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Article

Perceived Neighborhood Conditions and Happiness of Young Japanese and Koreans*

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The current study examines cross-national and age group differences in self-rated happiness, perceived neighborhood conditions and their linkages, with recent surveys representative of the national population in Japan and Korea. We find the adjusted level of happiness higher among young Japanese, but lower in the case of young Koreans, when compared to those of the older generations in each society. Japanese twenties and thirties show higher overall satisfaction about walkable residential areas in terms of neighborhood amenities and safety than Korean counterparts, but not as to neighbor relationships. In addition to intrapersonal factors, both socio-economic status and perceived qualities of neighborhood are significantly associated with happiness of Japanese across the life stage, whereas perceived neighborhood conditions do not contribute to happy lives of young Koreans, suggesting greater within-country group differences in Korea. The overall patterns in the key determinants of happiness are similar between young adults in both countries, but cross-national differences are observed in the effects of health status, self-efficacy, and neighborhood safety. Regarding neighbor relationships, age is a stronger moderator of buffering its positive effect on happiness in Korea, with young Koreans apparently less happy in neighborhood areas of higher bonding social capital. Discussing our findings as informed by further evidence, the present study considers divergent pathways to happiness of young adults in these two East Asian societies known to be similar in status-centered culture, collectivistic norms, and a wider institutional context.

Keywords: *self-rated happiness, neighborhood amenities, neighborhood safety, neighbor relationships, perceived neighborhood context, young adults, Japan, Korea*

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Introduction

Studies of subjective well-being, largely conducted in Western societies over the past decades, have uncovered that it is significantly associated with various dimensions of life quality. Looking beyond the national level, more recent works have endeavored to identify its determinants across countries (Helliwell and Putnam 2004; Haller and Hadler 2006; Sarracino 2010), often employing multi-level analysis (Inglehart, Foa, Perterson, and Welzel 2008; Deeming and Hayes 2012). Nevertheless, there seems to remain two domains of unresolved issues in current comparative research. First, studies informed by cultural psychology, with most cases based on the United States and Japan, provide ample evidence of distinctive meanings, constituents, and predictors of subjective well-being between West and East, but commonalities in non-Western societies of collectivistic culture appear to be conclusive. Second, scholarly attention is being increasingly paid to the extent to which determinants of subjective well-being vary across the life cycle, but due less to age group differences in well-being related factors and their impacts in a cross-national comparative manner.

For empirical analysis, we select cases from Japan and Korea among East Asian countries as they are known to be similar in demographic transition and wider institutional environments. According to the latest report of the OECD Better Life Index in 2016, Japan ranks 23rd among the 38 OECD countries, which is higher than Korea at 28th but substantially below the median. Performance in these two countries varies across different domains; one of the indicators that have been consistently lower than the average since 2011 is subjective well-being measured by life satisfaction and balance of affect. When the relationships between household income and wealth (at the top especially in Japan) and jobs and earnings are considered in the index, it seems to suggest a tenuous link between material living conditions shaped by the macro economy and subjective well-being (Haller and Hadler 2006), consistent with the Easterlin's paradox, "Money cannot buy happiness." As shown in Oshio et al. (2011), it is social comparison of family income with the average of the reference group instead of absolute income that matters, being significantly associated with happiness in Japan, Korea and China, all these status-oriented societies that have rapidly achieved economic growth.

Cultural psychologists put forward social psychological underpinnings of cultural differences in the meanings of happiness and its predictors. Their studies have observed that people in societies of individualistic culture tend

to consider personal characteristics more valuable in well-being such as self-esteem and personal achievement, whereas interpersonal factors such as relational harmony, emotional support from others, and spiritual enrichment instead of individual, hedonic satisfaction are noticeably crucial in collectivistic societies (Kitayama and Markus 2000; Lu, Gilmour, and Kao 2001; Lu, Gilmour, Kao, Weng, Hu, Chern, Huang, and Shih 2001; Lu and Gilmour 2004; Uchida and Kitayama 2009; Uchida and Ogihar 2012). Individual personality traits such as self-esteem and a sense of personal control, optimism, and extraversion are widely accepted as critical in subjective well-being (Wilson 1967; Myers and Diener 1995), but they are culturally moderated, with immediate social environments and interactional milieu theoretically and empirically more influential in East Asian societies.

Age group has been aptly considered in recent studies on subjective well-being whether it is conceptualized as the life cycle or birth cohort (Chen 2003; Easterlin 2006; Karasawa, Curhan, Markus, Kitayama, Love, Radler, and Ryff 2011; Kobayashi, Liang, Sugawara, Fukaya, Shinkai, and Akiyama 2015). Focusing on psychological and socially developed characteristics at a specific life stage, research based on a life cycle standpoint intends to examine age-related factors that contribute to different outcomes in subjective well-being such as economic hardship, employment, marriage, children, education, health status, and beliefs and emotions (Mirowsky and Ross 1999). As presented in Karasawa et al. (2011), for example, constituents of psychological well-being noticeably vary through the life stage as well as between the United States and Japan embedded in distinctive cultural contexts. Inoguchi and Fujii (2009) and Park (2009) find different trends of subjective well-being and disparities in life domains and value priorities by age group in Japan and Korea. Since economic development has been heavily compressed with dramatic social change in these two countries, happiness and its determinants are expected to reflect discontinuities across subpopulations by life stage that might have divergent expectations and cultural value orientations toward self and others to a greater extent.

In the present comparative study, we focus on the community context of subjective well-being in relative to status-relevant context (i.e., family income, subjectively identified social strata, education, employment status). Both factors are commonly recognized as crucial in the happy lives of Japanese and Koreans, but their contributions together are relatively less often evaluated in the existing research. Considering local community as spatially bounded neighborhood in the classical sense, we seek to examine the link between perceived neighborhood conditions (i.e., amenities, safety, and neighbor

relations) and happiness, unlike research practices that highlight the so-called neighborhood effect in the multi-level framework (e.g., the contextual effect of social capital on mental health). Given age from a life cycle perspective as one of the main moderators of perceived neighborhood context, we intend to compare young and older groups (i.e., twenties and thirties and the middle-aged and older, respectively) especially due to high possibilities of their different experiences and attitudes about communal values and social status. It remains open to empirical tests whether cross-societal divergence or age group differences are greater in the components of happiness.

Literature Review

Existing research on life satisfaction and happiness in Western societies establishes their positive relationships with social ties to family members, friends, neighbors (Powdthavee 2008), social and communal activities such as volunteer work (Thoits and Hewitt 2001; Bjørnskov 2008; Becchetti, Ricca, and Pelloni 2012), and social capital, either cognitive or structural (Leung, Kier, Fung, and Sproule 2011; Portela, Neira, and Salinas-Jiménez 2013). Not a few empirical studies also have confirmed the significance of interpersonal mattering in friendship, volunteering, and social capital to subjective well-being in Japan (Kuroki 2011; Matsushima and Matsunaga 2015; Inaba, Wada, Ichida, and Nishikawa 2015; Taniguchi 2015; Tiefenbach and Holdgrün 2015) or across East Asian countries (Yamaoka 2008) although research of their effects on mental health is still popular. The main findings together imply that the presence of supportive connections, pro-social activities, civic engagement, and trust are all universal ingredients to enhance individual well-being, which is attributable to social bonding and intimacy developed from positive relations with other people. In parallel, recent works on happiness of Koreans point out the beneficial consequences of volunteering during leisure time or the perceived quality of interpersonal relationships (Nam, Lee, and Kim 2012; Han, Kim, Ha, and Shin 2014).

From a different angle, research in cultural psychology has stressed the cultural context of subjective well-being: people embedded in different cultures tend to contain different equations of well-being given the list of intrapersonal factors and interpersonal ones. Individually oriented subjective well-being emphasizes personal accountability and the explicit pursuit of happiness, while socially oriented well-being underlines role obligation and dialectical balance between happiness and unhappiness (cf. Lin 2002 that

distinguishes "transactional rationality" in individualistic culture from "relational rationality" in collectivistic culture). Supporting evidence to this distinction is provided by Lu and Gilmour (2004) and Uchida and Kitayama (2009) based on content analysis of prescriptions of US college students about happy life in comparison to those from the Chinese and their Japanese counterparts, respectively. Cross-cultural differences in social relationships and their significance to subjective well-being are also explained. For example, received social support has a noticeable impact on the happiness of Americans and Japanese in the absence of self-esteem. Moreover, only in the US sample do such effects become significantly weaker after statistical control for self-esteem (Kitayama and Uchida 1999). This spurious relationship is replicated in another study (Uchida, Kitayama, Mesquita, Reyes, and Morling 2008), which first illustrates that perceived emotional support appears to enhance happiness in different Asian cultures (Japan and the Philippines) and American culture, but their association in the US sample is no longer meaningful in the presence of self-esteem.

Social interactions frequently occur in local communities where people experience everyday life to obtain intimate feelings about social relations and to learn how to express them. Local communities in this sense provide interpersonal milieu in which individuals are socialized and culturalized in spatially bounded areas; positive perceptions of local environments and place attachment tend to foster communal engagement and mutual recognition through which people develop a sense of community through the life stages and further local community citizenship can be born and bred. Accordingly, what types of local communities people live in have emerged as significantly associated with their mental health and individual well-being (Werlen 1993). For example, residents in disadvantaged communities are more exposed to higher levels of alcohol consumption and drug use after socioeconomic status is adjusted at the individual level (Boardman, Finch, Ellison, Williams, and Jackson 2001). Apart from ecological effects at the community level (Ross, Reynolds, and Geis 2000), there are also studies about the effects of resident observation and everyday experience in neighborhoods (Ross and Mirowsky 1999). For instance, a pathway to distress and depression among residents in disadvantaged neighborhoods is mediated by perceived disorder and fear (Ross 2000; Ross and Mirowsky 2001). Some other studies highlight the importance of perceived environments and social relations in walkable neighborhood areas on psychological well-being in light of theories of social disorganization and social capital (e.g., Sampson and Groves 1989; Ziersch, Baum, MacDougall, and Putland 2005). In these respects, neighborhood

experiences at the individual level such as perception of disorder, amenity scarcity, personal victimization, and the availability of support from neighbors have significant direct bearing or intervene the effects of neighborhood environments per se on subjective well-being. This idea is indeed reflected in contemporary indices of subjective well-being. For instance, the Canadian index of well-being (uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing) particularly concerning community vitality at the regional level intends to measure supportive relationship with neighbors, trustworthiness, and local security.

Japan and Korea, often simply reported as collectivistic societies, seem to offer interesting cases for comparative research on the connection between subjective well-being and neighborhood perception generally and social relationships in local communities particularly. Relationalism linked with strong familism and reciprocal norms are known as internalized main principles guiding social interactions in both societies, but there seem to be subtle cross-national dissimilarities not only historically and also culturally. For example, prototypes of neighborhood associations (NHAs) in Japan can be traced back to the Edo period (1603 to 1867) and earlier, and the current versions were organized by the government during World War II (Pekkanen 2006). Although Japanese NHAs by their nature are known as different from community-based groups or organizations in the United States (Ogawa 2009; cf. van Houwelingen 2012), the development of Japanese civil society has unfolded along with such local organizations and place-based activities, as in a recent example of community-building movements ("*machizukuri*") since the 1990s. On the other hand, the system of local self-government in Korea was introduced very recently in 1995, after a long history of a state-centered administrative system. In addition, Korean civil society has grown together with larger-scaled political and social movements, and local grass-roots practices based on voluntary associations in Putnam's term are still young compared to the prevalence of pseudo-familial associations more characteristic of extended in-group favoritism. Social relationships ("*yeonjul*" in a negative connotation rather than a neutral term "*yeongyol*") similar to connectionism ("*yeongoju*i") and regionalism have evolved in pursuit of private interests (Yee 2000; Lee 2002). Given relationalism and returnism as two intertwined mentalities of Koreans (Kim 2016), pseudo-familial associations are maintained by specific networks of kinship, hometown or alumni, with weakly nested in local neighborhoods.

Some studies on Japanese society present evidence of the positive effects of social connectedness in local community on subjective well-being. For

example, one recent work based on a nationwide survey of social capital in 2013 finds that adult life satisfaction is significantly associated with municipal-level social capital, measured by generalized trust, particularized trust, direct reciprocity, community participation, and everyday contacts with friends and neighbors, when controlling for socioeconomic status (Inaba et al. 2015). Another study examines the relationship between participation of neighborhood associations and subjective well-being to find that it is mediated by the voluntariness of local participation and feelings of loneliness (Tiefenbach and Holdgrün 2015). Directly concerned with perceived neighborhood context, Taniguchi and Potter (2016) using the 2010 Japanese General Social Survey data uncover that perceptions of neighborhood safety and supportive relations among neighbors are significant determinants of life satisfaction and happiness, with greater effects for male adults than their female counterparts who are more likely to feel building and maintaining neighbor relations obligatory rather than voluntary. Unfortunately, there are few studies on the linkage between perception of residential community and subjective well-being of Korean adults, but results from the 2006 Asia Barometer Survey indicate no significant effect of one's satisfaction with neighbors on happiness in Korea (Park 2009), as is the case with Japan given the same data (Inoguchi and Fujii 2009). In contrast, Han et al. (2014), using the 2012 Korean General Social Survey, present evidence that self-rated happiness has an important bearing on the quality of interpersonal ties measured by positive relations with family or friends and also on the number of neighbors who can provide small services in times of need.

Subjective well-being and its determinants change according to stage of adulthood. Numerous studies have examined various situational influences and personality-related factors since the classical study by Wilson (1967). He claims that happy people seem young, well-educated, healthy, religious, married, and well-paid; however, one of the central disagreements among researchers arguably has been over a relationship between happiness and age. There are different conclusions with mixed evidence, but cross-sectional analysis inherently cannot distinguish age effects from cohort effects. Employing the 20-year cumulated data from the US General Social Survey, Easterlin (2006) analyzes the average pattern of happiness by age after controlling for birth cohort to find that it follows an inverted U-shape curve. Increased satisfaction with family life and work primarily results in the upward movement of happiness until middle age, and the decline of happiness thereafter is attributable to growing concerns about health in later life. Mirowsky and Ross (1999) perform an extensive review of existing

literature about age-relevant factors contributing to different outcomes in subjective well-being: economic hardship, employment, marriage, children, education, health status, and beliefs and emotions such as a sense of control and trust. Furthermore, these factors are associated with each other (e.g., economic well-being and number of children) and some are socially developed or shaped by wider environments (e.g., mistrust and neighborhood disorder).

Life course trajectories in a society are substantially influenced by culture values, status and roles, and socio-economic contexts. Accordingly, there can be considerable variation in priorities in life domains and age-related issues not only across societies and also through the life stage. Chen (2003) with a representative sample of Taiwanese adults finds that determinants of subjective well-being significantly vary according to the young (in their 20s), the middle-aged (30s through 50s), or the older (60s or over). Financial status is a universal concern for all subpopulations, but the life satisfaction of the elderly is most seriously affected by it. Happiness of the middle-aged group depends on most of life domains except public safety, while subjective well-being of the young group is more closely associated with leisure time activities and transportation other than financial issues. For another example, Karasawa et al. (2011) reveal that constituents of psychological well-being in eudaimonic and hedonic aspects are noticeably divergent between the United States and Japan and by age and gender simultaneously. Japanese adults tend to evaluate interpersonal well-being higher relative to their average score of well-being compared to Americans, but this trend is stronger among younger adults than older generations in Japan. Additionally, Japanese and Americans feel that their personal growth increases from middle to old ages and during earlier ages, respectively. Meanwhile, women in both societies score higher than men in terms of positive relationships with others. Also, female adults in Japan evaluate their autonomy significantly lower than do their male counterparts, but this is not the case with the United States.

In the cases of Japan and Korea, there are no studies equivalent to Karasawa et al. (2011), but Inoguchi and Fujii (2009) and Park (2009) are the only comparable ones since they analyze the same data from the 2006 Asia Barometer Survey. Based on unadjusted raw scores, they first show divergent trends of self-rated happiness in adults in the two societies: Japanese feel happier in earlier or later life than in middle age, whereas happiness scores of Koreans gradually decline with age. Next, they classify life domains into "material," "post-material," and "public" and value priorities into "need for

having," "need for relating," and "need for being." Depending on age, there are also noticeably different patterns across categories in each classified group. When young adults are concerned in comparison to the elderly for review here, Japanese of all ages are most concerned about health, as is the case with Koreans, but Japanese in their 20s care more about income, interpersonal relations, family, and job, whereas the older adults over 60 care more about income, housing, medical care, and leisure time. In contrast, for Korean adults aged 20–29, housing, income, family, and job are more highly prioritized, while those over 60 find family, income, housing, medical care, and their job more important. Yet Japanese twenties are more likely to value "having" and "relating" than those aged 60 and older, with no difference in categories of "being" between the two age groups. Koreans in both age groups equally value "having," but those in earlier adulthood are more likely to pursue "being" relative to people in later life stages who value relating to others. These findings together imply the extent to which adults of different age groups in each society could be influenced by socio-economic factors, age-related risks, and cultural value orientations toward self and social relationships, ultimately resulting in growing disparities in subjective well-being.

In the current study, we analyze the subjective well-being of adults in Japan and Korea that have provided insight into what matters most for their happy lives in collectivistic societies characterized by lower well-being relative to higher household income at the cross-national level. Existing research has highlighted that community components including social relationships are more tightly coupled with the overall life satisfaction in these two countries than in Western countries of individualistic culture, but few studies have explored the relative importance of perceived neighborhood context in comparison to status-related context. Perceived neighborhood conditions and their association with happiness are coupled with cultural expectations and roles, and they also vary across the stages of adulthood. In terms of moderators of neighborhood context, theoretical variation in the equation of happiness according to the life stage has not yet been empirically examined. One plausible scenario is that as individually oriented happiness has appeared to become increasingly prioritized than socially oriented happiness in Japan and Korea, neighborhood perception is expected to entail less importance than status-related factors for feelings of happiness regardless of the life stage. As aforementioned, different historical and cultural contexts of the development of neighborhood in these two societies could result in its different meanings for individual well-being. On the other hand, more

disparities in the association of local community with happiness might be plausible between young and older adults in Korea given a wider gap in cultural value orientations toward locality and neighbor relationships. Hence, we hypothesize instead that residential community is considerably important in happy lives of Japanese and Koreans, but self-rated happiness of Japanese is more influenced by positive perception of neighborhood conditions in general than that of Koreans. Also, within-country group differences especially in the effects of supportive relationships appear more significant among Koreans since the older generations tend to share communal values and culture of social bonding beyond family in pursuit of relationalism.

Data and Method

Data

We use the datasets from surveys conducted during the same year and representative of the national population of adults who live in Korean and Japanese households: the 2010 Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS) and 2010 Korean General Social Survey (KGSS), accessed from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at University of Michigan. The former employs two-stage stratified random sampling (N=2496, a mix of interview and self-administered forms), and the latter is based on multi-stage area probability sampling (N=1576, face-to-face interview only). The response rates are approximately 60% in both surveys. They are preferred over the same surveys of any other year because both are the only ones intended to administer six questions about respondents' assessments of neighborhood environments and relationships within the area of a 15-minute walk.[1] A residential area of this size, about one kilometer in diameter, can be far more accurate for the notion of neighborhood than administrative districts often used in research on neighborhood effects.[2] In the 2010 JGSS,

[1] The 2014 KGSS contains exactly the same battery of questions about neighborhood perception, but self-rated happiness is not asked, whereas the 2015 JGSS administers only two out of six questions in total plus a single question about happiness.

[2] When variables at the local community level are available, multi-level analysis is an ideal approach in order to examine the impact of perceived neighborhood experiences controlling for contextual effects. The original JGSS data includes a series of codes assigned to respondent's residential areas, and such information is obtainable if the JGSS Research Center accepts a request. However, administrative units ("si-gun-gu") employed in the KGSS are not compatible with daily living areas ("chocho-aza") consisting of hundreds of households in the JGSS.

questions about neighborhood perception are available on Form B (self-administered mode) containing the health and well-being module.

Variable Definition and Measurements

Due to the absence of multiple items about subjective well-being that cover life satisfaction and affect, we consider a single-item question of self-rated happiness as the dependent variable in the model. It is measured on a 5-point scale from 5 ("very happy") to 1 ("very unhappy") in both surveys.

Perceptions of neighborhood conditions are measured across six items on a 5-point scale from 5 ("strongly agree") to 1 ("strongly disagree"). With respect to neighborhood amenities, the average score of assessment is computed from three questions: "The neighborhood is suitable for exercise such as jogging or walking," "A large selection of fresh fruits and/or vegetables is available in my neighborhood," and "The neighborhood has adequate public facilities (e.g., community center, library, park, etc.)." Perception of neighborhood safety comes from a single question: "The neighborhood is safe." Regarding relationships among neighbors, the averaged evaluation is used on the following two questions: "The neighbors are mutually concerned for each other," and "The neighbors are willing to provide assistance when I am in need." This classification of neighborhood context is reasonably consistent with results from exploratory factor analysis (not shown here) that suggest three factors of neighborhood amenities, neighborhood safety, and neighbor relationships, consistent with Taniguchi and Potter (2016).

Variables related to social economic status in the model include household income, subjective identification of social strata, educational attainment, and employment status. Unfortunately, 28% of cases are missing (18.3% of DK and 9.7% of "refused") regarding household income in the 2010 JGSS. In the existing studies using the same dataset, different approaches are adopted. For examples, Matsushima and Matsunaga (2015) include a variable of household income excluding all those missing cases, whereas Taniguchi and Porter (2016) focus on relative income instead in order to keep the original number of cases, with absolute income out of analysis. Differently but reasonably, we attempt to directly handle household income in pursuit of model specification by transforming the original metric into quintiles of the equivalized income and considering a group of missing cases for both countries.[3] The range of self-identified social strata is from 1

[3] In Table 1 and 2, we calculate the logarithm of equivalized income from the total household

(lowest) to 10 (highest). The highest level of education is measured by nine categories in Korea and more in Japan, but we dichotomize them into "college or higher" (college, university, and graduate school) and "high school or lower" (high school, junior high school, elementary school, and no formal education). The latter group is the reference category. We recode employment status into three dummy variables (regular work, temporary or daily work, and self-employed or working for family) and the baseline group includes those who are not currently working for pay.

Self-rated health is measured on a 5-point scale from 1 ("poor") to 5 ("excellent"). The surveys measure trust toward general others on a 4-point scale from 1 ("You cannot be too careful in dealing with people") to 4 ("People can almost always be trusted"). We calculate the average score of self-efficacy on a 5-point scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") measured by two items: "The future seems to me to be hopeless, and I cannot believe that things are changing for the better" and "I feel that it is impossible for me to reach the goals that I would like to strive for." A dummy variable of sex is created in comparison to the female group. We dichotomize marital status into one group (never-married, divorced, widowed, or separated), with the other group as the reference category (currently married or cohabiting). Religion is a dummy variable with "no religion" as the reference group. "Living alone" is another dummy variable, with "living with any other person" used as the baseline.

Stated earlier, the present study is concerned with determinants of happiness across the life cycle, but with special focus on effects of neighborhood perceptions among young adults. To this end, we intend to compare two subpopulations at different stages of adulthood: one subsample of residents in the 20s and 30s and the other subsample of middle-aged and older adults as a reference group.

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of all independent variables for the total samples of surveyed Japanese and Koreans. We also offer the averages of the same variables and their standard deviations across Japan and Korea for each age group in Table 2. Results from independent t-test of means or proportions are presented in both tables.

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income originally measured into 19 and 22 categories in Japan and Korea, respectively. One currency unit is added to a case when zero monthly income is reported. Informed by Parker and Fenwick (1983), we solve the issue of a mid-point setting for an open-ended category (i.e., the last income categories). After computation, we obtain 29,444,582 yen and 35,736,072 yen (Japan) and 13,481,446 won and 17,574.835 won (Korea) as the median and average mid-points for the total cases.

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables with T-Test Results from the Total Sample

Variables	JPN		KOR		t-test
	mean	range	mean	range	
20-30s	.25(.43)	0, 1	.42(.49)	0, 1	.000
neighborhood amenities	3.82(.75)	1, 5	3.65(.99)	1, 5	.000
neighborhood safety	3.94(.77)	1, 5	3.53(1.18)	1, 5	.000
neighbor relationships	3.39(.94)	1, 5	3.03(.46)	1, 5	.000
log income	12.35(.76)	0, 14.37	14.08(2.25)	0, 16.42	.000
subjective social strata	5.19(1.64)	1, 10	4.56(1.72)	1, 10	.000
education	.37(.48)	0, 1	.47(.50)	0, 1	.000
regular	.33(.47)	0, 1	.30(.46)	0, 1	.095
temporary/daily	.16(.37)	0, 1	.11(.31)	0, 1	.000
self-employed	.11(.32)	0, 1	.19(.39)	0, 1	.000
health status	2.88(.82)	1, 5	3.40(1.23)	1, 5	.000
general trust	2.77(.73)	1, 4	2.30(.81)	1, 4	.000
self-efficacy	3.35(.91)	1, 5	3.82(1.13)	1, 5	.000
male	.46(.50)	0, 1	.47(.50)	0, 1	.544
neither married nor cohabiting	.28(.45)	0, 1	.36(.48)	0, 1	.000
religion	.35(.48)	0, 1	.57(.50)	0, 1	.000
living alone	.08(.28)	0, 1	.18(.39)	0, 1	.000

Note.—Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations. The range of each variable refers to its observed minimum and maximum. p-values are presented based on the two-tailed test. The number of effective cases varies due to missing data. We report the logarithm of equivalized household income suitable for comparison.

Method and Model

To identify determinants of self-rated happiness, we simply use OLS, although the dependent variable based on a 5-point scale does not strictly follow a normal distribution, because estimated regression coefficients can be efficient given the final sample sizes. It should be noted that there are no substantial differences in the significance of coefficients when ordered logit models are implemented (not presented here). In the absence of post-stratification weights in the 2010 KGSS data, we report OLS results without

TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables with T-Test Results from Subsamples

Variables	young			middle-aged + older		
	JPN	KOR	t-test	JPN	KOR	t-test
neighborhood amenities	3.67(.78)	3.56(.97)	.032	3.87(.74)	3.72(1.00)	.000
neighborhood safety	3.85(.79)	3.19(1.11)	.000	3.96(.76)	3.79(1.16)	.000
neighbor relationships	3.13(.99)	3.01(.42)	.007	3.48(.90)	3.03(.49)	.000
log income	12.39(.59)	14.4(1.81)	.000	12.35(.81)	13.85(2.5)	.000
subjective social strata	5.21(1.62)	4.79(1.49)	.000	5.19(1.64)	4.4(1.85)	.000
education	.55(.50)	.69(.46)	.000	.32(.47)	.30(.46)	.425
regular	.51(.50)	.42(.49)	.001	.27(.44)	.22(.41)	.006
temporary/daily	.19(.39)	.10(.30)	.000	.16(.36)	.11(.32)	.003
self-employed	.07(.25)	.11(.31)	.018	.13(.33)	.25(.43)	.000
health status	3.19(.84)	3.81(.99)	.000	2.78(.78)	3.10(1.3)	.000
general trust	2.74(.75)	2.27(.71)	.000	2.78(.72)	2.33(.87)	.000
self-efficacy	3.60(1.01)	4.26(.85)	.000	3.27(.86)	3.48(1.19)	.000
male	.45(.50)	.48(.50)	.347	.47(.50)	.47(.50)	.826
neither married nor cohabiting	.47(.50)	.53(.50)	.019	.21(.41)	.23(.42)	.333
religion	.19(.39)	.50(.50)	.000	.41(.49)	.62(.49)	.000
living alone	.08(.27)	.21(.41)	.000	.09(.28)	.16(.37)	.000

Note.—Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations. p-values are presented based on the two-tailed test. The number of effective cases varies due to missing data. The logarithm of equivalized household income is reported here as in the previous table.

weights for both countries. The listwise method is adopted to handle missing values in a straightforward manner.

We consider happiness as a function of perceived neighborhood context and socio-economic status context in the presence of the other control variables. To this end, we construct our regression models in the following way. Model 1 includes a group of status-related variables and another block of the other personal and socially developed characteristics. Model 2 consists of a group of variables about perceived neighborhood context and the same set of control variables. Each of these two models is compared to Model 3 that fully covers all three blocks of independent variables whereby we can evaluate the explanatory power of perceived neighborhood context in relative to

socio-economic status context.

Another issue of statistical modeling revolves around subgroup analysis versus interaction analysis. There are strengths and weaknesses to both approaches for identifying the conditional focal relationship (see Aneshensel 2002: 191-232 for a comprehensive review). Our analysis follows two steps. We first intend to consider interaction analysis of the whole sample by including interaction terms between perceptions of neighborhood and age group (Model 4). This model has the main advantage of a direct test of whether the influence of neighborhood perception on happiness is different between the focal and reference group, with higher statistical power thanks to maintaining more observations. Nevertheless, it should assume that effects of all other covariates except the focal independent ones are held constant regardless of age group. Given this disadvantage, as the next step, we seek to conduct subsample analysis for each age group (i.e., twenties and thirties versus middle-aged and older adults) based on a full model with main effects only (equivalent to Model 3) to examine whether and how the major determinants of happiness differently operate between the two groups. Subgroup analysis can be more appropriate because some other independent variables let alone neighborhood perceptions might have differential impacts on happiness across stages of adulthood.

Results

Figure 1 shows the average happiness scores across two age groups between Japan and Korea. The means of self-rated happiness of Japanese twenties and thirties and adults over forties are reported as 3.78 and 3.65, respectively. A different pattern in its average is observed in Korea: 3.48 for young adults and 3.44 for middle-aged and older adults. According to the independent t-test, the cross-national mean differences in happiness scores are significant for each age group ($p=0.000$ for both). On the other hand, the between-group disparity in feelings of happiness within each society is statistically meaningful only in Japan ($p=0.001$, but $p=0.362$ in Korea).

Figure 2 summarizes the means scores of perceived neighborhood environments and relationships by age group in Japan and Korea. Young adults seem to reveal larger cross-national differences in the perception of neighborhood safety, while middle-aged and older adults between Japan and Korea appear to have more differentiated ideas about social relations in their walkable neighborhood. Results from the independent t-test rather indicate

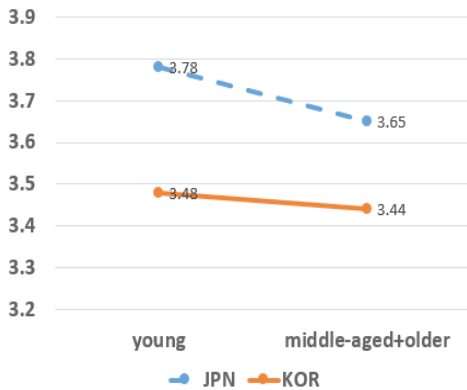

FIG. 1.—Unadjusted Mean Scores of Happiness by Age Group

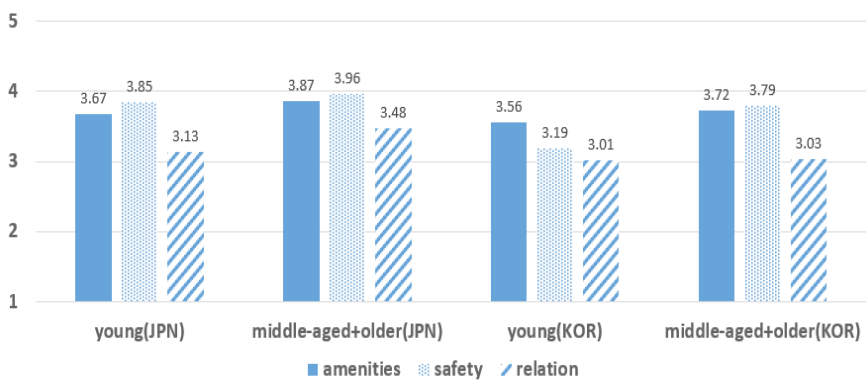

FIG. 2.—Neighborhood Perceptions by Age Group

the significant differences in the perception of all three constituents of neighborhood between the two societies (e.g., p=0.032 for the young and p=0.000 for the middle-aged and elderly even as to amenities showing the slightest differences in Figure 2). In Japan, the older generations are consistently more positive than twenties and thirties across three domains of neighborhood context (p=0.000 for amenities and relations and p=0.002 for safety). Between two groups of Koreans, there is no meaningful difference in the assessment of the quality of daily life interactions among neighbors (p=0.418), but middle-aged and older adults are significantly more positive than young adults about neighborhood amenities (p=0.002) and safety (p=0.000).

TABLE 3
Regression Model Descriptives

	total		young		middle-aged + older	
	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR	JPN	KOR
Model 1	.244(.238)	.216(.207)	.313(.293)	.248(.228)	.228(.221)	.212(.196)
Model 2	.251(.247)	.210(.204)	.304(.292)	.217(.205)	.236(.232)	.216(.207)
Model 3	.273(.267)	.224(.213)	.334(.311)	.254(.230)	.264(.255)	.225(.206)
ΔR^2 M3–M1	.030(.000)	.008(.003)	.021(.000)	.006(.195)	.035(.000)	.013(.003)
ΔR^2 M3–M2	.023(.000)	.014(.004)	.030(.004)	.037(.001)	.027(.000)	.009(.508)
N	2332	1505	600	648	1732	857

Note.—For the first three rows, numbers in parentheses indicate adjusted R^2s. For the last two rows, p-values for additional change of R^2 are presented in parentheses.

In Table 3, we offer a summary of the coefficients of determination for three models in the first three rows. The statistical significance of the relative importance of perceived neighborhood context (with ΔR^2 between Model 3 and Model 1) and status context (with ΔR^2 between Model 3 and Model 2) is also presented in the last two rows. First, all models in the table are significant in terms of global fitness. However, the models for Japanese adults all explain more of the total variation of self-rated happiness than do those for Korean adults. Given two components of subjective well-being, self-rated happiness and life satisfaction, the former is known to be more associated with subjective domains of the quality of life. Consistently, psychological and socio-demographic covariates make the highest contribution to the equation of happiness commonly in Japan and Korea (R^2=0.216 and R^2=0.200, respectively). Our results also show that both neighborhood perceptions and status-related factors significantly explain additional portion of the variance in happy life of Japanese and Korean adults. However, subsample analysis by age group provides distinguishable patterns in whether and how the overall neighborhood perceptions have differential effects. Perceived environments and social relations in walkable neighborhood are notably crucial to the happiness of young, middle-aged, and older adults in Japan and the older generations in Korea, but they do not appear to make any meaningful contribution among Korean young adults (p=0.195). In contrast, the overall status context significantly affects happiness of twenties and thirties in both countries and the middle-aged and elderly in Japan, but its influence is not particularly considerable among the older generations in Korea (p=0.508).

Table 4 summarizes the results of OLS regression analysis of self-rated happiness from the pooled data for each country[4]. According to Model 3 on the left panel, Japanese adults in twenties and thirties feel happier than middle-aged and older adults even after adjusting the other independent variables. Japanese men report that they tend to feel less happy than women. The average happiness score of those who are single due to being never married, widowed, divorced, or separated are lower than that of those who are being married or cohabiting. Religion has a positive impact on happiness although its effect size is relatively small. Both self-rated health status and self-efficacy are primary determinants of feelings of happiness. Among status-related variables, household income is considerably associated with happiness only between those in the second quintile and those in the bottom 20%. Regular workers tend to report lower scores of happiness compared to those who are not currently employed or working for pay. Self-identified social strata is far more influential than either absolute income or employment status. The main effects of perceived neighborhood safety and relations are significant, indicating that Japanese people tend to feel happier with more positive perceptions of safety and social relationships in their walkable neighborhood areas. In Model 4, all of the previous results from Model 3 are almost identical except the fact that the adjusted scores of happiness among self-employed Japanese are lower in relative to those who are unemployed or not working for pay. Among three interaction terms between neighborhood perceptions and subgroup by age, perceived neighbor relationship is the only predictor conditioned by age group, suggesting that its effect is buffered by our moderator. Specifically, the positive effect of perceived mutual concern and support by neighbors on happiness is significantly reduced among Japanese twenties and thirties. The positive effect of perceived neighborhood safety is not conditional on age group, however.

In Model 3 on the right panel, the adjusted mean score of happiness among Korean young adults is rather lower than that among the middle-aged and elderly. It should be mentioned here that the relative mean score of happiness for Korean young adults (-0.127) is significantly lower than that for Japanese counterparts (0.148), according to the t-test of the equality of two regression coefficients (Paternoster, Brame, Mazerolle, and Piquero 1998). As

[4] A reviewer raised concerns about the issue of multicollinearity in our regression models, but there is not any serious problem. For example, the highest VIF score is 2.543 from perceived neighborhood safety in the Japanese sample, which is the only one throughout Table 4 above the most conservative cutoff value of VIF (e.g., 2.5) used in the literature (see Allison 1999).

TABLE 4
Interaction Analysis of Subjective Happiness: Japan Versus Korea

variables	JPN		KOR	
	Model 3	Model 4	Model 3	Model 4
20-30s	.148(.042)***	.133(.042)**	-.127(.053)*	-.137(.053)*
male	-.067(.034)*	-.069(.034)*	-.024(.044)	-.029(.044)
neither married nor cohabiting	-.273(.043)***	-.273(.043)***	-.234(.054)***	-.234(.054)***
religion	.071(.034)*	.068(.034)*	.064(.043)	.065(.043)
living alone	-.099(.066)	-.109(.066)	-.048(.065)	-.055(.065)
health status	.206(.021)***	.206(.021)***	.077(.019)***	.077(.019)***
general trust	.041(.023)	.043(.023)	.116(.026)***	.116(.026)***
self-efficacy	.219(.019)***	.219(.019)***	.254(.022)***	.257(.022)***
income 2nd quintile	-.125(.059)*	-.126(.059)*	.045(.073)	.051(.072)
income 3rd quintile	-.095(.063)	-.088(.063)	.050(.081)	.056(.081)
income 4th quintile	-.075(.063)	-.067(.063)	.012(.074)	.028(.074)
income 5th quintile (top 20%)	-.033(.067)	-.027(.067)	.074(.081)	.085(.081)
income(missing)	-.077(.055)	-.074(.055)	-.034(.080)	-.036(.080)
subjective social strata	.074(.010)***	.073(.011)***	.052(.013)***	.052(.013)***
education	.031(.035)	.032(.035)	.042(.049)	.041(.049)
regular	-.126(.042)**	-.124(.042)**	-.100(.055)	-.097(.055)
temporary/daily	-.082(.048)	-.078(.048)	-.088(.071)	-.083(.071)
self-employed	-.106(.055)	-.109(.055)*	-.057(.062)	-.059(.062)
neighborhood amenities	.050(.027)	.053(.032)	-.005(.023)	-.031(.030)
neighborhood safety	.118(.027)***	.105(.033)***	.071(.020)***	.091(.025)***
neighbor relationships	.075(.019)***	.103(.023)***	.006(.045)	.081(.055)
amenities x 20-30s		-.012(.057)		.065(.046)
safety x 20-30s		.032(.059)		-.055(.040)
relations x 20-30s		-.090(.041)*		-.211(.093)*
constant	2.021***	2.021***	1.849***	1.831***
F	41.401***	36.467***	20.331***	18.208***
R^2	.273	.275	.224	.228
N	2332		1505	

Note.—Two-tailed test: * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. All scores of neighborhood perception are mean-centered.

in the case of Japanese adults, the marital status of being never married or WDS has a negative impact on happiness. Also, health status and self-efficacy are all positively associated with it, but the former's effect size is comparatively smaller. Unlike Japanese counterparts, trust toward general others affects happy life of Koreans more considerably. Among status-related predictors, subjective class identification is the only determinant showing statistical significance. Perceived neighborhood conditions do not appear to critically influence self-rated happiness of Koreans. The assessment of neighborhood safety is only significant, indicating that Korean adults tend to feel happier with more positive perceived neighborhood safety. In Model 4, there is no substantial change in estimated coefficients in terms of significance, direction, and associational strength. Focusing on interaction between neighborhood perceptions and age group, we find here again the conditional effect of perceived neighborhood cohesion. Its positive effect on feelings of happiness decreases among Korean young adults more prominently compared to Japanese counterparts. Although the main effect of the perceived quality of neighbor relations is not significant (Model 3), a bigger buffering effect suggests that twenties and thirties in Korean society feel rather less happy when in close interactions with neighbors of mutual concern and assistance. As similar among Japanese, the positive impact of perceived safety in neighborhood areas on happiness of Koreans does not depend on age group.

Table 5 presents the results of OLS regression of independent variables on happiness scores across two age groups for each country. For Japanese twenties and thirties, those who are single are less happy than those who are married or cohabit. Better health status and higher self-efficacy tend to enhance feelings of happiness. With the higher self-identified position in a hierarchy of social strata, it is more likely that one's score of happiness is heightened. None of the neighborhood-related variables is statistically significant at the alpha level of 0.05 except the effect of perceived neighborhood safety: Japanese young adults feel happier as they evaluate their residential area as a more secured place.

Among the middle-aged and elderly in Japanese society, marital status is a significant determinant among adults over forties, but to a less extent. Religious or spiritual life is conducive to self-rated happiness, whereas single-person households report that they feel less happy. The happiness of the older generations increase as their health is self-rated better, and self-efficacy also has a positive effect. Middle-aged and older adults in the second quintile rather report lower scores of happiness than the poorest fifth. They tend to

feel happier with higher self-evaluated position in social strata, whereas doing regular work, temporary work, or being self-employed rather seems to make them less happy than neither being currently employed nor working for pay. Positive perceptions of neighborhood safety and neighbor relationships are considerably associated with happiness of the older generations. Even perceived amenities tend to enhance their feelings of happiness albeit at a higher level of significance.

According to standardized regression coefficients of predictors in the model, the happiness of Japanese twenties and thirties is most affected by marital status (-0.279). Self-rated health status (0.228) is the second most important determinant, followed by self-efficacy (0.209), subjective class identification (0.157) and neighborhood safety (0.125). On the other hand, self-efficacy (0.223) is most conclusively associated with feelings of happiness of adults aged forty and over in Japan. Self-rated health status (0.168) and self-identified social strata (0.132) are the second and third most important factors, followed by the assessment of neighbor relationships (0.105), perception of neighborhood safety (0.090), regular work (-0.081), marital status (-0.071), whether or not to live alone (-0.066), and the other significant determinants.

In the last two columns of Table 5, we summarize the main results from OLS regression of predictors on the happiness scores of Korean adults by subsample. Unmarried young adults report significantly lower scores of self-rated happiness than those in marriage or cohabitation. As the case with Japanese counterparts, health status (with lower effect size) and self-efficacy are all positively associated with happy life of Korean twenties and thirties. Not only among Japanese young adults and also for Korean adults in the same stages of life, subjective class identification is the only significant status-related variable. In contrast, trust toward general others considerably increases the happiness of Korean young adults only. Perceptions of neighborhood do not significantly influence how happy they feel although positive relationships with neighbors apparently tend to decrease the score of happiness at a higher significance level.

Concerning the happiness of middle-aged and older adults in Korea, perceived neighborhood safety is the only determinant of statistical significance among community-related factors. Consistent with young adults in Korea, generalized trust, subjective health status, and self-efficacy all seem to substantially contribute to happy life of Korean adults in middle and later adulthood.

Given standardized regression coefficients of independent variables, self-

TABLE 5
Subgroup Analysis of Self-Rated Happiness: Young Versus Middle-Aged and Older

Variables	JPN		KOR	
	young	middle+older	young	middle+older
male	-.059(.067)	-.065(.040)	.010(.061)	-.044(.064)
neither married nor cohabiting	-.501(.071)***	-.152(.055)**	-.329(.066)***	-.135(.091)
religion	-.016(.080)	.081(.038)*	.059(.058)	.058(.062)
living alone	.066(.125)	-.209(.080)**	-.078(.083)	-.080(.103)
health status	.245(.039)***	.190(.026)***	.071(.030)*	.091(.026)***
general trust	.080(.044)	.032(.026)	.138(.041)***	.105(.034)**
self-efficacy	.189(.034)***	.227(.023)***	.297(.035)***	.244(.028)***
income 2nd quintile	-.119(.130)	-.138(.066)*	.096(.122)	.073(.097)
income 3rd quintile	-.010(.137)	-.105(.071)	.058(.130)	.098(.111)
income 4th quintile	-.149(.135)	-.024(.071)	.067(.121)	.058(.102)
income 5th quintile (top 20%)	-.150(.151)	.017(.076)	.123(.132)	.109(.111)
income(missing)	.038(.119)	-.099(.063)	-.034(.134)	-.001(.106)
subjective social strata	.087(.021)***	.071(.012)***	.098(.020)***	.031(.017)
education	.003(.066)	.050(.041)	.030(.065)	.059(.073)
regular	.023(.083)	-.160(.050)**	-.073(.069)	-.118(.087)
temporary/daily	.161(.097)	-.137(.055)*	-.058(.101)	-.097(.100)
self-employed	.084(.141)	-.144(.060)*	-.032(.105)	-.068(.081)
neighborhood amenities	.045(.048)	.056(.032)	.027(.033)	-.023(.032)
neighborhood safety	.144(.049)**	.103(.033)**	.023(.030)	.092(.027)***
neighbor relationships	.006(.035)	.103(.024)***	-.115(.069)	.070(.059)
constant	1.164***	1.100***	1.444***	1.477***
F	14.529***	30.612***	10.657***	12.128***
R^2	.334	.264	.254	.225
N	600	1732	648	857

Note.—Two-tailed test: * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

efficacy (0.309) is most crucial for happy life of Korean young adults, followed by marital status (-0.200), self-identified social strata (0.179), generalized trust (0.119), and health status (0.086). On the other hand, among Korean adults aged forty and over, self-efficacy (0.309) is the first priority predictor. Health status (0.124) the second strongest determinant

followed by perception of neighborhood safety (0.113) and generalized trust (0.096).

Additionally, we intend to test the equality of a pair of regression coefficients (Paternoster et al. 1998) in the following three ways: 1) Japanese young adults versus Korean young adults; 2) Japanese young adults vs. Japanese middle-aged and older adults; and 3) Korean young adults vs. Korean middle-aged and older adults. Through this investigation of the influence of independent variables on happiness, it is expected that we can clarify not only cross-national variations among young people in both societies and also within-country group differences in relative to the older generations of the same age range. According the first comparison, we reject the null hypotheses that the effects of health status, self-efficacy, and neighborhood safety are the same between Japanese twenties and thirties and Korean counterparts. From the second analysis, the impacts of marital status, temporary or daily work, and neighbor relationships are all different across age groups in Japan. Lastly, we also find differential effects of subjective class identification and neighbor relationships between young adults and the middle-aged and elderly in the Korean sample. All the results reported here are meaningful at the significance level of 0.05.

Discussion and Conclusions

The present study examined cross-national and age group differences in self-rated happiness, perceived neighborhood conditions, and their linkages, with a focus on young Japanese and Koreans. The main findings are as follows. Overall, Japanese adults seem to feel happier than Korean adults, and particularly the mean score of happiness among Japanese twenties and thirties is considerably higher than that among Korean young adults. Further observation by subgroup shows that there is greater disparity in feelings of happiness between the young and the middle-aged and elderly in Japan, whereas Korean young adults do not appear to feel as happy as the older generations (Figure 1). Second, Japanese adults feel more positively toward neighborhood environments and interactions with neighbors than do their Korean counterparts. Japanese young adults show higher overall satisfaction about walkable neighborhood areas than their Korean counterparts, but even their living conditions seem all inferior in terms of neighborhood amenities and safety compared to Japanese adults over forties (Figure 2). Next, in both societies, perceived neighborhood conditions are as closely associated with

feelings of happiness as status-related factors, but the overall neighborhood context seems more integral to subjective well-being of Japanese adults. Positively perceived neighborhood environment and relations appear substantially linked to happiness of Japanese throughout the life cycle, albeit in a less extent among their twenties and thirties. On the other hand, neighborhood perceptions are least important to Koreans in early stages of adulthood who tend to regard status-relevant factors comparatively more valuable in their happy life (Table 3).

According to our regression analysis of the whole sample (Table 4), young Japanese are happier than middle-aged and older adults after controlling for the other covariates, whereas the adjusted average score of happiness among young Koreans is lower in comparison to the same control group aged forty and over.[5] Sex, religion, and general trust are all distinguishably associated with the happiness of adults in the two societies. There seem to be also different patterns in the distribution of happiness scores by household income quintile and employment status. On the other hand, marital status, health status, self-efficacy, and subjective class identification turn out to be common determinants. With the main effects of perceived safety and social relations in neighborhood areas significant, the positive influence of perceived mutual concern and support by neighbors is conditioned by age group, suggesting that it tends to increase feelings of happiness, but to a lesser degree among young Japanese. In the Korean sample, neighborhood safety perception only has a significant main effect, while the impact of perceived neighborhood relationship is buffered by age group comparatively more than in the Japanese sample. In other words, perceived quality of social connectedness among neighbors is not considerably integral to happy life of Korean adults in general, and furthermore young Koreans seem to feel rather less happy in neighborhood areas of higher social cohesion.

Continued investigation by subsample (Table 5) shows not only cross-national subgroup distinctions but also within-country group differences in determinants of happiness. First, the overall patterns of significant associations with happiness appear rather similar between Japanese young

[5] Another reviewer pointed out inconsistencies between our results and Inoguchi and Fujii (2009) and Park (2009). Figure 1 is based on two age groups, but we can find similar patterns in the scores of happiness if three age groups are considered. In Japan, a U-shaped curve from young(3.78) > old(3.66) ≈ middle-aged(3.63). In Korea, a reverse pattern from middle-aged(3.52) ≈ young(3.49) > old(3.31). Rather than the unadjusted scores of happiness in Figure 1 and their works, we ultimately intend to compare its adjusted scores.

adults and Korean counterparts except generalized trust and safety in neighborhood areas. On the contrary, not a few covariates are differently associated with happiness of middle-aged and older adults in both societies such as marital status, religion, whether or not to live alone, generalized trust, self-identified social strata, and employment status. Perceived neighborhood safety is a common determinant, but perceived social relations among neighbors is significantly relevant only to the Japanese middle-aged and elderly. Next, marital status, health status, self-efficacy, subjective social strata, and perceived neighborhood safety are fairly crucial for happiness of both young adults and the older generations in Japan, while religion, the status of living alone, employment status, and perceived quality of neighbor relations are significant only among Japanese adults in their forties and over. On the other hand, there seem smaller age group differences in the equation of happiness among Korean adults. When focusing on the linkage between perceived neighborhood context and happiness in particular, we found its influence more important across the life stages in Japanese society, consistent with our results from interaction analysis.

Facing an ageing population, transition to a slow-growing economy, and residual state welfare provision, young adults in both countries are living through hard times as the "lost generation." [6] One plausible explanation of relatively less happy young Koreans is that their overall living standards are considerably lower than those of middle-aged and older Koreans, as reflected in the coined phrases, "three give-ups generation," "five give-ups generation," and finally "N give-ups generation." Newspapers frequently address similar social issues related to growing costs incurred by Japanese young people such as difficulties in finding a decent job, survival as temporary workers in despair, and postponed or abandoned marriage (*The Huffington Post* July 2, 2013), but Japanese domestic surveys report that Japanese youths are feeling happier than ever before although their life conditions have become worse over the years. Another related finding also indicates that the adjusted mean score of happiness among Japanese twenties and thirties is significantly higher than that of Korean counterparts. Furuichi (2011) documents two main factors to explain why subjective well-being of the so-called "satori generation" has been constantly higher compared to the older generations. First, they appear to enjoy today's life, believing the current situation is better

[6] In the Japanese sample, the younger group includes adults called the "N-generation (*dankai junior generation*)" and "Z-generation (*satori generation*)." The same age group in the Korean sample consists of those who were born after 1971 including the so-called "X-generation" and "N-generation."

than their precarious life in the future. Second, they tend to value peer relationships, maintaining close confiding relationships of mutual recognition with schoolmates and local friends. A Korean sociologist in response to Furuichi (2011) claims that Japanese youths in such a desperate country tend to recognize themselves as victims of social, economic, and political systems (Oh 2014). Consequently, they seem to accept the notion that "happiness is now and here" outside social structure to enjoy everyday life in a "consummatory" manner. In contrast, Korean young adults do not yet seem to put individual experiences into broader social and historical contexts. For example, youth unemployment becomes personal trouble to be overcome through self-development and vigorous efforts. There is little leeway for "seeking happiness from despair" to this "survivalist generation" (Kim 2015) driven by fear and competition and preoccupied with a neoliberal ethics of self-responsibility.

The second main findings in the current study seem to be attributed to how meanings of local community and neighborhood experiences have been differently shared and reproduced. Neighborhood associations consisting of 100–300 households, albeit once established from the top down for administrative purposes, undoubtedly have played important roles in generating a sense of locality for residents through various activities from firefighting to recreational festivals (Pekkanen 2006). Equivalent to neighborhood associations, Korean hometown associations organized by ancestors and descendants, whether to live in their hometown or elsewhere, largely have been dedicated to election campaigns and local economic growth. To Japanese older generations, local neighborhood in a broader sense have become more integral parts of their social life as community safety net with increased ageing-related problems and social isolation. Meanwhile, younger generations are reported to be less concerned about community affairs and neighborhood associations (Pekkanen 2006; van Houwelingen 2012), consistent with the biggest difference in the perception of neighbor relationships in our Japanese sample. Nevertheless, our finding first indicates that perceived neighborhood safety is crucial for happiness of Japanese adults regardless of life stages, reflecting that the issue of security is popular concern in Japan as a high-assurance society rather than as a high-trust society (Yamagishi 2001; Miller and Mitamura 2003). In addition, it turns out that the effect of neighborhood safety on happiness is more noticeable among Japanese young adults compared to Korean counterparts. Our results also suggest that the beneficial contribution of perceived bonding capital in neighborhood to feelings of happiness in Japanese society is not limited to a

specific age group although the size of its positive effect considerably diminishes among young Japanese.

On the contrary, the overall neighborhood context turns out to be comparatively less important to happy life of Koreans. Perceived neighborhood safety is the only domain significantly associated with their happiness. Older generations in Korean society tend to share feelings of nostalgia for their hometown in pursuit of intimate relations and place attachment, but the notion of local neighborhood as community-like networks of mutual concern and support is unfamiliar to Koreans in general and twenties and thirties in particular. Its context seems to be considered simply as secured environments for living or at best amenities in walkable areas. Perceived neighborhood cohesion itself and its association with happiness remain comparatively weaker as it is not unusual for Koreans to lead a happy life without knowing their next-door neighbors beyond family and kin networks. Further examination shows that Korean twenties and thirties are even less satisfied about neighborhood amenities and security than their older generations who can obtain disproportionate benefits in terms of accessibility to local welfare services and public facilities. Interestingly, young Koreans tend to feel rather less happy about better neighbor relationships albeit meaningful at the significance level of 0.10, plausibly implying a double-edged aspect of neighborhood bonding capital in a collectivistic society. It remains to be seen whether perception of neighborhood cohesion among Korean young adults and its contribution to their subjective well-being can change with age as network boundaries in daily life interactions expand with growing participation in various neighborhood meetings and organizations.

Besides effects of the focal independent variables, our regression analysis shows that some convergent determinants are significantly linked to the happiness of young Japanese and Koreans, with greater within-society divergence in patterns of associations across the life stages. Regarding socio-economic status context in our study, one's self-evaluated position in a social hierarchy is considerably integral to happy life of both groups of young adults. The importance of subjective class identification continues to be found among the older generations in both countries in spite of a decline in its impact on happiness of the Korean middle-aged and elderly. With growing frustration about within-generation inequalities between those who have inherited bright futures and those who have even no hope, young Koreans in particular sarcastically distinguish "earthen spoon (born into the poorest families)" from "silver spoon" and even "golden spoon" in "Hell Joseon" as if

back in the five-century-long Joseon dynasty of status hierarchy (*The Korea Times* December 24, 2015). Self-identified social position instead of absolute income seems substantially important also for the self-rated happiness of Japanese twenties and thirties in a highly status-oriented society. Nevertheless, our further analysis concludes that within-country group difference is significant only in the Korean sample, indicating that the effect of subjective class identification is more pronounced among Korean young adults.

Additionally, a general conclusion from existing research is that married people feel happier especially when in intimate relationships. Our results about young groups in both countries seem to indicate that the status of "not married," either postponed or abandoned, against standardized paths to early adulthood serves as the main stressor to these "lost generations." According to our further examination of the equality of regression coefficients, within-country group difference is remarkable only in the Japanese society. This seem to suggest that the negative impact of unmarried or WDS(widowed, divorced or separated) on happiness is more severe among Japanese young adults. Next, as confirmed from numerous studies by psychologists and social indicator researchers, self-rated happiness of the adult population in both societies is universally and remarkably dependent on one's health status and self-efficacy. Cross-nationally, however, the former and the latter seem more valuable among Japanese young adults and Korean counterparts, respectively. This divergence is fully consistent with our results from the test of the equality of regression coefficients between Japan and Korea, as presented earlier. Meanwhile, the effect of generalized trust on feelings of happiness does not appear prominent among Japanese in their twenties and thirties, whereas Koreans at the same stage of adulthood are significantly likely to feel happier with more positive assessment of the trustworthiness of other members of society. This pattern remains valid among the middle-aged and elderly of the two countries. A lack of statistical significance of the association between generalized trust and happiness among Japanese adults is not fully consistent with existing findings (e.g., Kuroki 2001; Matsushima and Matsunaga 2015). Nonetheless, our results at least seem to suggest that social relationships in Japan are more likely than those in Korea to produce a sense of assurance instead of trust in general others, and further that feelings of happiness are more explained by generalized trust in Korean society.

We have assembled the main findings indicating both convergent and also divergent determinants of the happiness of the adult population between Japan and Korea, two typical examples of East Asian countries alike in status-

centered culture, collectivistic norms, institutional settings, and wider economic and social environments. As expected from previous studies, local community seems to be one of the significant domains in subjective well-being in addition to socio-economic status. Furthermore, consistent with our expectations, happiness in life for Japanese is more influenced by perceived neighborhood context than that of Koreans although Japanese are known as sharing independence-oriented attitude and the "culture of solitude" (Woronoff 1997; Kim 2009; Jin 2013).[7] Concerning young adults, intrapersonal factors let alone status-related variables appear to be the key determinants of happiness in pursuit of individually oriented happiness in both societies, but the overall perception of neighborhood and its association with feelings of happiness are more positive among young Japanese, implying different historical legacies and cultural roles expected from local community at the same life stage. Besides different construction of happiness at the cross-national level as such, the present study also provides considerable evidence of within-society differences in determinants of happiness by age group. This subgroup variation appears more salient in Korean society between young adults and the older generations mainly because the former group tends to value personal freedom and relational mobility, while the latter more positively considers neighborhood environments and also shares different communal expectations and traditions. On the contrary, the influence of perceived neighborhood context including bonding social capital among neighbors on happiness seems operate stably across the life stage in Japanese society although personal community of young Japanese appears based on social networks primarily consisting of family, kin, and friends, as similar to Korean counterparts.[8]

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[7] For examples, generational differences in Japanese society have already emerged since the 1970s beyond political opinions; a new generation ("*dankai junior generation*") tends to value individualistic culture and lifestyles (Woronoff 1997). Even the generation of baby boomers in Japan, imbued with individualism, democracy, and the ideology of gender equality, sought to realize the prototypical ideal of a modern nuclear family (Ochiai 1997; Fukishima 2003). They have been depicted as birth cohorts who transformed stereotyped perceptions of the elderly into the new characteristics of independence, autonomy, and activeness instead of the popular notions associated with sickness, feebleness, and alienation (Kim 2009). Solitary death of the elderly in a so-called "disconnected society (*muen shakai*)" featured by the NHK in 2000 is now a well-known phenomenon representative of the demise of Japanese community, but it could be interpreted as a consequence of the mentality of isolation embedded in the process of modernization rather than as a newly emerged social risk (Jin 2013).

[8] The two surveys commonly deal with three types of received social support (i.e., instrumental, financial, and emotional) during the last 12 months, but unfortunately they administer the questions differently. For this incompatibility, we cannot include social support in our models, but it should be

In spite of the weakness in the present research design that age effects cannot be separable from cohort effects with non-repeated cross-sectional data, our study suggests qualitative variation by generation in Japan and rather discontinuities across generations in Korea in terms of the equation of subjective well-being, with some implications for further comparative research. Age group differences in the key determinants of happiness in Japanese society are partly indicative of the ramification of changing social generations: emergent individualistic societies and individually-oriented well-being upheld by Japanese in twenties and thirties. Nonetheless, we call attention to positive aspects of this on-going transition from collectivistic culture and social relationships recently more often featured in the mass media. For example, the "satori generation" is implicitly assumed as problematic (e.g., politically apathetic, disinterested in neighbors and community affairs, inward-looking, avoiding commitment), but it is such self-centered youths who dedicate to offline and online volunteering immediately after the 2011 earthquake (*The Huffington Post* April 7, 2011) and also experiment with diversified or less standardized transitions to adulthood in a post-materialistic manner (*Financial Times* July 6, 2012). Not only as political subjects but also as economic and cultural subjects, young Japanese seem to conduct various experiments in hometowns on small and social enterprises and new life styles that might be able to contribute to the subjective well-being of the older generations in a hyper-ageing society with a serious outflow of the youth population in every region in Japan.[9] However, as Furuichi (2011) aptly points it out, happiness of young adults is uncertain if material benefits from families are not sustainable (*East Asia Forum* September 17, 2014). There have been growing social problems coupled with decreased social connectedness and increasingly ailing household economy facing middle-aged and older adults in Japan, consistent with another finding in the current study as to the effects of employment status and the second poorest group on happiness of the older generations. For example, Japanese elderly are more likely to live in poverty with declining pension payments and increasing single-person households and non-regular workers (*The Wall*

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mentioned here that young adults in both countries, overall, receive emotional support primarily from non-kin, while financial and instrumental support are built more on kin-centered networks.

[9] An international survey (Cabinet Office 2009) indicates that 52.5% of Japanese youths aged less than 25 (equivalent to the "satori generation") present a strong attachment to their local communities due to daily gatherings with friends, firstly, and place attachment itself, secondly. Given the same 4-point scale, their community attachment is significantly higher than the 42.5% of their Korean counterparts (equivalent to "*N-generation*").

Street Journal August 10, 2016). This change might be only the latest phenomenon under the regime of Abenomics (*The Japan Times* June 16, 2016), but happy life of young Japanese can be breakable as long as it continues to depend on the generations of parents financially and instrumentally.

On the other hand, there exist greater disparities in the two contexts of the happiness between young adults and the older generations in Korea. Especially, a stronger buffering of the effect of perceived neighborhood cohesion on happiness by age group can be attributed to the shared experience of the financial crisis in 1997 and economic downturn thereafter without a stabilized period. As a consequence, competition for survival has become more serious across and within generations, leading to increased intergroup conflicts in the 2000s (Park 2010). Meanwhile, with the overwhelming ethics of self-responsibility regardless of stages of adulthood, social problems are not yet commonly acknowledged and resolved as structural and public. Most of older Koreans in poverty are forced into economic activities for daily lives without calling upon for public welfare and community-based support systems although our findings with the current data do not sufficiently confirm these stylized facts probably because the elderly in the Korean sample are underrepresented. Self-development, delayed or abandoned marriage, and political cynicism among young people can be interpreted as personal risk-averse strategies rather than as collective responses. These individualized reactions without individualism (Chang and Song 2010) seem to be passive defense strategies operating within the collectivistic social order maintained by earlier generations. One recent domestic survey finds that Korean from 19–34 (younger than the so-called "*X-generation*") appear largely distinctive from older generations (e.g., "*386 generation*" and baby boomers). Turning to life quality over economic achievement, they are more inclined toward cooperation and state responsibility for social problems and inequalities away from competition and personal responsibility (*The Hankyoreh* August 31, 2015). In parallel, according the 2016 Statistics on Senior Citizens aged 65 or over, 35.7% agree that the responsibility for elderly care lies with the family, government, and society, in comparison to 14.9% in 2006. Although 13.7% in 2006, a considerable 23.8% in 2016 still believe that the elderly should be self-responsible. Meanwhile, only 34.1% at present think that they should be taken care of by their family alone, almost half of the 67.3% in 2006 (*The Kyunghyang Shinmun* September 30, 2016). In spite of these seeds of ideational change, there seem to be still no alternative ways of life other than

family, which arguably is a primary factor of postponing the happiness of each generation and sustainable social well-being across generations. Traditional systems of social relationships provide workable solutions to social isolation and emotional loneliness, but Koreans in their twenties and thirties, as long as the current answers continued to be predicated on familism, could not refuse to follow standardized life courses of work-life and marriage, which put them into fierce competition. In Korea marked by strong familism, although it remains to be seen how different generations interact to explore new directions to their coexistence, difficulties and risks of the children generation are transferred entirely to the parent generation. Most likely, parents are all-round supporters of their children's well-being before and even after getting a job, but they are unable to retire from the labor market when they become poor or infirm with age. This would seem to be a self-portrait of the older generations in contemporary Korean society.

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