Subjectivity of Nursing Students’ Perception of Happiness

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: This research aims to investigate the status of happiness specifically nursing students perceive by identifying the happiness they recognize. Methods/Statistical Analysis: The study was conducted from June 20 to 31, 2015 through a survey. The purpose and process of the study were explained to the subjects and using a consent form and questionnaire, they were promised anonymity and exclusive use of the data for study purposes only. Findings: A Q factor analysis on the significance of happiness in nursing students showed four subjective types. Of the 25 subjects, there were 4 in type 1, 10 in type 2, 10 in type 3 and 1 in type 4. An analysis of the factor weight and variance for each type showed that the variance for type 1 was 41.81%, for type 2 was 10.10%, for type 3 was 6.15% and for type 4 was 5.48%. Application/Improvements: Based on the findings, developing a nursing communication method that can help students overcome challenges is suggested.

Keywords: Happiness, Nursing Students, Perception, Q Methodology, Subjectivity

1. Introduction

A word “happiness” is a term connoting multiple meanings and the research on happiness favors “subjective well-being” rather than “happiness”. Subjective well-being has positive, active attitude on individual experience and life for basic premises, focusing on inner side of individual. Namely, this can be interpreted in a sense that focuses on what not happiness everyone perceives commonly or similarly but individual, subjective happiness is, what the happiness is in their life and how independent, active they engage themselves in their life. To find out such subjective well-being, a prerequisite is appreciation and understanding on self and life he or she belongs to. Traditionally, although the opinion of psychologists is predominant that in regards to happiness of human being, every individual has their own setpoint of it difficult to change, recently it prevails that setpoint of happiness can be improved by efforts as many factors affecting happiness were revealed by positive psychology. According to, the factors affecting happiness can be broadly divided into three things. Out of them, the intrinsic characteristics genetically inherited account of only about 50 percent.

Many studies on happiness were promised individual and oneself as the main agent who feels and evaluates happiness and the being who decides the goal and fills the contents of one’s life. The conclusion that internal elements are more important than external conditions in happiness is, in other words, highlighting the role of individuals, the main agent of happiness.

Previous studies on the identity, life style and values of Koreans say Koreans are so conscious of regulations of organizations and others’ views so they are not aware of the ‘self’ as it is.

What is happiness? With what standard should we measure happiness? Through what process and mechanism do people feel happiness? People of what psychological, social, demographical characteristics feel happy? What should we do to be happier? These are various questions that can be asked regarding the phenomenon of happiness and are questions that were organized and resolved through the massive data that have been collected for a long time including the previously mentioned studies. As there are different explanations about happiness depending on scholars’ different positions concerning happiness and the mechanism of happiness, there are var-
ious attempts to explain many things about the happiness that Koreans experience from various aspects.

In Korean society, happiness is closely related to satisfying material and external conditions. However, if we define happiness as an emotional state of individuals or a desirable state that personal character and potential is completely realized and measure Koreans’ happiness according to these criteria, we cannot reflect what most Koreans believe about happiness.

Previous studies that explored the phenomena of happiness in Korean society are based on study results that happiness is more influenced by internal psychological elements than external environmental conditions and suggest the hypothesis that Koreans’ materialistic tendency makes them unhappy. This hypothesis does not seem to explain the paradoxical phenomenon in Korean society that appear in regard to happiness.

Hence, nursing students are faced with the necessity of education and counseling on happiness. Namely, nursing students are required to find awareness on happiness inherent in them.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate the status of happiness specifically nursing students perceive by identifying the happiness they recognize. Further, it seeks for a direction of education and counseling on the types of happiness of nursing students. In the process, as happiness individuals experience has subjective nature fundamentally, selected was methodology appropriate for typing research on happiness.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Selection of Q Sample
Referencing related literature and in-depth interviews on ego-resilience, the Q parent group was composed. A total of seven students majoring in nursing were selected. Those who participated in the interviews were briefed on the purpose, process, anonymity and exclusive use of data for the study, as well as the interview being recorded. Consent was gained from subjects. With counsel from two experts on the Q methodology, 34 statements were selected as Q samples.

2.2 P Sampling
The number of P samples was determined according to the small sampling theory of Q methodology, that states that when the number of P sample is greater, multiple people concentrate on one factor, leading to unclear characteristics. Twenty-five students majoring in nursing were selected as P samples of this study. The study was conducted from June 20 to 31 2015 through a survey. The purpose and process of the study were explained to the subjects and using a consent form and questionnaire, they were promised anonymity and exclusive use of the data for study purposes only.

2.3 Q Categorization and Data Analysis
To the 20 nursing students who consisted the P sample, 34 statements were given. One point was given to a strong negation, 5 points to a neutral response and 9 points to a strong agreement. PC QUANL program was used for analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Composition of Types
A Q factor analysis on the significance of ego-resilience in nursing students showed four subjective types. Of the 25 subjects, there were 4 in type 1, 10 in type 2, 10 in type 3 and 1 in type 4. An analysis of the factor weight and variance for each type showed that the variance for type 1 was 41.81%, for type 2 was 10.10%, for type 3 was 6.15% and for type 4 was 5.48% Table 1.

| Table 1. Eigen value and variances, cumulative variance |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Eigen value    | 7.0123 | 2.0410 | 1.4266 | 1.0689 |
| Variance       | .3506  | .1021  | .0713  | .0534  |
| Cumulative     |        |        |        |        |
| variance       | .3506  | .4527  | .5240  | .5774  |

Correlation between types showed .641 between type 1 and 2, .597 between type 1 and 3, .342 between type 1 and 4, .523 between type 2 and 3, .421 between type 2 and 4 and .359 between type 3 and 4.

As for the awareness of happiness of students in nursing department, there were type 1, those who are full of happiness; type 2, those who pursue new stimulations; type 3, those who pursue small happiness; type 4, those who pursue happiness with others; type 5, those who are happiness itself; type 6, those who are satisfied with...
themselves. In terms of correlations among different types, type 2 and types 4, 5, 6 had negative correlation and type 4 and types 5, 6 also had negative correlation, so there were 6 correlation types Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation between types

| Head | Type 1 | Type 2 | Type 3 | Type 4 | Type 5 | Type 6 |
|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Type 1 | 1.000 |        |        |        |        |        |
| Type 2 | .259 | 1.000 |        |        |        |        |
| Type 3 | .542 | .324 | .966 | 1.000 |        |        |
| Type 4 | .188 | -.049 | .036 | .038 | 1.000 |        |
| Type 5 | .241 | -.215 | .279 | -.038 | 1.000 |        |
| Type 6 | .395 | -.034 | .339 | -.156 | .169 | 1.000 |

3.2 Analysis by Types

Each type was analyzed for subjects with a factor weight of 1.00 or higher. During Q categorization, the reasons for selecting strong polar responses (either a strong positive or a strong negative) and a large difference in standard deviation when compared to other types were the reference point in identifying the subjective structure about ego-resilience. The characteristics of each type were interpreted and named as follows.

Type 1 was situation conversion type and had 4 subjects (16%). Type 2 was pursuit of fun type and had 10 subjects (40%). Type 3 was aversion of situation and had 10 subjects (40%). Type 4 was problem resolution through multiple angles and had 1 subject (4%).

3.2.1 Those who are full of Happiness

Type 1 is those who are full of happiness and they thought they were giving and getting love from family and others Table 3.

The followings are the statements that people who belong to type 1 agreed or disagreed with, in the order of weighing factor above 1.00.

Number 10 respondent (2.7165) answered, “My family is the most important and they are the reason why I live. I give and get love from my family and friends.”

Number 1 respondent (1.2231) was thinking, ”I am in a good relationship with my family and getting love from my parents and other family members. We talk a lot and call each other often. I feel comfortable and happy when I’m at home”.

3.2.2 Those who Pursue New Stimulations

Type 2 feels happiness through family and recognize having a new experience in life makes them happy Table 4.

Number 3 respondent (2.7165) answered, “My family is the most important and they are the reason why I live. I give and get love from my family and friends.”

Number 1 respondent (1.2231) was thinking, ”I am in a good relationship with my family and getting love from my parents and other family members. We talk a lot and call each other often. I feel comfortable and happy when I’m at home”.

3.2.3 Those who Pursue Small Happiness

Type 3 people are those who pursue small happiness and they turned out to feel happiness through their daily life Table 5.

Number 4 respondent (1.1696) answered, ”I think happiness is created when small things pile up. I feel lazy sometimes and whenever that happens, I think it is good to give myself some stimulation”. Number 5 respondent (1.0376) was thinking, ”When I’m with someone I like or when I play sports, I lose track of time”.

3.2.4 Those who Pursue Happiness with Others

Type 4 people are those who pursue happiness with others and they turned out to feel happy when they do volunteer work for others Table 6.

Number 20 respondent (.9645) answered, ”It feels really rewarding and heart-warming when I do volunteer work for the neighbors who are in need”.

3.2.5 Those who are Happiness Itself

Type 5 people are those who are happiness itself and they feel happy when they do things they like Table 7.
Subjectivity of Nursing Students’ Perception of Happiness

Table 4. Representative items of type 2

| No. | Q Statement                                                                 | Z-Score |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 14  | I am in good terms with my parents.                                          | 2.25    |
| 23  | I don’t feel like I rested after sleeping.                                   | 1.95    |
| 16  | It is important to have new experiences to give my life stimulation.         | 1.95    |
| 9   | I get influenced by others a lot when making a decision.                     | 1.20    |
| 21  | I'm not happy when I'm with other people.                                    | -1.25   |
| 1   | I don’t think I look attractive.                                             | -1.26   |
| 32  | I like all aspects of my personality.                                        | -1.29   |
| 34  | I have many friends that I connect well with.                                | -1.82   |
| 21  | I do not get any help from others when I need help.                          | -2.02   |

Number 9 respondent (.9749) said, “I lose track of time when I do things I like and when I meet someone I like. On the other hand, when I do things I don’t like, I can’t concentrate even for 30 minutes”.

3.2.6 Those who are Satisfied with Themselves

Type 6 people are those who are satisfied with themselves and they feel happy when others like them Table 8.

Number 20 respondent (.5794) said, "I think people like me because I am cheerful".

4. Discussion and Conclusions

With the aim of providing base data for developing an education program about happiness and nursing intervention centering on the features of nursing students’ awareness types about happiness by understanding their awareness types about happiness, this study found out the features and structure of classified types, applying Q methodology. The happiness phenomenon of Korean society discussed in the introduction is clearly identified though the general belief in happiness in Korean society, which was verified through the top and bottom awareness in the response average. While Koreans’ desire based on the belief that the external and material conditions represented by money is the correct answer to life shows through happiness condition, the thing that shows the
Table 8. Representative items of type 6

| No. | Q Statement                                                                 | Z-Score |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1   | I don't think I look attractive.                                            | 1.84    |
| 33  | There are many things to be thankful for in my life.                        | 1.84    |
| 3   | I like all aspects of my personality.                                       | 1.38    |
| 6   | I tend to get acknowledgement from others.                                 | 1.38    |
| 12  | I often feel joy and big pleasure.                                          | 1.38    |
| 10  | I don't feel lonely at all.                                                 | -1.38   |
| 21  | I'm not happy when I'm with other people.                                  | -1.38   |
| 7   | For me, happiness is not something big but is small pleasure I feel everyday. | -1.38   |
| 24  | I don't have many occasions that make me laugh.                            | -1.84   |
| 13  | I feel it's rewarding to do volunteer work for the neighbors in need.      | -1.84   |

Based on the findings, developing a nursing communication method that can help students overcome challenges is suggested.

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