificar a incorporação da psicologia nessa linha de pesquisa. Em um primeiro momento, será revisto o pano de fundo que deu origem ao conceito a partir das contribuições que Arthur Pigou fez da economia em 1932, bem como o contexto da Grande Depressão nos Estados Unidos e o pós-guerra. Em seguida, serão analisadas as implicações teóricas e epistemológicas que ocorreram a partir das mudanças na forma de abordar a qualidade de vida com a inclusão de indicadores subjetivos, que se somaram às medidas objetivas tradicionalmente feitas. Com a

incorporação de medidas subjetivas, marcou-se o início da participação da psicologia nos estudos sobre qualidade de vida, para o qual são analisadas as principais contribuições desta disciplina para este campo. As contribuições deste documento situam-se no campo teórico, pois se pretende que este seja uma referência tanto para alunos de graduação quanto de pós-graduação que iniciam sua formação em pesquisa em psicologia e qualidade de vida.

Palavras-chave: bem-estar social, qualidade de vida, ensino de psicologia, epistemologia, pesquisa psicológica.

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Introduction

Studies on quality of life began to gain relevance in the academic world and in public policy after 1930, when economics promoted the measurement of objective indicators, such as income and type of housing, to assess living conditions. life of the people. This perspective was modified in 1970, as disciplines such as psychology and sociology introduced subjective indicators such as perception, experience and well-being. Consequently, research on quality of life began to be addressed from various disciplinary frameworks.

The multidisciplinary nature of studies on quality of life has led to discrepancies regarding the conceptualization, operationalization and measurement of its indicators (Glatzer, Camfield, Møller and Rojas, 2015). Therefore, it is essential that, when starting a training process in this area of knowledge, the student body is clear about the fundamental principles of the discipline from which they carry out their research and the epistemological, theoretical and methodological elements that support the perspective of the quality of life. All this in order to provide you with the elements that allow you to coherently structure your investigative efforts.

To achieve the above, in the training of researchers it is necessary to contemplate three fundamental aspects: 1) the teaching of theoretical knowledge, that is, the transmission of concepts and constructs that allow naming and describing reality, 2) the teaching of knowledge practices, that is, the transmission of the knowledge that guides and regulates the actions of the researcher to approach the object of study in which he or she is interested and 3) the teaching of the ultimate meanings and values of scientific work, that is, the reflection on the ethical and political implications of the knowledge generation process (Sánchez, 2014).

Thus, the beginning of a research project implies the identification of a problem, a condition that sets the tone for the object of study and the way to approach it. However, this moment is one of those that represents the greatest difficulty for those who start research, because, according to Espinoza (2018), despite starting from a general idea, sometimes the writing of the problem remains hanging around the contours of the original idea, without taking the necessary leap for the formulation of the research problem.

In this regard, Rovetto and Fernández (2015) have observed that when preparing the approach to the research problem, the main difficulties that arise are: a) citing theories chronologically, without being able to connect them based on their coincidences, divergence and vacancy zones, in addition to the impossibility of considering the frames of reference typical of the discussion in each discipline or its historical contextualization; b) proposing an empirical investigation without articulating it with the theoretical perspective and the problems that would have been observed in it, and c) difficulties in indicating the problem, not only with the empirical case, but with the disciplinary perspective of the field of training.

In response to the above, this paper aims to become a teaching resource for those who begin their training in psychology and quality of life research. It is sought that, when choosing the research topic, the researcher has theoretical elements that allow him to recognize the conceptual and methodological bases that gave rise to this line of knowledge generation to later position himself from a disciplinary field that allows him to guide his efforts to contribute new findings and insights to this body of knowledge.

Identifying the foundational elements of quality of life makes it possible to recognize the origin and the purposes that promoted this aspect of knowledge. Reading, reflecting, discussing, sharing and writing about quality of life are activities that contribute to widening the path of those who start research, since the clarity that comes from these efforts makes it possible, in the process of generating knowledge, to recognize the deep social involvement that has been present throughout its history.

Due to the above, this text aims to carry out a narrative review of the theoretical and epistemological advances around research on quality of life to identify the incorporation and contributions of psychology to this multidisciplinary field. To achieve this, at first we reflect on the nature of knowledge and research. Subsequently, the background that gave rise to the concept of quality of life is reviewed. Thirdly, the implications at a theoretical and epistemological level that were produced from the incorporation of subjective indicators to the evaluation of quality of life, which were added to the objective measurements that were

traditionally carried out, are analyzed. With the incorporation of the subjective perspective, the incorporation of psychology to studies on quality of life was marked, for which the main contributions of this discipline to this field are analyzed.

Theoretical argument

The nature of knowledge

Science is a collective effort undertaken by several people at different times who, through observation, the development of hypotheses and the execution of tests, elaborate theories with the purpose of expanding the work that has previously been carried out in a disciplinary field. Its main objectives are to describe facts, make discoveries and advance knowledge and thus improve the state of things (Caballo and Salazar, 2019; Kerlinger and Lee, 2002). Since the generation of knowledge is the main purpose of a research postgraduate degree, it is advisable, before delving into the elements that provide the foundation for quality of life research, to begin this text with a reflection on the nature of knowledge and its consequences. possibilities.

Knowing is an effort of the human species to order reality in order to give it meaning through language. Thus, the first interest in knowing arises as a need to survive. However, history has shown that it is not enough for humanity to develop knowledge that allows it to meet the demands of daily life; appeals to other forms of knowledge such as philosophy, art or literature, which are constituted as ways of ordering reality—even of recreating it—, but which demonstrate that there is a body of knowledge whose usefulness is not immediately declared (Fullat , 2008).

For this reason, it is necessary to understand the usual forms of knowledge—not the only ones—: religious knowledge, everyday knowledge and scientific knowledge. The first form of knowledge is religious knowledge, which, according to Ribes (2013), is constructed as an interpretation of transcendental signs, its meaning criterion is given by revelation and its function is to communicate and give cohesion through the non-apparent.

In the process of discovering reality, the human being realizes that activities such as building tools, lighting a fire or covering oneself from the rain do not necessarily require rituals to control them; it is enough to replicate a procedure that previously produced a certain effect to obtain similar results. The accumulation of these experiences gives rise to the second form of knowledge: the everyday. For Ribes (2013), this knowledge is produced as a

conventional interpersonal practice, its meaning criterion is common sense, while its function is coexistence. Its shortcoming lies in the fact that, despite the fact that a procedure is repeated to obtain a certain result, there is no certainty of achieving what is expected.

Given this, it is possible to state that both religious and everyday knowledge are constituted as beliefs, since they offer partial explanations about reality; Thus, although they allow certain problems to be resolved, their assertions do not necessarily coincide with the facts that underlie them. Fullat (2008) states that:

Everything works wonderfully in our biographies until the day comes when the beliefs —that had us and sustained us— become problematic, awakening doubt within us. Some beliefs fight with other beliefs forcing us to decide. The intolerable thing is to walk eaten by contradictory beliefs (p. 50).

Doubt, which appears as a consequence of the divergence between reality and beliefs, is what gives rise to scientific knowledge. For Bunge (2017), scientific research starts from the perception that the wealth of available knowledge (both those that are based on experience and those that emanate from religious thought) is insufficient to respond to certain problems. Consequently, science grows from common knowledge, but goes further, since scientific research begins in the very place where experience and ordinary knowledge fail to solve problems, or even pose them. In this sense, it is possible to maintain that, in scientific work, the strength of the researcher is not in his certainties or in his assertions, but in his genuine interest in reality that allows him to ask questions about the phenomena that are of interest to him. , for this is the origin of any effort to know.

One of the systems of thought that has influenced the conception of modern science is positivism. This paradigm posits that reality is governed by laws and mechanisms that can be apprehended by the human being (Ramos, 2015). The task of the scientist is to find those laws and mechanisms that precede the facts in order to explain them, predict them and, if necessary, modify them. To achieve this, it is expected that between the researcher and the object of study there is total independence, in order to ensure that the knowledge produced faithfully reflects reality and distortions caused by the researcher's biases are avoided (Lerma, 2016).

Later, as a corollary to this vision, post-positivism appears. Its premise states that reality cannot be fully apprehended; instead, it is only imperfectly known, as a result of the mutual influence between the object of study and the knowing subject (Fullat, 2008; Ramos, 2015). Now, around these two visions of science, a knowledge classification system has been

developed based on its methodology and its object of study, which is described in the following paragraphs.

First, there are the formal sciences: mathematics and logic. They are characterized because their object of study is not the facts of reality, but abstractions of it. Likewise, they deal with ideal entities that do not exist in everyday life, therefore, they are in charge of studying the properties of numbers or the quantitative relationships between various elements. They use the deductive method of study, which allows starting from certain axioms to obtain results that acquire validity to the extent that the previously established premises are met (Bernal, 2016; Lerma, 2016).

The second category is the factual sciences, which are characterized by studying facts that can be verified in reality. Although it is based on hypotheses and theories, the results of the research must comply with the principle of verifiability, that is, the assertions that are produced must be consistent with the facts. When the arguments are not consistent, they are discarded and others are built. In this sense, factual sciences are expected to meet two tests: demonstration and verification. The areas of knowledge that make up the factual sciences are physics, chemistry, biology and geology, in addition to other disciplines that are characterized by having as objects of study those phenomena that can be verified through experience (Bernal, 2016; Fullat, 2008; Lerma, 2016).

There is another group of disciplines that, in their effort to establish themselves as sciences, use the empirical method, typical of the factual sciences, with the exception that their object of study is not the phenomena of nature, but human beings and their products. cultural, social, intellectual and psychological. This characteristic poses a reconfiguration in the way of approaching reality: although the natural sciences are not free from the ideologies, beliefs and evaluations of the researcher, in the social sciences subjectivity becomes more evident (Dorantes, 2018; Fullat, 2008).

Finally, there is non-scientific knowledge of a metaphysical or axiological type that alludes to non-experiential realities such as dignity, values or beauty. Although the propositions that emanate from this type of knowledge cannot be observed, it does not mean that they are devoid of validity, since their relevance lies in the fact that they become a guide insofar as they give meaning to the activities of knowledge generation. (Fullat, 2008).

Based on the foregoing, it is possible to state that both psychology and quality of life research elaborate their approaches based on the neopositivist paradigm. And, starting from the premises that distinguish scientific knowledge from everyday knowledge and once the

characteristics that distinguish social-human disciplines from natural ones have been established, it is convenient to ask: from where is knowledge built in the disciplines that carry out studies in the field? of quality of life? The following is expected to shed some light to answer this question.

First studies on quality of life

Quality of life is a topic that is usually associated with concepts such as well-being, happiness or satisfaction with life. Its relevance has become increasingly evident both in academic life and in political discourses since, being a multidimensional construct, it has become one of the most important indicators when designing public policies (Perren and Lamfre , 2018)

The origins in the study of quality of life stem from the tradition of social sciences, mainly economics, which has among its objects of study the analysis of social needs. Hence, the term quality of life was proposed by the American economist Arthur Cecil Pigou in 1932 to quantify the social costs of government decisions at that time (Perren and Lamfre, 2018; Tonon, 2010a).

Later, studies on quality of life began to gain relevance in public life thanks to approaches of an economic nature such as the idea of the welfare state, which was derived from the socioeconomic imbalances that resulted from the Great Depression in the 1930s. XX in the United States and was consolidated with the end of World War II, the result of economic development theories that appealed to the possibility of consumption and the accumulation of wealth as indicators of well-being and quality of life among citizens (Toscano and Molgaray , 2019; Urzúa and Caqueo, 2012)

The years after the Second World War marked a growth in studies on quality of life, based on the measurement of objective indicators such as socioeconomic status, educational level or type of housing, with the purpose of knowing the perception of quality of life. financial security and people's lives (Perren and Lamfre, 2018). However, according to Urzúa and Caqueo (2012), these indicators explained only 15% of the variance of individual quality of life.

The tendency to use objective indicators in the study of quality of life continued until 1976, the year in which the social psychologists Campbell, Converse and Rodgers published the book *The Quality of American Life: Perceptions, Evaluations and Satisfaction*. In the

publication in question, they incorporated subjective indicators such as perceptions, evaluations and levels of satisfaction of the population regarding their standard of living. This epistemological turn was based on the argument that the relationship between the objective conditions of life and the psychological experiences of people do not occur synchronously, therefore, to know the quality of life, it is necessary to ask for a description of how people experience it (Tonon, 2010a; Toscano and Molgaray, 2019).

In this same order, the sociologists Andrew and Whitey introduced the notion of social well-being, which made it possible to conceive of quality of life as a construct that is a function of both the material environment and the psychological assessment that people make of their own life (Sirgy, 2012)

With the incursion of psychology and sociology into studies on quality of life, based on subjective indicators, it was possible to add 50% to the explanation of the variance of individual quality of life (Urzúa and Caqueo, 2012). Later, in 1995, the International Society for Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS) was founded with the purpose of promoting interdisciplinary research in psychology, politics, social studies, medicine, and other disciplines focused on the study of development and the environment. The research promoted since the founding of ISQOLS has made it possible to now have a deeper understanding of the elements that condition quality of life, for example, social structure, cultural patterns, psychosocial characteristics of the community, as well as the institutions that develop their actions in this context (Tonon, 2008, 2010^a, 2010^b; Toscano y Molgaray, 2019)

Based on the above, it is possible to conceive of quality of life as a multidimensional concept that includes a number of domains of different weight for people depending on the importance they assign to each of them. It is based on the approach that establishes that the effect of social relations and relations with the context is mediated by the particular gaze of people, so that the way in which each person interprets their context becomes the perspective that determines their quality of life (Tonon, 2010^a).

Domains of quality of life

With the incorporation of subjective indicators to the evaluation of quality of life, new questions of an epistemological nature arose: what aspects should be included when evaluating quality of life? Or, in other words: what aspects should questions be asked about when researching quality of life? To respond to the above, various proposals emerged, which are shown in Table 1.

Tabla 1. Dominios en la calidad de vida

Autores	Método de análisis	Dominios de la calidad de vida
Campbell <i>et al.</i> (1976)	No indicado	- Actividades no laborales; vida familiar; estándar de vida; trabajo; matrimonio; ahorros e inversiones; amistades; ciudad o condado; alojamiento; cantidad de educación; vecindario; vida en los Estados Unidos; utilidad de la educación; salud; religión; Gobierno nacional; organizaciones.
Andrews y Whitey (1976)	Análisis de regresión múltiple	- Vida actual en Estados Unidos; gobierno nacional; gobierno local; situación económica; comunidad; servicios e instalaciones; educación; trabajos; vecindario; amigos y asociados; hogar; actividades de ocio y tiempo libre; familia; uno mismo; relaciones interpersonales.
Rogerson, Findlay, Paddison y Morris (1996)	Encuesta de opinión pública	Resultados en orden de importancia: crimen (violento como no violento); servicios de salud; medio ambiente (contaminación, acceso a áreas de conservación y clima); vivienda (costo y calidad); armonía racial; instalaciones educativas; perspectivas de empleo (salario y tiempo de traslado); desempleo; costo de la vida; instalaciones comerciales, deportivas y de ocio.
Schalock (1996)	Revisión de la literatura	- Bienestar emocional y psicológico (seguridad, espiritualidad, felicidad, satisfacción, ausencia de estrés).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relaciones interpersonales y sociales (bienestar familiar, amistades, relaciones íntimas, redes de apoyo). - Bienestar material (ingresos, seguridad financiera, posesiones materiales, ahorros e inversiones, satisfacción de necesidades básicas como alimentos y vivienda). - Desarrollo personal (competencia, logro educativo, actividades con propósito, dominio, eficacia, logros y consecución de objetivos). - Bienestar físico (salud y bienestar, nutrición, ejercicio físico, deportes y recreación, actividades relacionadas con la vida diaria). - Desarrollo social (inclusión en la comunidad, actividades de voluntariado, caridad, cohesión vecinal). - Deberes y derechos cívicos (derechos de privacidad, derechos de voto, derecho al debido proceso, derecho a la propiedad, responsabilidades cívicas).
Grupo WHOQOL (1998, 2004, 2006)	Desarrollaron instrumentos sobre dominios de calidad de vida	Trabajo; familia; estándar de vida; relaciones interpersonales; salud; crecimiento personal; espiritualidad/religión; problemas de la sociedad; problemas de la comunidad; ocio; vida en general.
Cummins (1996)	Análisis factorial	Bienestar material; salud; productividad; intimidad; seguridad; comunidad; bienestar emocional.

<p>Tom Rath y Jim Harter (2010)</p>	<p>Análisis de cientos de preguntas en países, idiomas y situaciones de la vida diversas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vida profesional: evalúa la forma en que una persona ocupa su tiempo. - Vida social: se refiere a las relaciones sólidas y el amor en la vida de una persona. - Vida financiera: se refiere a gestionar eficazmente la situación económica y las finanzas personales de uno. - Vida física/salud: se relaciona con la salud y la energía para hacer las actividades de la vida diaria. - Vida comunitaria: hace referencia al sentido de compromiso que uno tiene con el área donde reside.
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Fuente: Elaboración propia con base en Sirgy (2012)

The studies shown in Table 1 have revealed that people evaluate their quality of life based on various domains to which they assign a certain value, however, the number of domains that should be considered remains unanswered. This is due to a characteristic condition of disciplines such as sociology, economics or psychology: despite the fact that they come from the positivist tradition, they are distinguished from the empirical sciences because their field of application is not nature, but human beings and his works, so that subjectivity is manifested in a more evident way. In this line, Tintaya (2019) states that psychology is a science that studies the subjective life of the human being who lives in a social, structural and historically specific community.

This indicates that, despite the fact that subjective indicators have been shown to play a strong role in explaining the variance in quality of life, it is not possible to specifically determine which indicators should be considered, since these vary depending on the people and cultural environments (Sirgy, 2012). This, instead of being assumed as an epistemological weakness, can be conceived as fertile ground to raise research possibilities on what is valuable for people when evaluating their quality of life. On the other hand, in addition to the disagreement that has been raised regarding the domains that make up quality of life, theories have been developed that seek to explain the interactions between these domains and their effects on well-being and life satisfaction.

It has been theorized, for example, that specific experiences of satisfaction related to some domain (school, work, family, leisure) have an ascending effect that impacts the general evaluation of life (upward spillover theory); also, it has been explained that a certain affective experience in a certain domain can be transferred to some neighboring domain (horizontal spillover theory). The segmentation theory, on the other hand, aims to analyze the tendency of people to separate the aspects that make up their lives, in order not to impact the rest of the domains with negative experiences. (Sirgy, 2012).

Compensation theory, in turn, posits that people tend to increase their attention to the domain of life in which they perceive themselves to be successful, while the domains in which they experience failure are dismissed. Finally, the theory of balance is proposed, which appeals to reconcile both experiences of success and failure, since the conditions of daily life are presented in this way (Sirgy, 2012).

Although the approaches are broader and deeper, the foregoing was raised to point out that the theories that have been developed around the domains of quality of life are carried out from a holistic approach, since they seek to explain how the experience that one has in some aspect of life affects the rest of the life experience. Of course, this is produced from moderating elements of a psychological nature such as perception, personality traits, social conditions, the scale of values, cognitive resources, needs, among other variables, which will be analyzed in the section “The incursion of psychology in studies on quality of life”.

Quality of life, satisfaction with life, subjective well-being and happiness

As has been pointed out throughout this text, during the years after the Second World War, countries like the United States focused their efforts on trying to reduce illiteracy, disease and poverty, and from there move towards the formulation of public policies that guarantee a reasonable standard of living. That is why the first evaluations of quality of life were carried out based on objective indicators.

It was from the 1960s when there was a leap towards broader conceptions of quality of life, which incorporated subjective approaches such as satisfaction, subjective well-being and happiness, with the purpose of proposing that, in addition to material well-being, there are other elements that make up the quality of life (Veenhoven, 2015). This scenario raises the need to explore the nature of these concepts, in order to achieve greater clarity when using them for research purposes.

Quality of life and satisfaction with life

For Veenhoven (2015), quality of life indicates the subjective enjoyment of life; however, it is necessary to distinguish it from other notions, since it is possible that a certain quality of life does not represent a satisfaction with life. Thus, life satisfaction is defined as the degree to which a person positively evaluates the quality of their current life as a whole. To carry out this evaluation, it is necessary to consider all the criteria that appear in the person's perception: how he feels, how well he meets his expectations, how desirable he considers her life. In addition, the valuations can refer to different periods in time. The evaluation of life can differ in aspects such as the certainties of the person, or due to distorted judgments about the quality of life (Castellanos, 2018; Cladellas, Castelló y Parrado, 2018; Veenhoven, 2015)

Quality of life and subjective well-being

Sirgy (2012) part of the definition of subjective well-being as a broad category of phenomena that includes people's emotional responses, domain satisfactions and global judgments of life satisfaction to reconstruct them in a framework that integrates these disparate concepts. This author concludes that subjective well-being is a lasting (long-term) affective state that is made up of a combination of three components: a) the actual experience of happiness or cumulative positive affect (joy, affection, pride, etc.) in domains domains of life, b) actual experience of depression or cumulative negative affect (sadness, anger, guilt, shame, anxiety, etc.) in domains of life highlighted and c) evaluations of life in general or evaluations of domains of life highlighted.

Happiness and quality of life

Regarding the study of happiness, Rojas (2016) argues that this notion should not be limited to an academic construction, but to a life experience of people. For this reason, it is questioned in what way whoever conducts an investigation can know the happiness of people. To respond to the above, Rojas himself (2016) raises some reflections of an epistemological nature for the study of happiness:

- Well-being is intrinsically subjective, since it refers to a person's experience, so that happiness is not an object but an experience lived by the subject; Thus, the

explanatory factors should not be adjusted to the objectivity of the measurement, but rather to the relationship they have with people's experience of well-being.

- The person is the authority to judge her life, since no one else is in the best position to evaluate her happiness; therefore, the subjective well-being approach accepts a person's judgment as a valid assessment of their happiness. In this sense, it is proposed that it is possible to measure happiness by asking about it.
- Research on happiness is interested in knowing the experience of people and not how they think they should be.
- The research begins with a person's evaluation of her happiness and then follows a quantitative or qualitative approach to discover its determinants. Thus, research on happiness differs from the approaches that presuppose a specific conception of the construct and its factors that explain it and, instead, qualitative techniques are used to find out the relevant explanatory factors; With the above, it is intended to collect the heterogeneity between people.
- Research on happiness requires a transdisciplinary approach. Whenever the disciplines work with abstract entities, the models that are built to explain particular aspects mean that many others are neglected.

The incursion of psychology in studies on quality of life

Although studies on quality of life come from the economy, in the process of developing this construct there were significant changes in its way of conceiving and evaluating it. One of the most important changes was moving from the measurement of objective indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP) towards the inclusion of subjective indicators associated with the individual point of view of the well-being and functioning of each person (Arias, 2017; Perren and Lamfre, 2018; Trujillo et al., 2004).

The quality of life approach from psychology began to be glimpsed in 1969, when GA Miller, in his inauguration as president of the American Psychological Association (APA), defined psychology as a means for the promotion of human well-being, in addition to that he emphasized the challenge of this discipline to achieve a greater commitment with the social reality and with the problems of that moment (Casas, 1999).

This context gave rise to a body of research that focused on psychosocial indicators, for example, the work of social psychologists Campbell et al. in 1976, as well as the

contributions that the sociologists Andrew and Whitey made in the same year. From these approaches, the quality of life ceased to be the exclusive object of study of the economy to begin to be analyzed from disciplines such as psychology. The theoretical advances that emerged from this can be summarized in the inclusion of both objective and subjective indicators in the evaluation of quality of life (Casas, 1999; Toscano and Molgaray, 2019; Urzúa and Caqueo, 2012).

One of the theoretical aspects that welcomed the proposals that had been made regarding quality of life was positive psychology, founded in 1985 by Martin Seligman. From this theoretical perspective, Veenhoven (2000) made a distinction between objective and subjective quality of life. The first refers to the degree of life that reaches explicit standards of the good life, evaluated by an external person who is impartial; the second refers to appraisals based on the criteria that are significant for the person.

In 1996, Ferrán Casas defined quality of life as the perceptions, aspirations, needs, satisfactions and social representations that the members of any social group experience in relation to their environment and the social dynamics in which they are immersed, including services that are offered to them and the social interventions of which they are recipients and that emanate from social policies (Tonon, 2010a).

Research on quality of life from psychology

An approach that is fundamental to analyze is the one that seeks to explore the implications of psychological constructs in quality of life. Sirgy (2012) dedicates the section "Subjective Reality and Its Effects on Subjective Quality Of Life" of the book *The Psychology of Quality of Life* to analyze the relationship between constructs of a psychological nature and quality of life. The main approaches are presented below:

- Personality and quality of life: some investigations are presented that have indicated some effect between personality and subjective well-being; highlights studies that positively relate subjective well-being with personality traits such as extraversion, self-esteem, positive affective disposition, mindfulness, optimism, expectation of control, and resilience.
- Affect, cognition and quality of life: it is suggested that when people are induced to have a positive state of mind they present higher levels of subjective well-being; also,

it has been found that subjective well-being is modified depending on the way in which people make attributions about the things that happen to them.

On the other hand, personal meaning was also found to be important in subjective well-being. Also, that when people evaluate their lives, they do so by examining their achievements in relation to a variety of cognitive frameworks: the ideal life, the predicted life, the deserved life, so that the use of different cognitive frameworks produces different levels of results of satisfaction with life.

- Beliefs, values and quality of life: it suggests that people who have generalized positive points of view, high levels of social trust and experience, in addition to expressing high levels of forgiveness and gratitude, indicated high levels of satisfaction with life. Also, the role of religious beliefs in well-being was explored; it was found that the differentiation between the type of religious beliefs does not influence subjective well-being.

On the other hand, values that have a positive effect on subjective well-being were found to include family, social awareness, openness to experience, individualism, achievement, self-direction, stimulation, and secularism. Negatively influencing values include materialism, status consciousness, conservatism, collectivism, conformity, and security; however, research highlighted that values change throughout life. Finally, it was found that culture can act as a moderating variable.

- Satisfaction of needs and quality of life: analyzes the conceptions of subjective well-being based on the needs of being, belonging and becoming; physical, social and self-actualization needs; the need for self-determination; the need to have a pleasant life, a committed life, and a meaningful life; the human need to flourish, and the need for a purposeful life.
- Goals and quality of life: analyzes the effects of goals on subjective well-being. Those who set goals that have a high probability of being met plan strategies to achieve them, so that the achievement of their goals results in subjective well-being.
- Self-concept and quality of life: recovers the mechanisms proposed by Rosenberg through which people interpret life events, in a way that produces positive self-evaluations, these are: social comparisons, reflected evaluations, behavioral self-perceptions and psychological centrality.

In addition, the dimensions of the self-concept that are used in the judgments of satisfaction with life are analyzed, which include the ideal self, the social self, the deserved

self, the minimum tolerable self, the past self, the predicted self, the competent self and the aspirated self; discrepancies between the real self and any of these self-references generate dissatisfaction. Finally, it is suggested that the integration of the self-concept helps to increase subjective well-being, while the fragmentation of the self-concept causes the opposite.

- Social comparison and quality of life: suggests that social comparison is another psychological effect that plays an important role in subjective well-being. It should be noted that, from this point of view, people tend to compare themselves with others for three different reasons: the need for personal improvement, the need for social identification and the need for self-improvement.

Discussion

Despite the fact that in the last 20 years, both in the academic field and in decision-making spaces, research on quality of life has gained relevance, some lines of discussion that need to be analyzed are still identified, such as those that differ on: a) if quality of life is an objective construction, or should include subjective indicators, b) if it is an ideographic concept (its components depend on the person), or if it is a nomothetic construct (which establishes a general criterion for all subjects), c) the absence of a unifying theoretical model, d) the lack of differentiation of the factors that influence quality of life and e) the validity of the measurement instruments used.

These lines of discussion, of course, do not invite us to abandon the concept of quality of life, on the contrary, they are areas of opportunity for the consolidation of this field of research based on research that strengthens its theoretical body, but also based on theoretical reflections that guide the gaze of those who start on the path of research.

In order not to touch tangentially the concept treated here, or resort to a definition whose theoretical background, its implications for research, as well as its lines of discussion are unknown, it is essential that whoever is trained as a researcher develops a clarity on the paradigm from which it is positioned to advance in its research process.

Coinciding with what Sánchez (2014) proposes, clarity about the theoretical paradigm from which the researcher positions herself is built from critical reading, understood as a discovery exercise that will allow her to cite meaningfully (and not cite for the sake of quoting).); In addition, theoretical clarity will allow you to offer solid lines of discussion about the scope and limitations of the evidence that it presents.

Accompanying the research training processes with activities of theoretical reflection will allow those who start in this area, in addition to being interested in the problems of everyday reality, to also get involved in the processes of construction and discussion of the theoretical approaches that nurture their area. of interest.

The possibilities of both research and application of knowledge related to quality of life are multiple; therefore, it is desirable that academic training in this multidisciplinary field shows the way forward to understand the process of weaving and untangling ideas. However, it is the fundamental task of the student to filter the knowledge to propose new views on those elements that can contribute to the efforts that have been made in this field.

Conclusions

Since the first studies on quality of life were undertaken in the 1930s, its approach has been nourished by epistemological, theoretical and methodological proposals that have allowed it to expand its possibilities to explore problems and offer answers in the diversity of contexts and populations that they shape reality.

For this reason, as has been reiterated throughout this writing, it is essential that those who start researching this subject know the bases on which the entire research process is based, which include the philosophical-epistemological aspects (perspective from the that the object of study is built on which there is interest in investigating), methodological (ways of approaching the object of study), practical (execution of the investigation) and political (significance of the investigation in the sociohistorical moment in which it was carried out). makes).

In addition, it is necessary to be clear about some concepts related to quality of life in order to have a frame of reference to analyze the research problem that has been raised. On the other hand, those who start their training in this field of knowledge must be attentive to the epistemological, theoretical and methodological adjustments that are made in the area of quality of life research. Thus, for example, the incorporation of subjective indicators to the study of quality of life, coupled with the promotion of qualitative methodology, has made it possible to recover the meanings, interpretations and perceptions that various populations develop around this construct, since, being a part of people's vital experience, it must be described by the people who live it and not by those who sustain the discourses for academic or political purposes.

The theoretical and epistemological framework that was intended to outline in this work can function as a map for researchers in training. On the other hand, in addition to offering a brief orientation on how to carry out research, it is necessary to propose some lines of reflection and discussion regarding the possibilities of generating knowledge:

In the first place, it is necessary to recognize that the study of quality of life has marked an epistemological turn that points to the need to continue reflecting on how it is possible to obtain a better understanding of this construct and what is the most pertinent way to evaluate it, all time that the experience of people does not adjust to the conceptualizations that have previously been elaborated, but to their daily experiences. Therefore, it is pertinent to insist that it is the theories that must be tested based on the facts (experiences of people) and not the facts based on the theories proposed by those who carry out the research.

Thus, before assuming a theoretical position, it is essential that those who are trained in research develop a scientific attitude, with total willingness to question the very certainties that have been built in the field of science from which they elaborate their knowledge. Therefore, it is desirable that in the training of researchers in the line of psychology and quality of life, a scientific attitude is encouraged, that is, an interest in knowing, investigating, questioning and discovering the phenomena of reality, rather than a affiliation by a paradigm, or by a specific methodology.

Future lines of research

This work aimed to carry out a narrative review of the theoretical and epistemological advances around research on quality of life to identify the incorporation of psychology to this line of research; With this, it was intended to offer a conceptual framework that allows those who start research in this field of knowledge to have a first approach to the theoretical aspects on which they can conduct their first research efforts.

The incorporation of subjective indicators in the evaluation of quality of life raised the need to define which aspects of life are relevant for the various populations in which quality of life is evaluated. In this sense, it is suggested to continue investigating through qualitative research on what is valuable for people when reporting their quality of life, based on their particular environments.

Following this same line of reflection, the inclusion of subjective indicators in quality of life research allowed for a better understanding of those elements that mediate the report

that people make about their living conditions. Therefore, it is suggested to carry out research that incorporates constructs of a psychological nature such as perception, thoughts, affectivity, self-concept, among others, based on quality of life indicators.

It is also suggested to analyze the variables that influence evaluations of quality of life, so that whoever is interested in investigating quality of life can not only explore this phenomenon in a particular population, but also be encouraged to delve into possibilities that allow a greater understanding of the phenomenon, such as the cognitive mechanisms used when reporting satisfaction with life, the influence of mood when making the evaluation, its relationship with the gratification of universal needs, the adjustment of one's own desires to cultural environment, or the predominance of affect over cognitions.

Likewise, future research needs to consider the instruments used to assess quality of life. In this sense, it is suggested that in further research the instruments be analyzed in terms of validity, biases such as social desirability, reliability, response biases, variations between countries or westernization of the concept.

Finally, a line of work that is relevant to analyze are the social implications that arise in research on quality of life; so that it is possible to study how various phenomena of a sociopolitical nature, such as the violation of human rights experienced by certain vulnerable populations, the climate of generalized violence in specific environments or the increasing femicides, affect the evaluation of the quality of life.

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