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Gb gender

Japan/USA

LEISURE TIME AND HAPPINESS: A CROSS-CULTURAL
COMPARISON OF EAST AND WEST

by

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Key Terms

Social Outings

Social Outings Desired

Happiness

unpublished report
1989A

See also CARSA 1989B
same study

ABSTRACT

Changing gender roles in regard to marriage are ongoing in the U. S. but not in Japan. While Japan maintains the traditional form of the wife being the homemaker and the husband the breadwinner, the American wife is moving in large numbers into the workplace and bringing with her a challenge to the man's role of being the only breadwinner.

These cultural differences would imply that Japanese women would have a more active social life than American women since she is not occupied with work outside the home. However, Gove believes that it is the lack of control over one's future that leads to a lesser degree of reported happiness for the married woman. Thus, it could be expected that the American married woman would report a higher rate of global happiness since her work provides her with more control over her future. If change is considered stressful, then the Japanese male would report higher rates of global happiness than the American male since his role is currently unchallenged.

The first of the hypotheses was shown to be incorrect. The Japanese female was the least likely person in all categories to go out often socially and there is a wide contrast between her and her American counterpart. The American female was also more likely to report global happiness but the difference was slight. However, the declared global happiness of both the Japanese female and male were considered suspect due to the findings on suicide and marital comparison to other people.

The findings lead to the conclusion that the changing gender roles in the U. S. may not necessarily be a factor in creating unhappiness for the male while providing a basis of control for the female.

The cultural gender roles in the United States and Japan are seemingly at opposite ends. American gender roles for married people are seemingly

undergoing change as more and more married women are staying with or returning to full-time occupations while still raising a family. On the other hand, the Japanese culture emphasizes a marriage where the wife remains at home while raising the family and the husband maintains the role of breadwinner. These cultural differences between the American married female and her Japanese counterpart could lead to differences in regard to questions of overload, equality and happiness.

If indeed the American married female is preoccupied with both working and taking care of the household, then it would appear that she would have less time than the Japanese married female for an active social life. However, studies have indicated that the American working wife has more equality in her household decisions.

Gove believes that one of the reasons for the higher rates of mental illness of married women over married men lies in the frustration of "their uncertainty and lack of control over their future" (1972: 35). This is also one of the reasons that Bernard utilizes in her explanation for the lesser likelihood of married women than married men to note global happiness (1975: 600). On a cross-cultural basis, however, it might be expected that the American married female would be more likely than her Japanese counterpart to note lesser frustration over control of her future and, according to Gove, more likely to report global happiness. This would tie in with Glenn's belief "that women, as a whole, exceed men in both the stress and satisfactions derived from marriage" (1975: 599). That is, the American wife may find the balance between outside work and the home leaving less time for leisure activities but may still express greater global happiness than her Japanese counterpart due to her greater control over her future.

Combining the above two ideas, it could be hypothesized that the

Japanese married women would have a more active social life than her American counterpart since she is not overloaded with jobs both inside and outside the home. However, it might be expected that her lack of an outside occupation would lead to frustration over her future and to a hypothesized lesser likelihood of reported happiness than the American married female. Since the married male in both cultures is less restricted in his social life by home conditions, it would be expected that married males would have a more active social life than married females. Finally, it could be hypothesized that the Japanese married male is more likely than his American counterpart to report global happiness since he is not undergoing role change.

METHODS

As a means of dealing with the hypotheses and to test whether the findings had wider application, two surveys were conducted, for the western part of the study in the Dayton Metropolitan area. A probability proportionate to size cluster sample of 400 households was drawn from the Dayton Metropolitan area--an area of about 500, 000 in population. After determining the total number of households in the sample area, the number was divided by 80 in order to select the interval number. Selecting a random number between one and the interval number allowed for a random starting point. All 80 blocks were selected by utilizing the above random number and adding the interval number. Utilizing another random number allowed for the selection of the five households to be interviewed in each block. Refusals and "not homes" were replaced with similar random drawings in the same block area. Since respondents were contacted in the evening or on weekends in order to ensure the inclusion of all desired categories, only 15 households had to be replaced. For this study of marital happiness, only the married portion of the sample was utilized (240). The breakdown included 132 females and 108 males. The questionnaire contained 77 items and included references to lifestyle, loneliness, happiness, sexual behavior and health. Chi Square was used as a test of significance Okayama, Japan, an area similar to the Dayton area, was the site of the eastern part of the study. A random sample of 750 was drawn from census books listing all adults 21 years old or over from this metropolitan region of 600, 000. Of the sample, 216, or 29% of the sampling, responded to the mailed questionnaire. Again, only the married portion of the sample was utilized for this study. The breakdown included 90 females and 70 males.

RESULTS

Social Outings

Although desirable, social outings are by necessity those which occur during the time left over from many other activities and duties, that is, our leisure time. These restrictions on leisure time are confirmed by the combined sample of the two countries (Table 1). The vast majority (82%) go out once per week or less. On a cross-cultural basis, both the American female and male marrieds are far more likely to go out socially than their Japanese counterparts. Twenty three percent of the American females are likely to go out socially at least twice per week as compared to 5 percent of the Japanese women. Similarly, 26% of the American males go out this frequently as compared to 11% of the Japanese males. The seemingly restricted social life of the Japanese is even more likely for the Japanese female. She is the least likely to go out socially and is only half as likely as her male counterparts to get out at least twice per week (5% vs. 11%).

Where Do They Go

Although Americans are likely to go out more frequently, their top three preferences of where they go are quite similar (Table 2). The top three choices for both samples were going out to eat (59%), visiting friends (52%) and visiting relatives (42%). However, visiting friends (39%) and relatives (30%) is far less popular with the Japanese males than with any of the other categories. On the other hand, Japanese males are far more likely than the other categories to go out to nightclubs and bars (31%) and this is especially so with his female counterpart (31% vs. 6%). Actually nightclubs are a more popular outing than visiting relatives for the Japanese male.

Among other preferences, movies stand out as a popular item for the Americans but not the Japanese (24% vs. 6%). It was believed that the married woman does most of the cooking and so would look forward to eating out and such was the situation with the Japanese female as compared to the male (64% vs. 54%). But not the American female as compared to her counterpart (66% vs. 52%).

Happiness

Leisure activities would appear to be related to how happy people are most of the time since such activities are supposedly done for pleasure and fun. The large percentages of both samples indicating that they are happy most of the time (Table 3) makes this conclusion difficult to show; however, more Americans do go out more frequently (24% vs. 8%) and more Americans are likely to note that they are happy most of the time (88% vs. 81%). Also the Japanese females were the least likely to go out frequently (5% vs. 21% average) and the most likely to note being unhappy most of the time (8% vs. 4% average). On the other hand, there appears to be no relationship between the activities selected for an outing and happiness since all had similar outing choices.

As a means of checking on the declared happiness of the respondents, they were also asked to compare their happiness to their married acquaintances. The findings from Table 4 imply that the married Japanese are not as happy as they indicated on the happiness question. More of the Japanese believed that their married acquaintances were happier than themselves (19% vs. 6%) whereas the Americans had the opposite viewpoint (17% vs. 9%).

As a further check, the Self-Reported Claims of Happiness, Contemplation and Attempts at Suicide were also examined (Table 5). In this

regard, the Japanese, both females and males, were more likely than the Americans to plan and attempt suicide. This contrast is most notable with the Japanese female. Not only is she more likely than her male counterpart to plan and attempt suicide, she also reveals a large contrast with her American counterpart. She is more likely than the American female to both plan (17% vs. 29%) and attempt (59% and 39%) suicide.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted in order to note whether there was a relationship between changing mores regarding the working environment and questions of overload and equality. As a means of testing this question, measures of happiness were examined, the first of these considered the relationship between Going Out Socially--A Supposedly Fun Experience Conducted During One's Leisure Time--and Self-Reported Rates of Global Happiness. It was seen that the Japanese, both females and males, are less likely than the Americans to go out socially two or more times per week. The basis for this finding may be due to the traditional roles for the Japanese married couple. A carryover custom from the Tokugama Age of Feudalism, the Japanese consider working for their companies a public service. Thus, their work is considered private as well as more important and superior to any business at home. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to save the husband worry over trifling matters (Ryosa Ken Bo--"Good Wife and Wise Mother") by remaining at home and taking care of the house and children and obeying the stricture that the "wife follows after her husband" (Fusho--Fuzui). Nor is it the social custom for her to enjoy her leisure. Despite changing marital customs from arranged to love-based marriages (Asahi Sinbum, 1984), most Japanese today still adhere to the

traditional ideas of sex-role identification. Seemingly, the result of these beliefs is a greater restriction on time for the Japanese male since many work more than the five-day week and in the evenings. But also a situation in which the Japanese men are slightly more likely than the females to go out more frequently per week in this society where few married Japanese women work.

Although having self-reported rankings on global happiness only slightly less than the Americans, their relatively high self-rating on happiness may be considered suspect. Two findings are responsible for this conclusion. First, in direct contrast to the Americans, more of the Japanese saw their married acquaintances as happier than themselves. Second, the Japanese are far more likely than the Americans to contemplate suicide.

In contrast to the first hypothesis, it was seen that the Japanese married female, despite the lack of possible overload, does not have as active a social life as her American counterpart.

Despite seemingly similar results on self-reported claims of global happiness, it was believed that the Japanese female response was, as Bernard noted, affected by adjustment and reconciliation rather than a truly high level of psychological well-being since she was more likely than her American counterpart to note that other marriages are happier than hers and to contemplate suicide. On this basis, the second hypothesis was accepted,

The findings in support of the final hypothesis were limited. Both categories of married males were more likely than their female counterparts to go out more often socially. But the differences were minor. Finally, in contrast to expectations, it was the American male who was more likely than his Japanese counterpart to report global happiness but, again, the differences were minor.

These findings lead to the conclusion that changing gender roles in the U. S. may not be a factor in creating unhappiness for the males while providing a basis of control and happiness for the female. However, it should be noted that most of the differences found between the two cultures were limited and so it is important to investigate these questions further.

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TABLE 2: SOFT DRINKS (Three countries combined)

TABLE 1: FREQUENCY OF GOING OUT

	JAPAN						UNITED STATES						GR. TOTALS	
	F	M	TOTALS	F	M	TOTALS	F	M	TOTALS	F	M	TOTALS	%	#
Restaurant:	16	21	26	35	40	45	34	40	45	50	56	56	82	326
Once/week or less	94	88	92	77	74	76	101	60	181	82	100	100	82	326
Twice/week	3	4	4	15	17	15	19	18	37	11	10	10	11	43
3 or more times/week	2	7	4	8	9	9	11	10	21	7	12	10	7	28
TOTALS	56	44	100	55	45	100	131	138	239	100	138	100	100	397
χ^2 tests	3.16	.37		.30									.86	
Visiting Relatives:	51	30	43	41	43	42	54	46	100	41	46	100	41	169
TOTALS	50	40	100	51	49	100	256	247	493	100	247	100	100	725

TABLE 2: SOCIAL OUTLETS (Three choices Combined)

	JAPAN						UNITED STATES						GR. TOTALS	
	F		M		TOTALS		F		M		TOTALS			
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Restaurants	64	58	54	38	60	96	52	69	66	71	58	140	59	236
Movies	7	6	6	4	6	10	23	31	25	27	24	58	17	68
Nightclubs/ Bars	6	5	31	22	17	27	17	23	19	20	18	43	18	70
Theatre/ Concerts	8	7	4	3	6	10	9	12	11	12	10	24	9	34
Visiting Friends	53	48	39	27	47	75	51	67	59	64	55	131	52	206
Visiting Relatives	53	48	30	21	43	69	41	54	43	46	42	100	42	169
TOTALS	60	172	40	115	100	287	51	256	49	242	100	498	100	785

$$\frac{(127 - 52,33)^2}{156} + \frac{(21 - 52,33)^2}{156} + \frac{(9 - 52,33)^2}{156} = 35,74 + 6,29 + 12,03 = 54,06$$

TABLE 3: HAPPINESS

	JAPAN						UNITED STATES						GR. TOTALS	
	F		M		TOTALS		F		M		TOTALS		% #	% #
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#		
Happy	25	71	82	56	81	127	86	113	91	98	88	211	85	338
Neither	12	11	15	10	13	21	9	12	6	7	8	19	10	40
Unhappy	8	7	3	2	6	9	5	7	3	3	4	10	5	19
TOTALS	57	89	43	68	100	157	55	132	45	108	100	240	100	397
χ^2	1.82		> .40				1.60		> .45					

80

bevest status of men ^{low} happy most of the time?

not even als valid ~~HAPP~~ + COMP 1.1 MIX 11

antwraag naar precise vraagstelling

percentages vrouwen resp. mannen dat onderzocht is.

*I will cut & paste
after you proof*

TABLE 4: MARITAL HAPPINESS

	16 JAPAN						28 UNITED STATES						45
	13 F		10 M		23 TOTALS		29 F		31 M		34 TOTALS		
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	
Happier	21	18	17	11	19	29	10	13	8	9	9	22	
Same	74	64	76	50	75	114	72	95	76	81	74	176	
Unhappier	5	4	8	5	6	9	18	24	16	17	17	41	
TOTALS	57	86	43	66	100	152	55	132	45	107	100	239	
χ^2			.90	.64			.43	.81					

perceived happiness of spouse

TABLE 5: DRUNKENNESS

	JAPAN						UNITED STATES						GR. TOTAL	
	F		M		TOTALS		F		M		TOTAL		GR. TOTAL	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Everyday	8	7	42	27	23	34	0	0	1	1	.4	1	9	35
Several x a week	12	10	30	19	20	29	1	1	0	0	.4	1	8	30
Once a week	16	13	8	5	12	18	0	0	1	1	.4	1	5	19
Rarely	57	48	14	9	39	57	1	1	1	1	1	2	15	59
Never	7	6	6	4	7	10	98	130	97	105	98	235	63	245
TOTALS	57	84	43	64	100	148	55	132	45	108	100	240	100	388
χ^2	43.52 > .00						3.29 > .51							