

## **Happiness, ideal happiness, and reference point**

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Policy makers such as European Commission, UK, and Japan are now interested in happiness as a policy tool. The Statistic Committee in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is now preparing guidelines for measuring subjective wellbeing. Happiness is normally measured by a likert scale. However, happiness distribution can be classified into three types: normal, skewed and twin-peak. For example, distribution in Japan and Hungary is twin-peak. This implies that individuals have different reference points culturally. This reference points were tested to apply question about ideal happiness. Some may refer to 100% happiness, but the other may refer to 50% happiness and 50% unhappiness. An online survey in Japan (n=17,158) included questions about their current happiness on a 0-10 scale and ideal happiness. As a result, 21.3% and 18.7% of them chose 80% and 70% happiness as their ideal happiness respectively. 19.9% of them chosen 50% happiness and 50% unhappiness as their ideal happiness. Moreover, 37.3% among the persons who chose 50% happiness and 50% unhappiness rated 5 as their current happiness. Adjusted by ideal happiness, the distribution was skewed distribution similar to Nordic countries. The survey's result confirmed that distribution of happiness embodied the difference of ideal happiness. Therefore, taking account of ideal happiness, the measurement of happiness should be modified when the official statistics include such questions.

Key Words: Measurement, distribution, culture, policy maker