



Application of the Easterlin Paradox to Leisure Time on Korean Career Women

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine if the Easterlin paradox occurs in the relationship between the incomes and happiness of career women in Korea and whether the paradox can be applicable in a leisure study context. In particular, this study examined whether the marital status affects how the Easterlin paradox occurs and whether the application of the Easterlin paradox can be extended to a leisure study to determine if the Easterlin paradox occurs in the relationship between leisure time and happiness. The results showed that there are variations according to marital status in some parts of the income levels but the level of happiness reaches a plateau when the income reaches a certain point, meaning that the level of happiness does not increase as much as with increasing incomes. In addition, an analysis of the change in happiness level according to the leisure times after applying the Easterlin paradox to the leisure study context showed that the Easterlin paradox did not occur in every sample. On the other hand, when analyzing the samples after separating them into two groups according to their marital status, married working women and single working women, the Easterlin paradox occurred clearly in the group of single working women.

Key words : Easterlin's paradox, happiness, leisure participation, Korean career women

주요어 : 이스털린 패러독스, 행복, 여가참여, 한국직장여성

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I. Introduction

Will personal happiness increase with increasing income? The question of the relationship between income and happiness is still valid and arguments regarding this question are continuing. Happiness can be defined as 'Whole Life Satisfaction (Brandt, 1967; Tatarkiewicz, 1966; Telfer, 1980).' Generally, economists understand personal happiness through the income function and they assume that happiness will increase with increasing income. However, Easterlin (1974; 1995; 2001; 2010), an economist, had a different view and proposed the Easterlin paradox based on the relative income hypothesis. The Easterlin paradox proposes that when income reaches a certain point, happiness does not increase with further increases in income. The argument of Easterlin paradox has been refuted by several scholars (Hagerty & Veenhoven, 2003; Stevenson & Wolfers, 2008; Veenhoven, 1991 etc.).

Although the arguments are continuing, various studies aimed at determining the relationship between leisure activity and happiness have been conducted (Bailey & Fernando, 2012; Lu & Hu, 2005; Ragheb & Griffith, 1982; Wang & Wong, 2014). In particular, Ragheb & Griffith (1982) examined the types of leisure activities and reported that the satisfaction level of leisure time spent for sports and travels is much higher than that of other leisure activities and the satisfaction level positively impacts happiness. They reported that the satisfaction level of leisure time mediates the relationship between leisure activities and happiness. Studies conducted in the field of leisure study insisted that happiness keeps

increasing with increasing leisure time (Argyle, 1996; Chae, Han, 2002; Kim, Choi, 2006; Lu & Hu, 2005; Wang, Orpana, Morrison, Groh, Dai, & Luo, 2012). On the other hand, most of those studies examined the linear relationship between the leisure time and happiness using regression analysis as their methodology. Therefore, those studies have a limitation in determining any non-linear relationships between leisure time and happiness.

According to the OECD (2013), the happiness level of Koreans ranked 27th among 36 OECD countries while Korea had the highest suicide rates and women's depression in the world, which clearly indicate that the mental health of Koreans is under threat. In particular, Korea has a wider gender wage gap than other OECD countries as the wage of Korean working women still remains at two third of that of Korean working men (Korea Labor Institute, 2014). Those statistics indicate that the happiness level of Koreans is not high in accordance with increasing income along with Korean economic growth and that the Easterlin paradox can be applied in the situation. Moreover, it was reported that Korean working women are disadvantaged in their workplaces due to pregnancy, maternity leave, etc. (Rowan, 2000).

According to the statistics of the telephone consultation for equality reported by Korean Women Workers' Association United (2014), the rate of consultation on disadvantage due to pregnancy, and maternity leave has increased constantly from 13.6% in 2003 to 42.7% in 2013. In addition, Korean women are discriminated in working conditions in relation to promotion, unfair dismissal, overtime work, and they suffer

from sexual harassment, gender discrimination, violent language, assault, etc. in their jobs. Accordingly, given the discriminating job environment, it is applicable that the Easterlin paradox, which is a phenomenon that the increase in happiness level reaches a plateau at the satiation point of income, can occur in the relationship between happiness and incomes of Korean working women. Furthermore, the fact that telephone consultation on disadvantages, including unfair dismissal and employment discrimination due to pregnancy, giving birth, and maternity leave of married women, reached up to 84.6% of the telephone consultation cases, suggests that the Easterlin paradox will certainly occur in Korean working women. This also indicates that the relationship between income and happiness can differ according to environmental factors, such as marital status.

Therefore, in this study, the authors examined the Easterlin paradox in terms of the relationship between incomes and happiness by targeting Korean working women. We thereafter expanded application of the paradox to leisure activities to determine if the Easterlin paradox occurs in the relation between leisure time and happiness. Given the situation that the female employment rate in Korea is up to 48.7% (Korean Statistical Information Service, 2014), this research targeting Korean working women and examining the Easterlin paradox in the relationship between income and happiness and the relationship between leisure time and happiness of women is meaningful as a signpost for the leisure policy. In addition, this research will have meaningful implications for formulating a leisure policy that promotes happiness in the consideration of the Easterlin

paradox in leisure contexts.

Happiness & Easterlin's Paradox

Over the past 20 years, studies on happiness have been conducted actively by economists and psychologists. Generally, economists understand personal happiness (satisfaction with life, wellness, utility, etc.) through the income function and assume that happiness increases with increasing income (Moon, 2012). On the other hand, based on the relative income hypothesis of Duesenberry (1949), Easterlin insisted that an increase in income does not necessarily bring an increase in happiness. According to the relative income hypothesis of Duesenberry (1949), happiness is determined by comparing one's relative place on the income spectrum with a reference group and with one's previous income. Therefore, an increase in the absolute quantity of income does not relate to an increase in happiness. In other words, when the overall national income increases but the personal relative status does not change remarkably, an increase in happiness does not occur; rather, due to adaptive expectations¹, which is that the expectation level increases with increasing others' income, an increase in income does not affect the increase in happiness. Similarly, the phenomenon that an increase in happiness does not occur with increasing income after the income reaches a certain point is called The Easterlin Paradox (Easterlin, 1974; 2010).

According to Easterlin (1974), while the absolute level of income works as a major factor determining personal happiness in a low-income society, in a society where income exceeds a certain level, non-economic factors, such as

family relationships, plays a decisive role in determining personal happiness. The Easterlin paradox is supported by several researchers. Layard (2005) reported that happiness increases until income reaches a certain point (national income per head reaches approximately \$15,000), but when income reaches a certain point, the association between income and happiness becomes weak, as Easterlin argued. In addition, Mayer (2002) and Mayer & Diener (1995) insisted that although material affluence has some relationship with happiness, the level of national happiness is not determined solely by the material affluence. Moreover, the level of happiness cannot be predictable anymore when the income exceeds a certain level.

On the other hand, some studies refuted Easterlin's argument. Veenhoven (1991) refuted the Easterlin paradox and insisted based on needs theory 2 that the personal needs do not change by comparing the others' needs or according to personal adaptive levels. Rather, personal needs are inherent factors, so happiness increases as the individual's efforts to meet their needs for achievement. In addition, Hagerty & Veenhoven (2003) insisted that an increase in national income accompanies an increase in national happiness even in a nation with a high national income level.

Furthermore there are arguments that an increase in income and an increase in happiness are not always directly proportional to each other. Accordingly, the Easterlin paradox of the relationship between income and happiness needs to be examined. This is meaningful because when the examinations prove the Easterlin paradox, the paradox can be used to confirm that materialistic growth is not the

only and best way to promote human happiness. Furthermore, it can be a signpost to develop national policies to promote national happiness. In particular, the paradox can be used to emphasize whether it is necessary that the government switches its focus from economic policies to social policies, such as leisure, welfare, environment, occupation, and when prioritizing national policies.

Happiness and Relational goods in Aristotle's Eudaimonia

Besides Easterlin's Paradox, there have been many attempts to discover what contributes to happiness. Especially researchers in the field of Happiness Economics has actively studied determinants of happiness other than income (Bruni & Porta, 2005; Easterlin, 2003; 2004; 2005; Frey & Stutzer, 2002). Traditional economic theories have stated that an increase in income itself will also result in an increase in happiness. Happiness economists insist that an increase in income does not guarantee an increase in happiness. Easterlin is the leading scholar in this area. Economic studies prior to Happiness Economics focused on a hedonistic approach, in which happiness can be determined in the degree of your physical, emotional, and psychological satisfaction. In other words, happiness can be identified by the ability to satisfy one's preferences and be financially efficient.

In contrast to traditional beliefs, Happiness Economics inherits Aristoteles' Eudaimonia 3 approach, and states that happiness is a result of a life where one's full potential has been manifested and the ultimate goals in one's life have been met. Aristoteles stated it is in peoples' nature to live with each other,

meaning that 'man' is a political being. Therefore, a happy person is someone who exists and lives with other people; in other words, happy people live among friends. Aristoteles also has stated that a good life is based strongly on 'Reciprocity'. This is why when it comes to happiness, things that have an intrinsic value, such as friendship, love, and political activities, are more important than wealth accumulation.

Aristoteles defined friendship, love, and political commitment as the things of intrinsic value that contribute to happiness, and Bruni (2010) showed that happiness comes automatically if you lead a life of things focused on intrinsic value. In other words, he believed that achieving happiness was impossible without the reciprocal exchange between social relationships, such as friends, family, and lovers. Bruni (2010) proposed that the values of friendship, love, and political commitment were inclusive in sociality, or 'Relational Goods'. The phrase, 'Relational Goods', was first used by Nussbaum (1986) and is largely based on the interpretations from Aristoteles Happiness (Eudaimonia). Bruni (2010) stated that the theory of 'Relational Goods' was based on Aristoteles Eudaimonia, which had the basic attributes of reciprocity and gratuitousness. He stated that specifically in relationships of love or friendship, the actual relationship is made and shared together, so in that aspect, it is reciprocal. In addition, the relationship also has the characteristics of gratuitousness if that relationship is voluntary where it is not forced and nothing of value or profit is exchanged.

On the other hand, Uhlener (1989) argued from an economic perspective and defined relational goods as a direct correlation to

"Economic Goods". According to Uhlener (1989) 'Relational Goods' can be achieved solely through mutual agreement, and that the individual cannot produce and consume at the same time. Furthermore, he stated that 'Relational Goods' rely heavily on the interaction with others, and the actual experience can only be enjoyed (consumed) when that experience is shared with others. An example of 'Relational Goods' would be a comparison between having a good dinner on the weekend by yourself versus having the same dinner with your family. The contention is that there are different levels of joy and happiness between the two scenarios. In addition, 'Relational Goods' become "Economic Goods" based on the fact that basic human needs and desires are satisfied and fulfilled through social exchange and interaction. Because 'Relational Goods' is the act of producing and consuming goods through an interaction with other people, it is a process that requires time, and time is normally used to invest is now utilized to consume, resulting in a further decrease in the time for labor, thereby creating a loss due to the cost of opportunity.

In other words, the increase in income provides an opportunity to consume more goods, which may lead to increased happiness. On the other hand, because this process decreases the time needed to produce, it may also lead to decreased happiness, which means that there is a possibility that increased income may not have a direct correlation with increased happiness. The concepts and logic behind the relationship between income and happiness is one of the ways the Easterlin Paradox is described. Wealth accumulated and

expanded through the market may provide happiness for society, but this may place restrictions on production and consumption when the market itself reaches a certain size. Because these restrictions and limitations may decrease the chances of a Eudaimonia lifestyle, even with increased income, when that income reaches a certain point, it may actually have no bearing on the increase in happiness.

While researching happiness, the increased interest in 'Relational Goods' probed more research on the correlation between the overall satisfaction of one's life versus the time committed in the production and consumption of described goods. Bruni & Stanca (2008) showed that activities, such as volunteering, have noticeable effects on the increase in the satisfaction of one's life. The satisfaction level appears to increase within members who actively enjoy volunteering versus mere participants. Bruni (2010) also used the Relational Time Indicators to measure the time spent with friends and family and the correlation to life satisfaction. Research results suggest that time spent with family is the largest contributing factor, and sports activities, along with time spent with friends and interacting with other people, all have an association the level of life satisfaction. Through this research and Relational Time Indicators, Bruni emphasized the importance of the amount of time committed in production when it comes to Relational Goods.

Leisure Participation and Happiness

As stated above, Bruni (2010) illustrated the connection between production and the time spent with family and friends, and emphasized the

importance of their correlation through Relational Time Indicators. In addition, Yang et al. (2012) also stated that production and consumption take place when they are beyond market participation, i.e., the two elements actually take action during leisure hours where they are free from participation in acts of labor. This indicates that items, such as marital status and leisure participation, may be related to the levels of happiness. Because married people have more time to spend with their family, they are exposed more frequently to the production and consumption of 'Relational Goods'. Furthermore, people who participate in leisure and sports activities in their free time are more exposed, and have greater opportunity to participate in the production and consumption of 'Relational Goods' because they interact and spend time with other people during those activities. Therefore, observing the change in the levels of happiness in regards to one's marital status and participation in leisure activities, may provide another example of how to explain the Easterlin Paradox phenomena.

In addition to happiness economists, social and sports scientists have discussed the many elements that affect the level of happiness. For example, while one's health, marriage, family, and age may not have a direct and precise relationship with happiness, Kim (2013) argued that those elements are still related very closely to the state of happiness itself. Argyle (1996) contended that similar to one's occupation, leisure activities were also connected to the correlation between happiness and affection. Although people seek challenge and accomplishment through their jobs, they do not want to be over-worked. Moreover, they desire to still have the extra time to enjoy

leisure activities and lead a happy life. This can be attributed to a person's desire to seek happiness through their relationships and interactions with other people. In addition, Argyle (1996) also stated that group activities, such as social, musical, and theatrical clubs, along with sports team settings can also affect the levels of happiness. Based on the data analyzed from a 2010 research study conducted through the Korea Culture and Tourism Institute, Kim and Lee (2011) showed that there was an increase in happiness within people who spent and invested more time and money into leisure activities. In particular, physically active leisure events, such as travel and sports, had a more significant impact on happiness than the more passive activities, such as watching TV, movies, concerts, and or participating in other entertainment activities (Kim & Lee, 2011; Ragheb & Griffith, 1982).

Therefore, the preceding research reports the relevance between happiness, leisure, and sports activities. On the other hand, while this research does succeed in showing a correlation with leisure activities and increased happiness, it is limited in its ability to explain the effects of the Easterlin Paradox. Therefore, there is further need to analyze the presence of the Easterlin Paradox Phenomena when increasing the level of participation in leisure and sports activities, but items, such as marital status, must also be taken into consideration.

II . Research Questions

This research aimed to substantiate Easterlin's paradox in regard to the correlation between happiness and earnings as the employment of

working women in Korea increases. Specifically, as discussed previously, in the situation of a lack of an established correlation between happiness and earnings, this research aimed to substantiate whether Easterlin's paradox applies.

Women are discriminated in the labor market because they are the ones who become pregnant, give birth and raise children considering the Korean culture and suffer from the relatively low wages compared to men and sexual discrimination, harassment, and verbal abuses. Accordingly, research questions (Research Question 1) regarding the correlation between earnings and the happiness of working women in an exclusive Korean society were set up as follows.

1. Are there any changes in the feeling of happiness as earnings of Korean working women increase?
- 1-1. What are the correlations between earnings and the happiness of working women?
- 1-2. Depending on the marital status, are there any changes in the feeling of happiness in relation to earnings?

In addition, this study was extended to determine if Easterlin's paradox applied in regard to the correlation between the leisure activities and happiness. Research regarding the correlation between the leisure activities and happiness (Argyle, 1996; Lu & Hu, 2005; Wang, Orpana, Morrison, Groh, Dai, & Luo, 2012) showed that more leisure activities led to a greater feeling of happiness. On the other hand, it is unclear if there is a correlation between the leisure activities and

happiness in reality because previous research showed the result only graphically. Accordingly, to determine if Easterlin's paradox worked regarding the correlation between the leisure activities and happiness, authors set up research question 2 (Research Question 2) as follows.

2. How will the feeling of happiness change depending on the increase in leisure activities?
 - 2-1. What are the correlations between the leisure activities and the happiness of working women?
 - 2-2. What are the correlations between the leisure activities and the happiness of working women depending on their marital status?

III. Method

1. Sampling

This research targeted working women in Seoul as a sample group. A total of 440 questionnaires were given according to cluster quota sampling. In particular, the subjects were initially grouped into four different divisions such as South, North, East, and West of Han river and given 110 copies in each division. Secondly, each division was divided to two subgroups of 55 married women and 55 single women.

In the survey, they were asked to mark their answers using the self-administration method. In this way, to finalize the analysis, the authors

used 433 survey sheets out of 440 excluding 7 sheets, which had a lack of information and were unclear. The majority of subjects in the sample groups (45.1%) were 25 to 30 years of age and their income ranged from \$2,000 to \$3,000 (32.4%); 48.7% were single and 51.3% were married.

2. Instruments

To measure the feeling of happiness, which was the main factor of this research, the authors used the happiness index reported by Suh, Ku, Lee, Chung, and Choi (2010). Their index was good for checking the Korean culture and mode, which valued the importance of the relationships in person or in groups. Their measurement of happiness comprises 3 subcategories: life satisfaction (3 questions), positive feeling (3 questions), and negative feeling (3 questions). Specifically, the factor of life satisfaction was measured by "I am satisfied with my life in private," "I am satisfied with my life relating the relationship with others.", and "I am satisfied with my life relating the groups to which I belong." The positive feelings (happy, pleasant, and comfortable) and negative feelings (upset, bothered, and helpless) were measured by asking of how often they felt these feelings for the last one month. Each question was answered on a 5 point scale (1: never, 5: always).

For the factor of happiness measured using this method, the researchers performed reverse coding of the questions for the negative feeling and used the mean of these 9 questions for statistical analysis. The reliability rate (Cronbach's α) used in this study showed that

the life satisfaction (.870), positive feeling (.846), and negative feeling (.832); the reliability rate of all the questions was .883. Income was measured by the monthly income. The time of the leisure activities was measured by asking, “On average, how many hours do you spend on leisure activities?”

3. Data Analysis

Frequency Analysis, Reliability analysis, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to analyze the changes in the working women’s feeling of happiness depending on their earnings and the time allocation of their leisure activities.

IV. Results

1. Reliability & Validity

CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) was performed to validate the reliability of the measure of happiness, which is the major dependent variable of this study. The result of CFA showed that the model fit ($\chi^2=66.12$, $\chi^2/df = 2.76$, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, NFI = .97, RMSEA = 0.06), the level of standardized regression weight (all the values

were $\geq .5$), and the significance level of standardized regression weights (all $p < .1$) were at the satisfactory level. In general, the convergent validity is determined to be present when the average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than or equal .5, and the discriminant validity is determined to be present when the AVE is larger than the square of the correlation coefficients among the variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in <Table 1>, the AVE of all variables were above this standard. Therefore, the convergent validity was secured for the variables included in this study. On the other hand, the largest correlation coefficient between the variables was the one between the life satisfaction and positive emotion (.501), and it was determined that discriminant validity had been secured because all the AVE values were larger than .251; the square of the correlation coefficient was .251.

To analyze the validity of the questions used to measure the variables in this study, Cronbach’s a coefficient, which evaluates the internal consistency among variables, was calculated. The Cronbach’s a value of each variable was greater than or equal to .8, as shown in <Table 1>. Additional analysis based on a calculation of the construct reliability

Table 1. Reliability & Validity Test

Latent Variable		Standardized Factor loading	Error Variance	Construct Reliability	AVE	Cronbach's α					
Happiness	Life Satisfaction	x1	.837**	.235	.902	.754	.875				
		x2	.909**	.130							
		x3	.775**	.329							
	Positive Emotion	x4	.871**	.148	.906	.765	.865				
		x5	.922**	.102							
		x6	.699**	.393							
		Negative Emotion	x7	.819**				.353	.856	.667	.867
			x8	.940**				.130			
			x9	.745**				.571			

** $p < .01$

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Happiness according to Income

Happiness	Total			Marital Status					
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	Married			Unmarried		
				<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Average									
Income(\$)/month									
A ~1999	118	3.63	0.63	34	3.67	0.53	84	3.61	0.67
B 2000~2999	131	3.78	0.58	51	3.78	0.57	80	3.78	0.59
C 3000~3999	47	3.75	0.62	27	3.76	0.60	20	3.74	0.65
D 4000~4999	24	3.83	0.69	20	3.85	0.73	4	3.72	0.56
E 5000~	84	3.79	0.57	63	3.78	0.57	21	3.79	0.60
F-Value		1.39 ^{NS}			0.37 ^{NS}			0.84 ^{NS}	

NS: none significant

(CR) showed that this value was greater than or equal to .5 for all variables, as shown in

<Table 1>. Therefore, the validity of the measurement tools was confirmed (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998).

2. Change in Happiness Index by Income

ANOVA was performed on the entire sample to examine the change in happiness depending on the family income level using the family income level as an independent variable and happiness as a dependent variable <Table 2>. The analysis revealed the happiness index to be the lowest in the group with an ‘income lower than \$2,000’ (M = 3.63) and was highest in

the group with an ‘income between \$4,000 and \$4,999’ (M = 3.83). Specifically, as shown in <Figure 1>, although the average happiness increased by .15 when the income was increased from interval A to B, the level of the increase in the average happiness from income interval B to E was smaller than from interval A to B or the average happiness even reduced. This shows that the increase in happiness is not absolutely proportional to the income level <Figure 1>.

On the other hand, the analysis after classifying the groups based on the married status showed that the difference in the level of happiness between the groups of married, working females (Mmarried=3.85), and the group

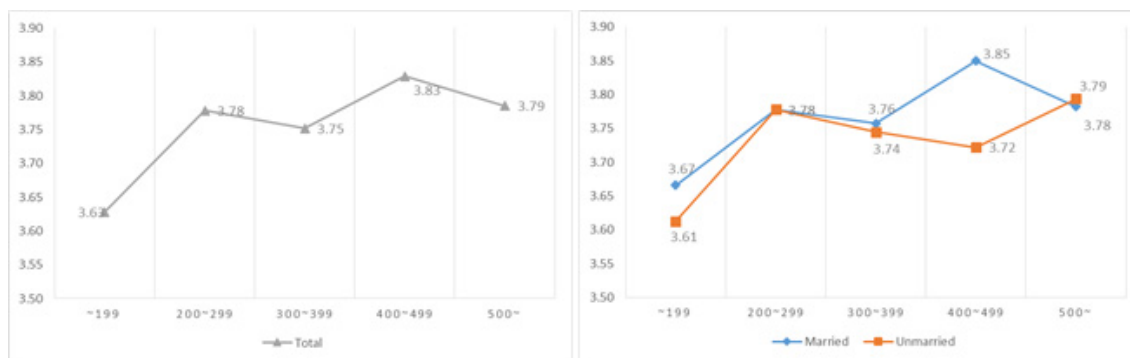


Figure 1. Transition of Happiness according to Income

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation of Happiness according to Leisure Time per Day

Happiness	Total			Marital Status					
				Married			Unmarried		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Ave									
Income/month									
A ~ 1 Hr	87	3.60	0.61	63	3.64	0.57	24	3.50	0.69
B 1 Hr ~ 2 Hr	127	3.69	0.64	62	3.78	0.55	65	3.61	0.71
C 2 Hr ~ 3 Hr	102	3.78	0.56	38	3.74	0.59	64	3.81	0.55
D 3 Hr ~ 4 Hr	52	3.83	0.52	20	3.96	0.49	32	3.75	0.53
E 4 Hr ~	51	3.92	0.67	19	4.05	0.75	32	3.84	0.61
F-Value	2.89*			2.43*			1.92/NS		

*: $p < .05$, NS: none significant

of single, working females (Unmarried=3.72) was largest in the income interval “D”, but the increase in happiness level was not proportional to the increase in income level when the entire income interval was taken into consideration. In particular, in the group of single, working females, when their income was greater than or equal to \$2,000, the level of happiness notably stagnated, even when income was increased (Figure 1). In summary, the Easterlin’s paradox was observed in the relationship between the income and happiness of working females in Korea.

3. Change in happiness by leisure time

ANOVA was performed to examine the change in the level of happiness according to the leisure time using leisure time as the independent variable and happiness as the dependent variable (Table 3). The analysis

showed that the level of happiness was lowest in the group with ‘below 1 hour’ of leisure time per day on average ($M = 3.60$) and was highest in the group with ‘above 4 hours’ of leisure time per day on average ($M = 3.92$). As shown in (Figure 2), the level of

happiness showed an increasing trend with increasing leisure time.

On the other hand, an analysis of the level of happiness according to leisure time after classification of the groups based on their married status showed different patterns in the change in the level of happiness between the group of married, working females and the group of single, working females. The group of married, working females showed a decrease in the level of happiness in the “C” interval of leisure time, but overall, the level of happiness increased with increasing leisure time (Figure 2). In contrast, in the group of single, working females, the level of happiness increased with increasing leisure time from the group of ‘below 1 hour’ ($M = 3.50$) to the group of ‘between 2 and 3 hours’ ($M = 3.81$), but the level of happiness did not increase proportionally with increasing leisure time from the group of ‘between 2 and 3 hours’ ($M = 3.81$) to the group of ‘above 4 hours’ ($M = 3.84$) (Figure 2).

Overall, it appears that the level of happiness increases proportionally with increasing leisure time. On the other hand, classification of the groups based on the married status demonstrated

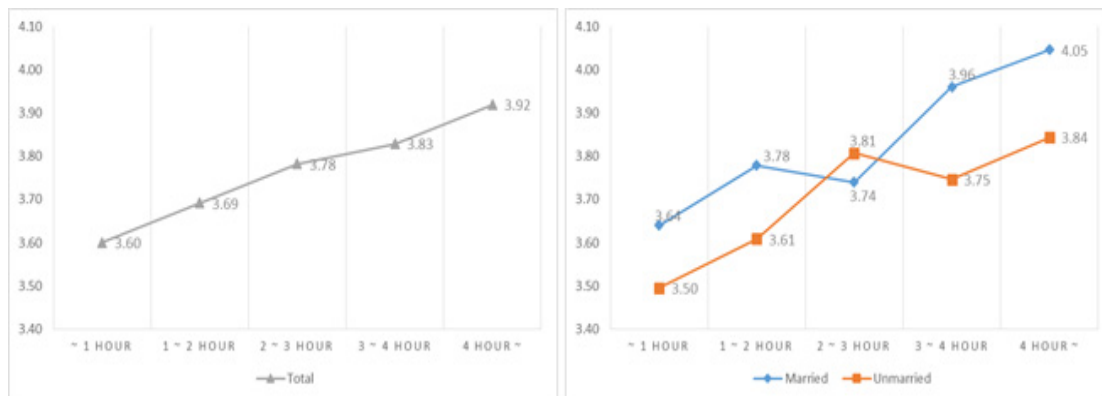


Figure 2. Transition of Happiness according to Leisure Time per Day

Easterlin’s paradox phenomenon in the group of single, working females. In particular, married, working females showed an increase in the level of happiness with increasing leisure time, but single, working females did not show an increase in the level of happiness corresponding to an increase in leisure time after a certain leisure time was procured. These results suggest that Easterlin’s paradox can be applied to leisure and culture studies. The observation that the level of happiness an individual feels varies according to the environmental characteristics of the individual, such as leisure time, should be noted in the field of leisure and culture studies.

In addition, from the viewpoint of relation goods, these results suggest that married, working females feel a relatively high level of happiness upon an increase in leisure time compared to single, working females because the amount of time they can spend with meaningful people, namely family members, increases, which leads to an increase in the opportunities to participate in the production and consumption of relation goods. In contrast, single, working females cannot participate in the generation of relation goods with meaningful people even when the leisure time increases unless

they actively participate in leisure activities; consequently, the increase in happiness is stagnated. Such interpretations are consistent with the arguments of Ragheb & Griffith (1982) in that active participation in leisure activities, such as sports or travel affects happiness to a larger extent than less active leisure activities, such as watching TV. The reason is that utilizing increased leisure time on active leisure activities, such as sports or travel, rather than on less active leisure activities, such as watching TV, extends the opportunities to participate in the generation and consumption of relation goods. Therefore, research question 2 is meaningful for demonstrating that the application of Easterlin’s paradox can be extended from economics to leisure and culture studies.

V. Discussion

The Easterlin Paradox has stirred continuous debate and this study examined whether or not his theory applies to working Korean Women. Although the central tendency of Korean women’s hiring rate is increasing gradually. The employment benefits to these women remains

unfair. In addition, the employment benefits to women who are pregnant, have delivered a child or in need of infant care remain inconsiderate and most of these working women are asked to work under the unfair circumstances. Many economists have stated that economics has a significant effect on happiness. Therefore, if the labor market has increased then the level of the happiness would also increase, but this may not necessarily be and it might depend on the discrimination of these women at their work site.

In addition, the authors also compared if the Easterlin Paradox, which was discussed prominently in economics, can show its relations between leisure and one's well-being. The leisure department have done their research based on the correlation of leisure and one's happiness, and they concluded that participating in a leisure activity can improve the level of one's well-being. On the other hand, looking into the perspective of the two relationships, it can also predict that the two might not have a direct influence of the increase. Furthermore, the research in regards to the leisure activities increasing the level of happiness was mostly done by linear relations, which can cause difficulty and limit the nonlinear relations of the two. Therefore, this research was based on one method that was handled in the Easterlin Paradox, which is linear relations, and have set the research study in relation to two fields: leisure and happiness, and marriage and happiness. According to the research, it was proven that working women with a higher income than the norm did not show a corresponding increase in happiness. Furthermore, the change in the level of happiness in the usage of leisure time showed that in single women, even if their spending time increased, after reaching a certain

level, their happiness level did not increase even if they spent more time on leisure activities.

In particular, the first research is proving that if Easterlin Paradox theory applies to Korean Working Women based on one's income to their happiness. When one's income has reached a certain level, even if their income increased, their happiness level in relation to that income raise did not show a corresponding increase. In addition, when looking deeper into marriage and happiness, similar results were obtained, which proved that their level of happiness did not increase once it had reached a certain level. These results can support the on-going debate in regards to the Easterlin Paradox, i.e., the level of happiness and well-being increases up to certain level but once it reaches that level, the circumstances to well-being, particularly in one's income, is minimal. On the other hand, previous research was based on the income and happiness correlation. The present research was based on one specific group, which is aimed at working women.

The second research issue was to determine if the Easterlin paradox would occur despite the change in the level of happiness depending on the leisure time by extending Easterlin paradox in the context of leisure studies. According to the research result, when the target was all groups regardless of their marital status, a linear relationship, i.e. the level of happiness increases in proportion to increasing leisure time, was observed. Nevertheless, when the group was classified according to marital status, the Easterlin paradox was applicable to single career women. In particular, the level of happiness increased until the leisure time was 3 hours, but the increase in happiness stagnated

in the section of more than 3 hours in leisure time. Therefore, as mentioned above, the reason why there is a difference between married career women and single career women regarding the change in the level of happiness depending on leisure time can be explained in terms of the study of relational goods. That is, if the leisure time increases in more than a certain time, the time to be isolated alone can increase in the case of single career women. Although the leisure time of women increases, they are more likely to spend their leisure time individually because they prefer physical activities using private equipment at home rather than outdoor physical activities due to safety (Soltani & Hoseini, 2014).

In other words, the rise in happiness stagnates for them because they have limited opportunities to participate in the production and consumption of relational goods for meaningful people, such as a friends and family more than married career women. Ryff (1997) reported that the main factors that predict the happiness of a person's present and future are the level of education, occupation, relationship with a family and friend and a leisure life, particularly for the relationship with meaningful people, such as family and friends, which is the most important factor for adults. In addition, with regard to research related to happiness conducted in the field of original leisure studies (Kim & Lee, 2011; Lu & Argyle, 1994; Ragheb & Griffith, 1982; Wang & Wong, 2001), they considered leisure time as having a linear relationship with a positive effect on happiness. In the present study, however, not all the relationships between leisure time and happiness were linear, depending on an

individual special situation.

This research result has the following implications. First of all, it is very suggestive in the way that it can raise a question about the linear relationship between leisure time and happiness, which has been accepted generally. Secondly, the Easterlin paradox was an explanation about the relationship between income in a country and happiness on a macro perspective. In this research, however, by applying the relationship to a special group, such as married career women, the study identified that the application of the Easterlin paradox can be extended by verifying that the paradox can affect the group in the same way. Thirdly, the result has important meaning because it suggested a new research issue regarding the relationship between leisure and happiness in the field of leisure studies by applying the Easterlin paradox discussed in an economic perspective to the field of leisure extendedly. Finally, in establishing a policy for enhancing a welfare system for career women, it is essential that the research proposes the necessary for a change in policy from increasing incomes to a policy of expanding production and consumption of relational goods.

VI. Limitation

The study was exploratory in verifying whether or not the Easterlin paradox would be observed in the relationship between leisure time and happiness as well as income and happiness. Several important results could be proven regarding the relationship, as mentioned above, but some limits were found.

First, the object of the study was restricted to Korean career women. Blanchflower & Oswald (2005) reported that generally men feel happier than women according to the result of the study regarding happiness. Therefore, there is a limit in generalizing the results of a study focusing on Korean career women, and a study of diverse groups, such as men, housewives etc., will be needed.

Second, this study focused on the marital status with the relationship between leisure time and happiness as well as income and happiness. On the other hand, happiness is influenced by a variety of factors (e.g., age, number of children, etc.) with regard to precedent studies. Friedrich Hayek (1899–1992), an economist from Austria, reported in his book, *The Road to Serfdom*, that the welfare and happiness of millions of people could not be measured using only one way (Hayek, 1994). Indeed, the studies related to happiness have been referring to diverse factors that decide happiness: a personal factor (feeling, heredity), a situational factor (health, a marriage), a demographic factor (gender, age), an economical factor (income level, unemployment, price), an institutional factor (an operating system of society) etc.. (Kim, 2009) Accordingly, research on the factors that affect happiness will be required to determine if the Easterlin paradox holds.

Finally, cross-sectional data was used to examine the relationship between not only income and happiness, but also leisure time and happiness. This is because there is no database on incomes, leisure time, and happiness for Korean career women, and it is difficult to access the longitudinal data. Consequently, a continuous database about the factors affecting happiness for Korean career women will be

needed, and a follow-up study should be conducted using these longitudinal data.

Notes

1. The happiness level does not increase anymore despite increases in income because happiness adaptation appears when the expectation level of happiness increases with increasing income.

2. In the need theory, happiness is understood as a hierarchical process to meet various needs based on the Hierarchy theory of Maslow (1970). That is, according to the needs theory, people can become happier as they meet more needs.

3. Eudaimonia was one of Aristoteles' philosophical perspectives and was the opposing theory of hedonism. While hedonism defines one's happiness level by the satisfaction of one's psychological and financial state, the Eudaimonia perspective defines the state of happiness by living well and having a good life. A good life and happiness are defined by a life in which a person can manifest their full potential and achieve one's ultimate goal. Therefore, a life of Eudaimonia is achieved through the practice of love and friendship, and focuses its values in making the right decisions when it comes to morals and virtues, and one can achieve what is defined as a good life by doing so.

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