

# Social Capital and Resident Happiness in Korea\*

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Korean society has achieved remarkable economic growth, however when income reaches a certain level and basic needs are met, it does not proportionally increase happiness cognition, as it can be seen in Easterlin's paradox. Therefore, we should consider complementary factor such as fairness to enhance the level of residents' satisfaction. Fairness theory explains the motivational effects of perceived imbalances in the exchange process, and people subconsciously compare the proportion of perceived input and output. In addition, communication perform a role as a medium in the conscious process because it can be a essential criterion on evaluation. We finds many results of the precedent analysis have investigated that fairness judgement has a direct and indirect effect on value evaluation. but the role of communication is not well-defined in that process.

This study tried to analyze the mediating effect of communication on the relationship between the fairness and the residents' happiness awareness. Recognizing fairness may be a very important factor in this process and mediating effect of communication is identified simultaneously. Therefore, it is important not to make policy reflected effects of fairness but to make public program considering communication for residents' happiness in the future.

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## I . Introduction

Happiness is a key factor in the quality of individual life. Happiness is a composite concept including achievement feeling, cultural richness, feeling of safety, and absence of stress. At the local level, however, as a collective concept, residents' happiness may be understood as community well-being or sustainability of the community. Therefore, promoting happiness of community is not only a matter of the private domain but also a public task to be discussed in the non private domain(Kim, ByungSeop, Ahn Sun-Min, Lee SooYoung, 2015). And happiness at this perspective can be defined as the level of quality of life according to the state of physical conditions on the objective level including subjective aspect of the individual(Jung Eun Jin, Lee Jae Deok, Chung Hyang Yoon, 2017). A demographic analysis of Koreans shows that there is wider diversity among groups according to gender, income, educational background etc. In addition, the sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, and love and trust with the spouse were also important as a mental factor(Choi Young, 2016). So we can assume that residents can be classified by the average recognition, judgment and evaluation (Kim, Seung-hyun, 2010).

However, we also find that the effect of GDP and individual income increases on euphoria is limited, and that the effect of social capital and social relations is much more significant (Nam HoHa·Kim, SangBong,

2012). This is because the average perception and evaluation of the residents is considered to be highly influenced by social capital. For example, if the composition and operation of the community is judged to be unfair as a whole, the infrastructure such as traffic, environment, culture, and education can be evaluated very poorly despite its quantitative and qualitative excellence. The recognition of fairness have broad impact on the evaluation of other variables because when an individual evaluates the distributed results, the principle of equality of compensation based on input plays a criteria. There can be certain limit to analyze fairness concept with some questionnaire. Moreover, it has limitations such as accuracy problems of aggregation, distortion of perception, excessive simplification. Nevertheless, the theory of fairness explains the motive effects of perceived imbalances in the exchange process and people compare their ratios of perceived output and input with others. In this comparison, if both ratios are the same, they are perceived to be satisfied with the process state, but if both ratios are not equal, the individual compares his or her compensation to that of the other party to determine whether the exchange relationship is fair or not.

According to such an oligopoly, a compensation given to an individual can be regarded as fair when it is distributed proportionally to the individual contributing to the group's output. In collective dimension, fairness realization can be influenced by the medium of communication among residents. The lack of fairness in social capital and mis-communication are constantly raised as big issue in our society. This study attempts to empirically analyze how the fairness cognition affects the happiness degree of the residents through the parameter of communication. We discuss the theoretical viewpoint concerning values for quantitative analysis before measuring the relationship between fairness and happiness of residents and the mediating effects of communication below.

## II. Theoretical Discussion

### 1. Social Capital

We can classify social capital as Bonding and Bridging Social Capital. Bonding capital emphasizes homogeneity within the community and it is internally oriented and reinforces individual reciprocity and solidarity as a social glue. Bridge capital, on the other hand, is characterized by outward orientation and diverse hierarchies through connections with various external communities or networks.

For Korean local residents, social capital emphasizes bonding capital in the process of forming a community or settlement in the region. However, bridging capital is increasingly emphasized for the purpose of complexity of interests and pursuit of common interests. Participating in a community and building a network can be a necessary process for adaptation and long-term living in the community (Lee Seungjong, Ki Youngwha, Kim Namsook, 2013). However, the key factor to enhance participation and network is actually communication because social capital is not constructed without communication activities. In particular, considering the characteristics of Korean society, the nature and contents of social capital are largely determined by communication and it has significant impact on the quality of life of residents in a particular area.

In addition, the more dense networks, the more the social norms based on reciprocity are effective, inducing members to adapt and establishing trust based on mutual obligations and responsibilities through active communication and understanding. Therefore, the social network provides the psychological resources to the members by raising the reciprocity in

the community, solving the problems, and reducing the transaction cost among the members within the community(Jung EunJin, Lee JaeDeok, Chung HyangYoon, 2017).

There are many studies on the relationship between social capital and happiness. Some Researches that explore the social context of subjective assessment of life satisfaction, happiness, and health show that social capital considering family, neighbors, religion, and community ties has a positive effect on the promotion of happiness (Helliwell, 2003). Besides, recent comparative studies have also pointed out that GDP growth and income growth do not continuously increase the happiness index(Oswald, A. J., 1997). Simultaneously, according to research on social leisure activities such as meeting with friends, club life, religious organizations is positive for life satisfaction.

Synthetically, we can defines social capital as 'the characteristics of social organizations such as trust, norms and networks that enhance social efficiency by promoting collaborative behavior. Social network refers to an interconnected group of people within a community, trust means the belief that people will behave as they say, and social norm means an informal rule embedded in behavior in a variety of situations<sup>1)</sup>.

## 2. Fairness

Fairness can be divided into fairness of distribution and procedural fairness (Helliwell, J.F.,& Putnam, R.D. 2004). First, Distribution fairness refers to the equitable distribution of organizational resources. The initial study of distributional fairness was based on results returned and social

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1) Recent sociological studies shows that the effects of GDP and individual income increase on happiness are limited, while the effects of social capital and social relations on happiness are much more significant (Nam Eun-young, 2012).

experiences. We can argue that individuals in an exchange relationship feel fairness when receiving compensation for their own efforts. In particular, the theory of distribution fairness is based on two fundamental premises. First, the perception of an individual's fairness depends on the distribution proportionate to the contribution of the individual. The degree of commitment can be expected to be rewarded proportionally to performance levels. Second, the comparison between the percentage of compensation for one's contribution and the rate of others is an important factor in fairness perception. Thus, an individual expects a rate of compensation for the same contribution through comparison with others. Second, Distributional fairness can be pointed out as the theoretical limit that individuals pay attention only to the distribution of compensation within a group. The beneficiaries of the compensation are not only the consequences but also the process.

In this context, the group value model assumes that individuals attach importance to belonging to a group because they secure their identity through long-term social relations. Also, it is important for an individual to consider what kind of treatment he or she receives from a group, which is an important factor in how an individual treats himself or herself to form the identity in a group. So, we can suggest that if individuals are able to express their opinions in the decision-making process of community, they will be able to more fully reflect their own gains in the process of value distribution<sup>2)</sup>.

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2) With democratic point of view, they say that procedural justice should be emphasized not for just equal opportunity but for justice of results in Korean community operation.

### 3. Happiness

In Korea, most researches concerning happiness have been focused on exploring factors that affect happiness. They have paid great attention to happiness factors since Easterlin's paradox research, which confirms that the material wealth and economic aspects have limitations in promoting happiness (Easterlin, 1995). Researches on the factors influencing the happiness has been accumulated and proliferated on the fields of psychology, sociology, politics(Frey & Stutzer, 2010; Helliwell, 2003).

The usual local policy for residents has been focused on social and objective programs such as transportation infrastructure, park, welfare center etc. in short fiscal years. However, happiness of residents has been measured as a concept equivalent to subjective well-being or subjective quality of life including work experience, culture, and trust, but in fact happiness can be defined from various perspectives. The gap between concept and program is not closing all the time, so we need to consider subjective concept in measuring happiness apparently. Diener and Lucas(1999) defined happiness as the subjective satisfaction of individuals and Veenhoven(1996) regards it as an affective aspect of happiness and at the same time a cognitive aspect.

Synthetically happiness can be defined as a perception of one's status in relation to his goals, expectations, and interests within the culture and value system in which an individual lives<sup>3)</sup>.

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3) Of course, the perception of one's own state can also be understood in various ways, such as the view of pleasure and the state of absence of suffering and the view of total life satisfaction.

III. Research method

1. Hypothesis

In order to verify the influencing relationship between fairness as a social capital factor and happiness of residents in exploring the path, mediating communication value is classified into social group communication and government communication.

<Table 1> Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis		
Hypothesis 1	Fairness will have a positive impact on communication among community residents	
Hypothesis 2	Fairness will have a positive impact on communication between the government and community residents	
Hypothesis 3	Fairness will have positive (+) impact on happiness of residents	
Hypothesis 4	Communication among community residents will have positive (+) impact on happiness of residents	
Hypothesis 5	Communication between the government and the community will have positive (+) impact on happiness	

2. Research subjects

This study used the data of the 2017 Social Integration Survey by the Korea Institute of Public Administration. The number of samples collected from 17 metropolitan cities and provinces is 8,000. As the result of descriptive statistics, each demographics are shown as below <table 2>.



〈Table 2〉 Demographics

	classification	freq.	(%)		item	freq.	(%)
sex	male	4,050	50.6	job	expert	493	6.2
	female	3,950	49.4		officer	1,367	17.1
age	19~29	1,556	19.5		sales	2,251	28.1
	30~39	1,540	19.3		farming	413	5.2
	40~49	1,833	22.9		technician	1,180	14.8
	50~59	1,814	22.7		others	24	.3
	60~69	1,257	15.7		non response	2,272	28.4
marrige	single	2,053	25.7	income	under 100	484	6.1
	married	5,354	66.9		100~200	710	8.9
	bereaved	294	3.7		200~300	1,214	15.2
	divorced	299	3.7		300~400	1,667	20.8
edu.	elementary	372	4.7		400~500	1,521	19.0
	junior high school	539	6.7		500~600	1,086	13.6
	senior high school	3,700	46.3		over 600 million	1,318	13.5
	college	3,389	42.4				

3. Measurement Tools and Data Analysis Methods

The measurement variables of this study consisted of fairness cognition of our society, the happiness degree of residents and communication. Based on the previous research, this study analyzed variables by using the statistical program R. The methods chosen were exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis.

The specific analysis methods are as follows. First, the descriptive

statistics of the variables were analyzed to confirm the mean and standard deviation of the variables, and the frequency and percentage were checked to examine the demographic characteristics of the subjects. Second, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine fairness, social group communication, government-citizen communication, and happiness variables.

〈Table 2〉 Factors and Question Compositions

Variable	Factor	N	Question Compositions of Factor
Independent Variable	Fairness	8	Tax, Opportunity, Balanced development, Law, Politics, Journal, Company Relationship Distribution Structure
Mediator	Communication among groups	2	Among Neighbourhood, Among Generations
	Communication with government	4	Central Government, National Assembly, Local Government, Local Assembly
Dependent Variable	Happiness	3	Happiness State (Yesterday) Satisfaction of Life (Recently) Value of Work (Daily)
	Total	17	

Third, the convergence validity and discriminant validity were verified for the measurement tools. Fourth, the structural equation model verified path coefficients between exogenous variables and endogenous variables and confirmed mediating effects. Fifth, we examined the exogenous

factors affecting social group communication, and government communication through multiple regression analysis. In addition, the mediating effect of control variables on the factors such as gender, age, marital status, educational background, occupation, and income were analyzed.

The verification procedure was executed by confirmatory factor analysis in order to confirm the latent variable. Next, the overall fit of the structural model and the significance of each path were confirmed. SRMR and RMSEA were used as absolute fitness indices, and CFI and TLI were applied to confirm incremental fitness indices. Finally, to verify the mediating effects of social and government communication in the relationship between fairness and happiness, we analyzed the structural equation model and obtained the degree of indirect and total effect.

## IV. Analysis

### 1. Measurement model analysis

Prior to the model validation, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) of the main potential variables of the study were presented in <Table 3>.

**<Table 3> Descriptive Statistics**

Latent Variables	N	Min.	Max.	mean	S.D.
Fairness	8,000	1	4	2.24	0.471
Social group Communication	8,000	1	4	2.36	0.660
Government Communication	8,000	1	4	2.18	0.567
Happiness	8,000	0	10	6.26	1.461

Before validating the structural equation, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to verify whether the measured variables of the model reflect the theoretical concept well.

#### 1) Convergence and Discrimination Validity

Convergence validity is verified to assess the reliability of the variables used to measure constructs<sup>4)</sup>. The measurement results are shown in <Table 4>. We can confirm that all latent variable values are

4) Cronbach's alpha, conceptual reliability(C.R.) and mean variance extraction(AVE) are often used. Generally, when Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value is 0.6 or more, C.R. If the value is greater than or equal to 0.7 and the AVE value is greater than or equal to 0.5, then convergence validity is recognized.

over 0.7.

〈Table 4〉 Convergence Validity

Latent Variable	Cronbach's $\alpha$	C.R.	AVE
Fairness	0.843	0.842	0.403
Social group Communication	0.714	0.717	0.558
Government Communication	0.819	0.805	0.538
Happiness	0.817	0.820	0.605

The results of the correlation analysis are shown in <Table 5>. We can confirm that all related measurement variables including fairness, social communication and happiness were statistically significant. As the discriminant validity is judged to be valid when the value of each latent variable is larger than the correlation coefficient, we may confirm the Discrimination Validity with this model

〈Table 5〉 Validity of Discrimination

	Fairness	S.C	G.C	Happiness	$\sqrt{AVE}$
Fairness	1				0.635
S.C	0.211***	1			0.747
G.C	0.420***	0.207***	1		0.733
Happiness	0.140***	0.161***	0.101***	1	0.778

\* $p<0.05$ , \*\* $p<0.01$ , \*\*\* $p<0.001$

## 2) Verification of Conformity of Structural Model

In order to find out whether the model with fairness as an exogenous variable and happiness as an endogenous variable fit well with the empirical data, a structural model was established and the fitness was verified. According to <table 6> which shows each fit index result, all indices are good and consequently we may confirm that the theoretical model fits well with the data.

**<Table 6> Fitness Index**

Fitness Index	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Results	0.937	0.928	0.050	0.030

## 2. Research Hypothesis Verification

In order to test the research hypothesis derived from the study model between fairness and happiness of residents, the z-value is the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables, Which is an integrated concept for the path coefficient<sup>5)</sup>.

The results of the hypotheses derived from the structural equation model analysis are shown in <Table 7> below. First, the results showed that the path coefficient was 0.220 (Z=10.899) at the level of  $p < 0.001$ . Second, with the H2, path coefficient was 0.423(Z=21.135) at the level of  $p < 0.001$ . So, H1 and H2 were adopted. Third, H3 showed that

5) The z-value is the path coefficient divided by the standard error. If the z-value exceeds  $\pm 1.96$  at the confidence level of 95%, the null hypothesis is rejected and the hypothesis is adopted.

the path coefficient was 0.111( $Z=5.812$ ) at the level of  $p < 0.001$ . Fourth, the H4 of social communication and happiness showed that the path coefficient was 0.125( $Z=6.650$ ) at the level of  $p < 0.001$ . Fifth, the H5 on the relationship between government communication and happiness showed that the path coefficient was 0.043( $Z=2.392$ ) at the level of  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, H3, H4 and H5 were adopted as well. The results of the above analysis show that fairness has a positive effect on happiness, social communication, happiness, government communication. This means that as the perception of fairness increases, the communication and the level of happiness increases.

**〈Table 7〉 Research Hypothesis Verification**

H	Path	B	$\beta$	S.E.	Z	P	
1	F $\rightarrow$ S.C	0.305	0.220	0.023	10.899	0.000	accept
2	F $\rightarrow$ G.C	0.431	0.423	0.017	21.135	0.000	accept
3	F $\rightarrow$ H	0.314	0.111	0.054	5.812	0.000	accept
4	S.C $\rightarrow$ H	0.216	0.125	0.032	6.650	0.000	accept
5	G.C $\rightarrow$ H	0.122	0.043	0.051	2.392	0.017	accept

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Sex was dummy variable of 0(female) and 1(male). The marital status was also converted into dummy variables of 0(married), 1(single, bereaved, divorced). As a result of the analysis, according to <Table 8>, some demographic characteristics such as sex, age, marriage and education are significant in the path toward social communication. Jobs, income and communication did not have a significant effect in that path.

In the case of happiness, marital status, education, job and income were significant within confidence interval.

〈Table 8〉 Controlled Variable Verification

Path			B	$\beta$	S.E.	P
S.C	<-	Sex(female)	-0.012	-0.084	0.020	0.000
		Age	0.079	0.142	0.010	0.000
		Marriage	-0.155	-0.101	0.025	0.000
		Edu.	-0.066	-0.072	0.017	0.000
		Job	-0.002	-0.004	0.009	0.795
		Income	0.013	0.030	0.007	0.059
G.C	<-	Sex(female)	0.017	0.019	0.012	0.165
		Age	0.001	0.004	0.006	0.839
		Marriage	0.003	0.003	0.015	0.862
		Edu.	-0.002	-0.004	0.010	0.810
		Job	0.005	0.014	0.005	0.352
		Income	0.005	0.019	0.004	0.202
Happiness	<-	Sex(female)	0.006	0.002	0.036	0.876
		Age	-0.034	-0.035	0.019	0.078
		Marriage	-0.145	-0.055	0.045	0.001
		Edu.	0.174	0.109	0.032	0.000
		Job	-0.061	-0.062	0.016	0.000
		Income	0.041	0.56	0.012	0.001

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

As a result of analyzing direct and indirect effects, according to <Table 9>, the total effect of fairness was 0.151. The direct effect of social communication was 0.125 and the indirect effect was 0.022. On the



other hand, the effect of government communication was 0.043 and 0.018 respectively.

**〈Table 9〉 Total Effect**

Variable	Effect	Fairness	S.C	G.C
Happiness	Direct	0.111***	0.125***	0.043***
	Indirect	-	0.022***	0.018*
	Total	0.151***	-	-

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

The results of analysis show that fairness explains happiness through social communication and the parameters of government communication. In other words, fairness cognition degree of community is contributing to the level of happiness of residents through the communication among society and with governments.

## V. Conclusion

We analyzed the relationship between fairness as a social capital factor and happiness cognition of residents. This study is different from the previous studies in that it analyzed the influence relation between fairness and happiness cognition degree and verified the communication mediating effect which is considered to be critically important in Korean society(Shin Seung Bae, 2015).

As usual, the factors considered to be necessary for individual happiness were economic income, health and environmental factors and institutional factors of the national for a long time.

Basically, economic income was considered to be an essential indicator of happiness, because it has been absolute impact on the quality of life and satisfaction of human beings (Nam Ho Ha·Kim Sang Bong,2012 ; Ryu Jia, 2016). However, if the income realized to a certain level and basic needs are met, as can be seen from the paradox of Easterlin, happiness does not proportionally increase with income level rather increase with the level of social capital which is influenced by the communication that activates social relationship (Seo In Seok, Wang Bin, Woo Film, 2016). Therefore, local government policy of infrastructure has clear limit in an effort to enhance happiness of residents. In other words, it is imperative to change from economic and construction policy to social capital and communication policy.

We can not be happy as individual desires rises indefinitely. But creating a fully-fledged society can only be ideal (Lee Yeon Kyung·Lee Seung Jong, 2017; Johnson, W., & Krueger, R. F. 2006). Therefore, it is very important to continuously pursue and actively communicate in the

fair process toward perfect community. Absolutely, through social and public communication, we can secure community integrity and prevent lots of conflicts in community. In order to reduce the risk of extreme gaps between communities, it may be necessary to develop distinguishing community norms and fine-tuning systems, as well as local programs that promote communication and interchanges between residents. It is especially important to make policy efforts to raise awareness of fairness within the community members. The residents need to be compensated according to their contribution to community. Before arguing consequential equity, process fairness should be established in the allocation of community resources because process fairness has leverage toward communication and happiness degree of residents.

However, the analytical results presented in this study are limited empirical evidence. And it analyzed a few variables related with residents happiness and it is also limited to using only one year's survey data. In future research, it will be necessary to conduct more in-depth analysis using comprehensive variables and time series data.

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## 한국에서의 사회적자본과 주민행복\*

오영균\*\*

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사회적 자본은 한 사회의 건전한 발전을 위해 매우 중요한 요소이다. 특히 한국사회는 물리적 경제적 성장은 괄목하게 이루었지만 공감적 심리적 토대를 구축하지 못해 전반적인 행복지수를 낮추고 있다. 본 연구는 이러한 사회적 자본 중 특별히 공정성과 주민행복간의 관계와 영향관계에 있어서 의사소통의 매개 효과를 분석한 것이다.

경제적 수입은 삶의 질과 인간의 만족에 절대적인 영향을 미치기 때문에 행복의 중요한 지표로 간주될 수 있다. 그러나 소득이 일정 수준에 도달하고 기본적인 욕구가 충족되면 Easterlyn의 역설에서 볼 수 있듯이 행복을 비례적으로 증가시키지 못한다. 따라서 공정성과 같은 사회적 자본을 적극적으로 활성화하는 정책으로 전환하여야 한다. 공정성 이론은 교환 과정에서 인식된 불균형의 동기 효과를 설명하며 이 이론에 따르면 사람들은 지각된 산출물과 투입물의 비율을 다른 사람들과 비교한다. 따라서 행복에 영향을 미치는 다른 요인들에 대한 기본적 평가기준이 될 수 있으며 이 과정에서 공정성을 인식할 수 있는 소통이 매우 중요하게 된다. 분석결과 공정성은 직간접적으로 유의미한 효과를 가지고 있는 것으로 확인되었다. 따라서 향후 주민 행복의 향상을 위해 지역 사회 내 공정성을 높이기 위한 정책적 노력을 기울이는 것이 매우 중요하다.

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주제어 : 사회적자본, 행복, 삶의 질, 소통, 공정성

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