The Culture of Happiness and Satisfaction in Asia:
Data analysis of the AsiaBarometer surveys

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ABSTRACT

The AsiaBarometer is a questionnaire survey conducted at regular intervals that covers the Asia region. It was first conducted in 2003, and secondly in 2004.

The first section of this paper deals with the methodological advantages of the AsiaBarometer survey as a large scale cross-national comparative survey.

1. Research projects that have gained global attention include Euro Barometer, European Values Studies, International Social Survey Programme, World Values Survey, and so on. These surveys mainly focus on the countries of Europe and North America. This makes the AsiaBarometer, which focuses on the countries of Asia, all the more important.

2. A cross-national survey encourages the reinvestigation and clarification of concepts (variables). The AsiaBarometer survey enables us to reexamine and clarify important social concepts such as “happiness” and “satisfaction”.

The second section presents exploratory data analyses of the AsiaBarometer survey. Examples of the analyses are as follows:

1. Testing the determining factors for Happiness/Satisfaction.
2. Testing the conceptual framework of “Happiness Is Affective” while “Satisfaction Is Cognitive.”
3. Testing the relationship between the objective and subjective indicators of Happiness/Satisfaction.
4. Testing the conceptual framework of “Small Happiness” versus “Great Happiness.”

These analyses show that some theories/propositions from previous studies are applicable in Asia, whereas others are not. The important point to be taken from the analyses is that the “socioeconomic factors” and “cultural factors” in each country may account for those cases in which theories/propositions were not supported by the Asian data.

Key Words: AsiaBarometer, happiness, satisfaction