

Major Factors Having Influence on the Subjective Happiness of Korean Youth; From the 13th KAHBOS Data

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: As a study of secondary analysis that analyzed the 13th (2017) Korean Adolescents' Health Behavior Online Survey data second time, this is a descriptive study performed for the purpose of identifying the major factors having influence on the subjective happiness perceived by the youth.

Methods/Statistical analysis: The subjects of the 13th (2017) survey were 64,991 students from total 800 schools and out of them, 62,276 students from 799 schools participated showing 95.8% of participation rate. For the general, physical and psychological factors, the complex sample frequency analysis and for the major factors having influence on the subjective happiness, the complex sample regression analysis were used.

Findings: The age, grade, economic level, frequency of having breakfast per week, experience of receiving treatment by the violence, frequency of physical activities more than 60 minutes per week, fatigue recovery with the sleep, weight control effort, BMI, smoking, stress, subjective cognition of body type, subjective health, suicidal ideation and the agony counselor were drawn as the major factors having statistically significant influence on the subjective happiness received by Korean youths.

Improvements/Applications: To enhance the happiness of the youth, the happiness enhancement program about breakfast management prevention of violence, physical activities more 60 minutes per week, sleep and fatigue recovery, weight control, smoking, stress management, suicidal ideation, counseling with the family as counselor, etc. is need to be activated.

Keywords: Youth, Happiness, Health Behavior, KAHBOS, Affecting factors

Introduction

Adolescence is the period that the rapid changes are experienced in the physical, mental and spiritual aspect and particularly, the growth and the development in this period influence on the adult period, too, and ultimately, the adolescence is considered as important phase to determine the quality of life of a man. Happiness refers to the subjective state that one experiences the positive emotion or satisfaction in one's life through the control and commitment exerting the strengths and the potentials of an individual^[1]. In the research of Diener^[2] that

investigated the happiness from 7,204 college students in 42 countries, most people consider the satisfaction in life and the happiness very important and only 6% of the respondents answered that the money is more important than the happiness and 69% answered that the happiness is one of the most important scales^[3].

The research results that studied the Korean adolescents are as follows. National Youth Policy Institute reported that in the results of analyzing the first and third graders of middle school and the second graders of high school using NYPI Panel Survey data, it was shown reverse V shape that the happiness is high in the third graders of middle school that the first graders of middle school and the second graders of high school. Another research explored the factors having influence on the subjective happiness of youth by analyzing the

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10th Adolescents' Health Behavior Online Survey in 2014^[4], and its results showed that the happiness was higher in the middle school students than the high school students.

The subjective happiness index of the Korean youth published by 2016 8th International

Comparison of Youth and Children Happiness Index, the subjective happiness index of Korean youth was 82 points showing the lowest among the 22 OECD countries. This result explains that as shown in various data that reported the seriousness of the cognition of stress and depression and the suicidal ideation in the adolescence, the happiness and the satisfaction in life perceived by Korean youth is significantly low compared with the other countries^[5].

The subjective happiness is the evaluation method of recognition on overall subjective well-being and one evaluates subjectively what degree he/she feels the happiness^[6]. The happiness in the adolescence has influence on the quality of life after one became adult, which will become major evaluation factor in the area of mental health in the national level. That is, the emotional aspect is the most essential factor for sound growth of youth influencing through entire life. Therefore, this study is attempted to identify the current status for the sound growth in the emotional level related to the happiness of the youth and to contribute to establishing the direction for the purpose of identifying the major factors having influence on the happiness perceived subjectively by Korean youths.

Method

The 13th (2017) survey was conducted with 64,991 students from total 800 schools, 400 middle schools and 400 high schools, but 62,276 students from 799 schools participated showing 95.8% of participation rate based on the number of students.

For the general characteristics, the questionnaire items asking the gender, age, academic achievement, economic condition, residential type, number of breakfast taken per week, hour of using smartphone, experience of receiving the treatment by the violence were used.

For the physical factor, the questionnaire items asking the physical activities, degree of fatigue recovery with sleep, weight control effort, BMI, drinking,

smoking.

For the psychological factor, the questionnaire items asking stress, subjective body image, subjective health, subjective happiness, suicidal ideation, the agony counselor were used.

The data were analyzed after generating complex sample plan file by giving weight using the IBM SPSS 25.0 program, and the analysis was conducted by setting the significance level to 0.05. For the degree of general, physical and psychological factors of the subject, the complex sample frequency analysis was used. For the major factor having influence on the subjective happiness perceived by the subject, the complex sample regression analysis was used.

Results

1. General, physical and psychological factors

Out of the general factors, in the gender, the male was 31,624 students (52.1%), showing highest proportion, the age was 12-15 (54.1%), in the academic achievement, 47,624 (76.4%) students answered that their academic achievement is medium and in the economic condition, 53,970 (86.5%) students were medium showing highest proportion.

Out of the physical factors, in the number of days performing physical activities more than 60 minutes a week, '2 days or less' was high (68.1%), and 46,128 students (74.9%) answered that 'fatigue is not recovered with sleep'.

Out of the psychological factors, in the stress, 23,259 students (37.2%) answered that they feel 'very much' and 23,564 students (39.0%) answered 'happy'.

2. Factors having influence on subjective happiness

To identify the factors having influence on the subjective happiness of Korean youth, the complex sample regression analysis was performed taking the subjective happiness as dependent variable and the rest of variables as independent variable.

The significant difference was shown in the age, academic achievement, frequency of having breakfast a week, treatment experience by the violence, frequency of physical activities more than 60 minutes a week, fatigue recovery with sleep, weight control effort,

BMI, smoking, stress, subjective cognition of body type, subjective health, suicidal ideation and the agony counselor. its explanatory power was 34.1% ($F = 653.55$, $p < .001$)

Discussion

This study was conducted to identify the major factors having influence on the subjective happiness of Korean youth. In the results of this study, the happiness in the students of 12~15years old was lower than the student whose age is 16 ~ 18 years old, which is as same as results of the research by Lee and Known^[7] and as the happiness in the youth can be enhanced by the commitment to the peer group and the reinforcement of fellowship, which is reinforced when the school age is higher^[8], it is deemed to be shown lower in the students

of 12-15 years old, which is relatively younger age. In this study, the higher the academic achievement, the lower the happiness. Since in the results of research by Park and Seong^[9] the better the academic achievement, the higher the happiness in the youth and in the results of research by Han and Han^[10], the higher that economic level, the higher the happiness in the youth, they showed the different results from this research. Considering the fact that the fervor of academic achievement in the Korean youth is shown high than the youth of any society^[11] and that the stress is severe by that, the relation between them needs to be researched repeatedly. In addition, as the psychological factors, family relationship, the peer relationship, etc. may have more influence than the income level of household^[12], it need to understand the happiness in the youth considering these factors more.

Table 1. Demographic • Physical • Psychological Factors of Subjects

Characteristics		n(weight %)/ M	
Demographic Characteristics	Gender	Male	31,624(52.1)
		Female	30,652(47.9)
	Age (year)	12-15	35,888(54.1)
		16-18	2,5973(45.9)
	Academic grade	High	8,528(13.6)
		Medium	47,624(76.4)
		Low	6,124(9.9)
	Economic level	High	6,713(11.0)
		Medium	53,970(86.5)
		Low	1,593(2.6)
	Living arrangement	With family	59,162(95.4)
		Others	3,114(4.6)
	Frequency of breakfast (day/week)	≤3	24,325(38.9)
		≥4	37,951(61.1)
	Smartphone usage time (min)		202
Healed by violence	Yes	555(0.9)	
	No	60,600(99.1)	

Cont... Table 1. Demographic • Physical • Psychological Factors of Subjects

Physical factors	Physical activities performed 60 minutes or more (day/week)	≤2	41,980(68.1)
		≥3	20,296(31.9)
	The level of fatigue recovery by sleep	Sufficient	1,6148(25.1)
		Insufficient	46,128(74.9)
	Weight control efforts	No effort	29,479(47.9)
		Effort	32,797(52.1)
	Body Mass Index(BMI)(kg/cm2)	<18.5	12,557(20.6)
		18.5-24.9	30,959(52.4)
		≥25	15,819(26.9)
	Alcohol drinking	Yes	24,417(40.2)
		No	37,859(59.8)
	Smoking	Yes	8,150(13.7)
		No	54,126(86.3)
	Psychological factors	Stress	Feeling a lot
A little feeling			39,017(62.8)
Subjective body awareness		Thin	15,646(25.2)
		Normal	22,245(35.7)
		Overweight	24,385(39.1)
Subjective health status		Good	44,913(71.8)
		Normal	13,417(21.7)
		Bad	3,946(6.5)
Subjective happiness		Very happy	18,573(29.1)
		Happy	23,564(38.0)
		Average	15,309(25.0)
		Not happy	4,041(6.5)
		Very not happy	7,89(1.3)
Suicidal thoughts		Yes	7,584(12.1)
		No	54,692(87.9)
Worried counselor		Family	24,861(40.1)
		Others	37,415(59.9)

Table 2. Factors Influencing Subjective Happiness

Characteristics		B	t(p)	F(p)/ R2
Age(year)	12-15	-.071	-5.76(<.001)	653.55(<.001)/ .341
	16-18	1.0		
Academic grade	High	-.228	-12.37(<.001)	
	Medium	-.123	-8.18(<.001)	
	Low	1.0		
Economic level	High	-.414	-12.24(<.001)	
	Medium	-.212	-6.88(<.001)	
	Low	1.0		
Frequency of breakfast(day/week)	≤3	.035	4.27(<.001)	
	≥4	1.0		
Healed by violence	Yes	1.0		
	No	.125	2.66(.008)	
Physical activities performed 60 minutes or more(day/week)	≤2	1.0		
	≥3	-.073	-7.88(<.001)	
The level of fatigue recovery by sleep	Sufficient	1.0		
	Insufficient	-.237	-26.73(<.001)	
Weight control efforts	No effort	.055	6.67(<.001)	
	Effort	1.0		
Body Mass Index(BMI)	<18.5	.045	2.69(.007)	
	18.5-24.9	.081	7.20(<.001)	
	≥25	1.0		
Smoking	Yes	1.0		
	No	.055	3.88(.001)	
Stress	Feeling a lot	1.0		
	A little feeling	.595	62.90(<.001)	
Subjective body awareness	Thin	-.068	-4.70(<.001)	
	Normal	-.045	-4.19(<.001)	
	Overweight	1.0		
Subjective health status	Good	-.583	-31.80(<.001)	
	Normal	-.187	-10.06(<.001)	
	Bad	1.0		
Suicidal thoughts	Yes	1.0		
	No	.463	30.96(<.001)	
Worried counselor	Family	-.182	-24.20(<.001)	
	Others	1.0		

In the results of this study, the quality of life was represented high in the students having 3 breakfasts a week than those who having 4 breakfast a week, which is same as the results of research by Lee and Kwon^[7]. In addition, those who do not have treatment experience by the violence perceived happier than those who have it, which is similar to the results of research by Park, Hong and Han^[13]. The high stress in the youth may influence on the acts of violence, which becomes the cause of low happiness^[13]. Therefore, to prevent the acts of violence by the youth, it needs to enhance the happiness. In the results of research by Kim and Yeom^[14], there was difference according to the gender but the subjective happiness was represented high when the physical activities per week by the youth is more than 0 ~2days. However, this study showed the difference as the happiness was low when it was 3 days or more, for which the additional research is needed considering the detailed setting on the type and the scope of the physical activities and other characteristics of the youth. In the results of this study, the happiness was low when the students do not recover from fatigue with sleep compared to when they do not, which is as same as the result of research by Lee^[15] and proves the importance of physical factors in the happiness. Therefore, to enhance the happiness of the youth, the sleep enough to recover from the fatigue is needed. In the results of this study, the happiness was high when the students do not control the weight and when the BMI is less than 25kg/m², which is as same as the results of research by Sim^[16]. The adolescent who satisfies with his/her own appearance is high feels happy but if the satisfaction is low, as the high interest is not satisfied, the happiness is lowered as he/she shrinks psychologically^[16]. Therefore, to enhance the happiness of the youth, it is necessary to make them to have correct perception on the appearance. In the results of this study, the happiness was high when perceiving less stress. This result is as same as the results of research by Suh^[17] and since the stress in the youth may cause the anxiety and frustration of the youth resulting in emotional problem^[18], the active intervention to relieve the stress is required.

In the results of this study, the students who do not think of suicide feel higher happiness compared to those who think of it, which is as same as the results of research by Park and Lee^[19]. The depression, which is being increased continuously, can be led to suicidal impulse, which may hinder the satisfaction with life and exert negative influence on the happiness^[20, 21].

Therefore, the emotional approach to reduce the stress and the depression is required.

In this study, higher happiness was shown in case of counseling the agony with other than family than the case of counseling the agony with the family. However, the open communication can become a factor to enhance the happiness of the youth^[22], it is necessary to maintain not only the positive relationship with the peer group but also the efficient communication with the family.

Conclusion

The youth can grow up as a matured adult as long as they adapt to lots of changes experiencing the emotionally. The emotion is the important factor to stabilize the life and among them, the happiness is the important factor having influence on the quality of life. Therefore, to enhance the happiness of the youth, effort to activate the intervention program around the breakfast, prevention of violence, physical activities more than 60 minutes per week, sleep and fatigue recovery, weight control, non-smoking, stress management, suicidal ideation, counseling with the agony counselor, etc. is required. And the follow-up research considering the diverse factors having influence should be made and the happiness enhancement program should be developed.

Ethical Clearance: Not required

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Conflict of Interest: Nil

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