Does Public Safety Perception Change?

-Focusing on the Changes in Influencing Factors Over the Past 10 Years

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Abstract

Recently, Korea has experienced disasters and safety accidents in various sectors of society, which has led to a growing interest in safety across society. National security, natural disasters, buildings and facilities, traffic accidents, fires, food hygiene, information security, emerging diseases, and crime threaten people's perception of safety and affect their subjective life satisfaction. In this study, we examined the safety perceptions of each social sector that disturbs the public's safety perception, and examined the impact of each sector's safety perception on the overall social safety perception. In addition, we examined the impact of overall social safety perception on subjective life satisfaction and examined the influencing factors and changes in safety perception by social sector over the past decade. The path model analysis showed that safety perception by social sector has a significant positive effect on overall social safety perception. In addition, overall perceived social safety has a positive effect on subjective life satisfaction. To test whether the effect of safety perception by social sector on overall social safety perception differs by, we analyzed the moderating effect of age. As a result, the moderating effect of each social sector was different, showing significant differences in safety perception and life satisfaction according to the influencing factors of each survey year.

Key words: perception of safety, social safety perception, subjective life satisfaction, path model analysis, moderating effect

I. Introduction

In recent years, Korea has experienced disasters and safety accidents in various fields of society, which has led to a growing interest in safety across the board. In the field of national security, North Korea's continuous provocations are causing public anxiety, and in the field of environment, the threat of natural disasters is becoming more serious due to climate change caused by global warming. In the field of buildings and facilities, a corporate culture that emphasizes corporate profits and cost savings rather than the safety of workers, a lack of safety awareness, and work negligence such as non-compliance with processes are widespread, adding to public anxiety. In daily life, accidents that directly affect people's lives and health, such as traffic accidents, fires, and food hygiene, affect safety perceptions. In addition,

after the COVID-19 outbreak, the sense of crisis over food security has increased due to international trade problems (Park, Jae-wan, 2020). In the field of information security, which is closest to people's lives, leakage of personal information related to the use of smartphones has become a major problem, and when COVID-19 hit the world as a new disease in 2019, the pandemic maximized people's anxiety and threatened their safety awareness. Finally, as various crimes that occur in our daily lives threaten people's safety in recent years, securing safety from crime will play an important role in improving subjective life satisfaction.

In this study, we examine the safety perceptions of each social sector that disturbs the public's safety perception and examine the effects of these safety perceptions on overall social safety perception. In addition, we examine the impact of overall social safety perception on subjective life satisfaction, and investigate the influencing factors and changes in safety perception by social sector over the past decade.

II. Theoretical Discussion

1.Disaster and Disaster Management

Disasters can be broadly categorized into natural and social disasters (Kim, Seok-gon, 2005). The definition of natural disaster is stipulated in the Natural Disaster Countermeasures Act and is defined as damage caused by natural phenomena. Among them, natural disasters tend to be complex and distributed over a wide area when they occur, and are characterized by high risk. Social disasters are defined as damages over a certain scale, paralyzing national infrastructure systems, and spread of livestock epidemics (Shin, Sang-Young, 2012). Disaster management refers to any activity that focuses on preventing the occurrence of various disastrous factors and minimizing possible risks in advance, and returning to normal conditions as soon as possible in response to a disaster that has occurred in a prompt and proactive manner. Therefore, this study aims to provide policy implications for managing disasters and improving safety awareness by defining anxiety factors as disasters by social sector and examining safety awareness by sector.

2. Safety awareness

Recently, Korea has been experiencing various disasters in various social fields, threatening the safety of the people and increasing the sense of crisis in their lives. It is known that various disaster situations are perceived as risks by people and adversely affect their subjective safety perception. Safety is defined as the absence of risk, where risk is defined as the possibility or probability of harmful consequences (Quarantelli,

1988; WHO, 2002), and social safety is a concept that expands the concept of safety beyond the individual level to the collective level (Lim, Dongjin, 2016). Perceptions of social safety (risk) can be broadly categorized into subjective and objective perceptions. Therefore, this study aims to identify safety awareness and anxiety factors by social sector and provide educational implications for improving social safety awareness.

3. Subjective life satisfaction

Life satisfaction is the satisfaction or acceptance of one's life circumstances, meaning that one's needs have been met for a full life (Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001). Life satisfaction is a concept that has been used confusingly with terms such as life satisfaction, quality of life, psychological well-being, and happiness, and has been defined differently by different scholars (Jung, 2003). While some scholars refer to life satisfaction in objective terms, subjective life satisfaction is defined as a person's judgment or evaluation of how satisfied they are with their life in general compared to their own standards (Worsch et al., 2003). In the existing studies on life satisfaction, most of the studies examined the effects of social participation of the elderly on life satisfaction (Kwon, Hyunsoo, 2009), adolescent stress and life satisfaction (Kim, Namjung, and Lim, Youngsik, 2012), or the overall satisfaction of life according to the characteristics of adolescents, adults, and the elderly, such as leisure, retirement, and preparation for old age. Therefore, this study defines subjective life satisfaction as the degree of satisfaction with one's current life when considering one's life as a whole, and aims to improve life satisfaction that can be experienced in the overall life of the people.

III. Problems and Challenges

1. Problems

This study aims to examine the effects of safety perception by social sector on overall social safety perception and subjective life satisfaction, and to investigate the moderating effects of differences in influencing factors on safety perception by age on subjective life satisfaction. In order to provide opinions on the improvement of overall social safety awareness and subjective life satisfaction, the research questions were set as follows. First, to investigate the influence of consumers' safety perception by social sector on their overall social safety perception. Second, to investigate the effect of consumers' overall social safety awareness on their subjective life satisfaction. Third, to verify the moderating effect of social safety perception on overall social safety perception by age. Fourth, this study examines the moderating effect of overall social safety perception on subjective life satisfaction by age.

IV. Conclusions

The data used in this analysis is from the National Statistical Office's Social Survey. This data is collected annually and distributed through the MDIS (Microdata Integration Service) of Statistics Korea to identify social concerns and subjective perceptions of the public related to quality of life and to serve as a basis for major national policy formulation and research. The data analyzed in this study are from even-numbered years that include the crime and safety sections. The five most recent surveys (2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022) were used for the analysis.

Path analysis was conducted to examine the influence of safety perception by social sector on overall social safety perception. The results of the path model analysis showed that safety perception by social sector has a significant positive effect on overall social safety perception, and overall social safety perception also has a positive effect on subjective life satisfaction. Next, we analyzed the moderating effect of age to test whether the effect of safety perception by social sector on overall social safety perception differs by age. The results showed that the moderating effect of each social sector was different, indicating that there were significant differences in safety perception and life satisfaction depending on the influencing factors of each era.

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