

# A Study on the Relationship between Job Stress, Belief in Happiness, and a Sense of Happiness Perceived by Early Childhood Teachers

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**Abstract: Background/Objectives:** The purpose of this study is to analyze a relationship between job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness perceived by early childhood teachers.

**Methods/Statistical analysis:** The subject of this study consisted of 176 early childhood teachers in Gyeonggi-do, and carried out a questionnaire using job stress, belief in happiness, and happiness scale. A t-test was conducted on the collected data according to the research problem using SPSS 22.0 Program, and conducted a hierarchical regression analysis to investigate the explanation power of job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness perceived by early childhood teachers. **Findings:** The key findings of this study are as follows. First, it was identified that there is a significant correlation between job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness. Secondly, explanation power of belief in happiness for a sense of happiness (19.1%) was higher than job stress (14.2%). **Improvements/Applications:** This signifies that job stress needs to be reduced and belief in happiness needs to be improved to increase a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers.

**Keywords:** early childhood teacher, infant, job stress, a sense of happiness, belief in happiness

## I. INTRODUCTION

People have different standard and meaning of happiness but hope to have a happy life, and there is no one who hold a different view that happiness makes a positive effect on human life[1]. 'Happiness' is the universal value that everyone will have as soon as they are born that happiness can be considered as the ultimate goal of human life. Happiness is defined as the state of feeling satisfaction and pleasure of life or feeling mental and physical satisfaction by fulfilling their needs[2]. In general, happiness is the people's major interest and concern of life as it is in the field of education. For this reason, educational officials are putting effort to create a happy environment for both educators and learners.

Happiness can make positive effects on physical and mental health by perceiving the world around them and their own life positively, building harmonious social relations, and reducing the frequency of disease outbreaks that can occur naturally and artificially in life[3]. Specially, a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers who are meaningful to infants is very important, and this cannot be overlooked in terms of making a direct and positive effect on a sense of happiness of infants. Meaning, happiness of early childhood teachers that makes the most significant positive effect on infants growing up happily can be a major key to the quality of

education[4].

However, early childhood teachers are exposed to job stress situations every moment not only by the role of teachers but according to various roles compare to the teachers of other school age. The job stress can result in a negative outcome for educational activity of teachers and may inhibit normal development of infants by making negative effects on infants and young children[5]. As said, early childhood teachers are having difficulty not only by the role performance as a teacher but by complex situations in childhood education field and by dealing with unforeseen circumstances[6].

Recently, the government is putting effort to improve working conditions of child care teachers as revising related laws and regulations and supporting the budget for work condition. Nonetheless, scandalous incidents of early childhood teachers everyday on mass media have caused a great disappointment not only on educational officials but on parents of young children as well. This is a problem related to the character of early childhood teachers, but it is also the result of putting overburden and excessive responsibility on teachers of early childhood teachers than teachers of other school age. As said, early childhood teachers carrying out a variety of roles makes a direct impact on job stress and makes negative effect on achieving the goal of high-quality education [7][8][9]. Above all, considering the importance of early childhood development from the perspective of a whole life of humans, it is considered that not only an administrative support for teachers who make direct effect but continuing interest and encouragement are necessary as well for them to engage themselves in teaching with a sense of happiness in education field. As mentioned above, various job stress that early childhood teachers experience is a problem that should not be overlooked as it is directly related to the quality of early childhood education.

First, for the meaning of job stress, duty refers to the position or assigned tasks according to the job, and stress signifies psychological · physical state of tension that people feel when they face an intolerable environment[10]. Meaning, job stress signifies a state of psychological dysfunction that appears due to the imbalance between the elements of individual duty, and the individual response signifies adjustment disorders that cause a decline in self-esteem, threat of psychological health, and confusion in a sense of responsibility and task performance[11].

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On the other hand, belief in happiness signifies an organized belief in the nature of happiness produced through personal experience[12]. To be specific, personal belief being thoughts and views signifies value that does not change easily by feelings about the world or behavioral tendency[13]. A strong belief of humans on happiness can be the energy for them to have aggressive attitude as not getting discouraged by and submitting to unexpected unfortunate situations in life. As explained above, belief in happiness is expected to make positive effect on early childhood teachers who experience a variety of stress by work overload. However, it is difficult to determine the inherent value because there are insignificant studies on a relationship between belief in happiness and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers.

To this end, this study focused on reducing job stress as well as on raising belief in happiness and a feeling of happiness to improve happiness of early childhood teachers. Therefore, this study intends to investigate a relationship between job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers, and to investigate the power of explanation of belief in happiness and job stress of early childhood teachers on a sense of happiness. It is considered that investigating the factors that make effect on a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers can provide theoretical basic data about the need of the promotion of happiness of early childhood teachers and expected to provide an opportunity to reconsider about the importance of happy environment of early childhood teachers in early childhood education field.

The research problems set to achieve the purposes of this study listed above are as follows.

First, what are job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers like?

Secondly, what is a relationship between job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers?

Thirdly, what is the explanation power of job stress and belief in happiness for a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers?

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. Research participants

The subject of this study consists of 176 early childhood teachers in early childhood educational institutes located in Gyeonggi-do. This study selected 197 early childhood teachers through random sampling from Nov 5th to 23rd, 2017, and showed 95% of collection ratio as total 176 copies excluding 11 copies with unreliable response were collected. The general background of research subjects is as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: General background of research subjects (N=176)**

Contents	Number of cases	percentage(%)
Under 25 years	11	6.3
25 to 29 years	21	11.9
30 to 34 years	29	16.5

	35 to 39 years	32	18.2
	40 to 44 years	39	22.2
	45 to 49 years	32	18.2
	Over 50 years	12	6.8
marriage	single	67	38.1
	married	109	61.9
career	Under 1 years	10	5.7
	1 to 3 years	25	14.2
	3 to 5 years	32	18.2
	5 to 10 years	50	28.4
	10 to 15 years	44	25
	Over 15 years	15	8.5
Education	Graduated from two-year and three-year colleges	92	52.3
	Graduated from 4-year college	44	25
	Graduate school graduation	20	11.4
	Other	20	11.4
Position	teacher	138	78.4
	Manager teacher	7	4
	Vice Director-Director	31	17.6
Education institution	National-Public kindergarten	2	1.1
	Private kindergarten	1	0.6
	National-Public preschool	6	3.4
	Corporatepreschool	4	2.3
	Work preschool	3	1.7
	Private preschool	160	90.9
Total		233	100.0

According to Table 1, 40~44 years of age was the highest in number with 39 teachers(22.2%), and career of teacher was in the order of 5~10 years with 50 people(28.4%), 10~15 years with 44 people(25.0%), and 3~5 years with 32 people(18.2%). Academic background of early childhood teachers was in the order of 92 graduates of two-year and 3-year colleges(52.3%) and 44 graduates of four-year colleges(25.0%).

### 2.2. Research process

This study drafted a questionnaire based on precedent studies on job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers, and revised and supplemented questions by receiving a review on the adequacy of questions by 3 experts in early childhood education.



The investigation was conducted on 200 people for 30 days from Oct 1~ Oct 30, 2017, and the questionnaire was conducted after providing sufficient information of this study to the research participants.

**2.3. Research tool**

**2.3.1. Job stress**

A scale developed by [14], modified by [15], and adapted by [16] was used to measure job stress of early childhood teachers. The total number of questions of the measurement tool of job stress is 41, and it is composed of 6 subfactors as teaching-learning activity, working relationship, administrative support, relationships at work, relationship between parents, and private questions. Questions by each subfactor are in Likert 5-point scale. Reliability of the results that estimated Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient by lower measure of job stress to identify reliability of the scale is as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Composition and reliability of questions by subfactor of job stress scale**

Subfactor	Number of questions	Question numbers	Credibility( $\alpha$ )
teaching and learning activity	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	.84
working relationship	11	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 37	.89
Administrative support	9	16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29	.94
supportrelationship at work	6	24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30	.89
relationship between parents	6	31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36	.86
personal related factor	4	38, 39, 40, 41	.79
Total	41		.97

**2.3.2. Belief in happiness**

**Table 4:Composition and reliability of questions by subfactor of a sense of happiness scale**

Subfactor	Number of questions	Question number	Credibility( $\alpha$ )
a sense of happiness	3,8,18,22,24,37,40	7	.68
positive relation	4,9,13,19,25,36,44	7	.74
autonomy	5,10,15,20,31,34	6	.77
control of the environment	6,14,16,23,28,38,42	7	.79
purpose of life	7,11,17,21,26,30,33	7	.84
personal growth.	2,32,35,39,43	5	.86
Total		44	.91

For belief in happiness of early childhood teachers, this study used the happiness beliefs scale developed by [17] and modified and supplemented by [18] appropriate for Korean society. The scale is composed of 4 subcategories as the experience of pleasure, avoidance of negative experience, self-development, and contribution to others. Questions by each subfactor are in Likert seven point scale, and higher score signifies higher level of belief in happiness. Credibility of the estimated results of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient to investigate credibility of the scale is as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Composition of questions and reliability coefficient of happiness beliefs scale**

Subfactor	Number of questions	Question number	Credibility( $\alpha$ )
pleasure-seeking	1, 2, 9, 12	4	.85
pain-avoidance	4, 7, 14, 16	4	.92
self-growth	6, 11, 15	3	.89
contribution to others	5, 10, 13	3	.86
Total		14	.88

**2.3.3. A sense of happiness**

To measure a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers, this study used a scale that [19] has developed, adapted and modified into Korean version by [20], and has modified according to the purpose of this study. The total number of questions of the happiness scale is 44, and is composed of 6 subfactors as a sense of happiness, positive personal relations, autonomy, control over the environment, purpose of life, and personal development. Each question is composed of Likert five point scale from 'not at all(1 pt)' to 'very much(5 pts),' and higher score signifies a high sense of happiness. Credibility of the estimated results of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient by subfactor of a sense of happiness to investigate credibility of the scale is as shown in Table 4.



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## 2.4. Data analysis

This study conducted a data analysis according to the research problem using SPSS 21.0 Program for data processing of the questionnaire.

First, correlation analysis was conducted to investigate a relationship between job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers. Secondly, this study conducted a hierarchical regression analysis to investigate the explanation power of job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive statistics of job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers

Cross correlation matrix between measuring variables of job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers and estimation of mean and standard deviation of each measuring variable are as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics of job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers (N=176)**

Variable	Factor	Minimum value	Maximum Value	Mean	Standard deviation
work stress	teaching and learning activity	1.00	5.00	2.52	0.79
	Working relationship	1.00	4.82	2.59	0.71
	Administrative support	1.00	4.78	2.35	0.83
	Relationship at work	1.00	4.50	2.23	0.81
	Relationship between parents	1.00	4.33	2.35	0.78
	personal related factor	1.00	4.75	2.64	0.83
	Total		1.00	4.32	2.45
belief in happiness	pleasure-seeking	2.50	5.00	4.05	0.68
	pain-avoidance	1.25	5.00	3.26	0.95
	self-growth	2.00	5.00	4.09	0.63
	contribution to others	2.00	5.00	4.00	0.71
	Total		2.38	5.00	3.84
a sense of happiness	a sense of happiness	2.57	4.86	3.48	0.45
	positive relation	1.86	4.57	2.87	0.52
	autonomy	1.83	4.50	3.13	0.44
	control of the environment	2.43	4.57	3.34	0.38
	purpose of life	2.00	4.14	2.96	0.40
	personal growth	1.80	4.60	3.02	0.57
	Total		2.61	4.50	3.18

The whole average of job stress is 2.45(SD=.67), and is showing an average of 2.23 ~ 2.64 by each subfactor. Among job stress factors, private questions showed the highest point followed by working relationship, teaching and learning activity, administrative support, and relationship between parents, and relationships at work was perceived relatively low. Next, the whole average of belief in happiness of early childhood teachers is 3.84(SD=.59), and is showing an average of 3.26 ~ 4.09 by each subfactor. It was identified

that the average point of self-growth is the highest among subfactors with 4.09 point. Lastly, the whole average of a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers is 3.18(SD=.31), and is showing an average of 2.87 ~ 3.48 by each subfactor. It was identified that a sense of happiness is the highest among subfactors and positive interpersonal relation was relatively low.

3.2. A relationship between job stress, belief in happiness, a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers  
A correlation between job stress, belief in happiness, a

sense of happiness of early childhood teachers is as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: A correlation between job stress, belief in happiness, a sense of happiness of kindergarten teachers (N=176)**

	1	1-1	1-2	1-3	1-4	1-5	1-6	2	2-1	2-2	2-3	2-4	3	3-1	3-2	3-3	3-4	3-5	3-6
work stress_Total	1																		
teaching and learning activity	.709**	1																	
working relationship	.906**	.594**	1																
administrative support	.916**	.556**	.784**	1															
relationship at work	.859**	.477**	.691**	.826**	1														
relationship between parents	.852**	.603**	.689**	.688**	.728**	1													
personal related factor	.780**	.483**	.693**	.643**	.565**	.691**	1												
belief in happiness_Total	-.305**	-.311**	-.304*	-.411**	-.244*	-.349**	-.407**	1											
pleasure-seeking	-.219**	-.231**	-.183*	-.192*	-.173*	-.189*	-.156*	.851**	1										
pain-avoidance	-.435**	-.383**	-.387**	-.407*	-.460*	-.470*	-.295**	.686**	.339**	1									
self-growth	-.182*	-.426**	-.149*	-.209**	-.427**	-.409**	-.197**	.840**	.743**	.312**	1								
contribution to other	-.468**	-.446**	-.160*	-.171*	-.384**	-.425**	-.149*	.853**	.737**	.362**	.820**	1							
a sense of happiness_Total	-.276**	-.245**	-.315**	-.435**	-.285**	-.251**	-.385**	.324**	.221**	.289**	.219**	.314**	1						
a sense of happiness	-.152*	-.364*	-.360*	-.425**	-.326**	-.436*	-.275*	.282**	.321**	-0.008	.309**	.408**	.533**	1					
positive relation	-.456**	-.393**	-.374**	-.428**	-.394**	-.388**	-.337**	.163*	.345*	.317**	.395**	.487**	.767**	0.1	1				
autonomy	-.188*	-.293**	-.324*	-.413**	-.347**	-.199**	-.164*	.479*	.389**	.309**	.459*	.337*	.705**	0.12	.578**	1			
control of the environment	-.379*	-.407*	-.206**	-.332**	-.173*	-.151*	-.211**	.347**	.311**	.226**	.261**	.317**	.764**	.390**	.486**	.450**	1		
purpose of life	-.319**	-.276**	-.264**	-.236**	-.301**	-.319**	-.268**	.254**	.166*	.245**	.181*	.222**	.785**	.259**	.637**	.488**	.536**	1	
personal growth	-.314**	-.315**	-.430**	-.487**	-.302**	-.284**	-.191*	.342**	.452**	.216**	.421*	.348**	.667**	0.123	.568**	.545**	.389**	.426**	1

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

Note) 1 work stress, 1-1 teaching and learning activity, 1-2 working relationship, 1-3 administrative support, 1-4 relationship at work, 1-5 relationship between parents, 1-6 personal related factor, 2 belief in happiness, 2-1 pleasure-seeking, 2-2 pain-avoidance, 2-3 self-growth, 2-4 contribution to others, 3 a sense of happiness, 3-1 a sense of happiness, 3-2 positive relation, 3-3 autonomy, 3-4 control of the environment, 3-5 purpose of life, and 3-6 personal growth.

As shown in Table 6, this study conducted a correlation analysis to investigate a correlation between job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers, and correlation range was from .152 to .916(p<.01). The result of a correlation analysis for a relationship between job stress, belief in happiness, a sense of happiness is as shown in <Table 6>.

First, the whole job stress showed a significantly negative correlation with the whole belief in happiness(r=-.305, p<.01). According to the correlation between subfactors of job stress and the whole belief in happiness, all 6 subfactors were significantly significant and subfactors of teaching and learning activity(r=-.311, p<.01), working relationship(r=-.304, p<.01), administrative support(r=-.411, p<.05), relationship at work(r=-.244, p<.01), relationship between parents(r=-.349 p<.01), and personal related factor(r=-.407 p<.01) were significantly poor. This signifies that early childhood teachers perceive lower belief in happiness when they perceive higher job stress.

Secondly, job stress and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers(r=-.37, p<.01) showed a significantly

poor correlation. According to the correlation between subfactors of job stress and the whole sense of happiness, every factors as teaching and learning activity(r=-.245, p<.01), working relationship(r=-.315, p<.01), administrative support(r=-.435, p<.05), relationship at work (r=-.285, p<.01), relationship between parents(r=-.251 p<.01), and personal factor showed statistically negative correlation. The result signified people tend to perceive lower sense of happiness when they have higher job stress.

Thirdly, it was identified that the whole belief in happiness has a significantly positive relationship with the whole sense of happiness(r=.324, p<.01). According to the correlation between subfactors of a belief in happiness and the whole sense of happiness, pleasure-seeking(r=.221, p<.01), pain-avoidance(r=.289, p<.01), self-growth(r=.219, p<.01), and contribution to others(r=.314, p<.01) showed a statistically significant positive relationship. Meaning, people showed a tendency to perceive higher sense of happiness when they believe to make a lot of positive experiences.

3.3. Explanation power of job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers

This study analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis to investigate the explanation power of job stress for belief in happiness and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers. A sense of happiness was set as a dependant variable, investigated the explanation power of job stress, an independent variable,



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and investigated the explanation power of an additional independent variable, the belief in happiness. To this end, this study added the job stress variable in step 1, added the belief in happiness variable in step 2 to verify the significance of

incremental explanation power, and the results are as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7. Explanation power of job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers (N=176)**

Step	Variable	B	Standard error	B	t	R2	ΔR2	F
1	work stress	-.436	.072	-.391	-6.670***	.142	.142	46.724***
	work stress	-.271	.058	-.272	-4.877***	.366	.191	74.286***
2	belief in happiness	.387	.043	.467	8.244***			

\*p<.05, \*\*\*p<.001

As shown in Table 7, explanation power of job stress perceived by early childhood teachers for a sense of happiness in step 1 was significant of approximately 14.2% (F=46.724, p<.001). When belief in happiness was added in regression equation in step 2, job stress perceived by early childhood teachers and belief in happiness significantly explained a sense of happiness, and the two variables accounted for 36.6% of a sense of happiness (F=74,286, p<.001). This signifies that teachers feel happier when job stress is lower and belief in happiness is higher. It was identified that additional explanation variable (ΔR2) of belief in happiness for a sense of happiness is significant of 19.1% (p<.001), and that it can explain more sense of happiness than the explanation power of job stress (14.2%). This signifies that job stress and belief in happiness of early childhood teachers have a major impact on a sense of happiness, and among them, it was identified that belief in happiness perceived by early childhood teachers have a relatively higher explanation power.

### IV. CONCLUSION

This study was intended to obtain basic data for improving a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers by understanding a relationship between job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers. Discussions around the research findings are as follows.

First, according to the result of investigating job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers, the overall average of job stress was relatively low (M=2.45 2.23~2.64). Among job stress factors, personal related factor was the highest followed by working relationship, teaching and learning activity, administrative support, and relationship between parents, and relationship at work was perceived relatively lower.

Secondly, according to the result of investigating a correlation between job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers, job stress and belief in happiness showed a negative correlation and this signifies that belief in happiness gets lower when job stress is higher and belief in happiness increases when job stress is lower. Next, job stress of early childhood teachers showed a negative correlation with the whole sense of happiness (r=-.37, p<.01). This signifies that teachers perceive low sense of happiness

when job stress is higher. Lastly, it was identified that the whole belief in happiness has a significantly positive correlation with the whole sense of happiness (r=.324, p<.01). According to the result, people perceive higher sense of happiness when they make a lot of positive experiences.

Thirdly, according to the result of investigating the explanation power of job stress and belief in happiness for a sense of happiness perceived by early childhood teachers, both job stress and belief in happiness had a significant explanation power. Job stress showed 14.2% of explanation power for a sense of happiness. Moreover, job stress and belief in happiness of early childhood teachers showed 36.6% of explanation power for a sense of happiness and additional explanation power by belief in happiness was 19.1%. The result shows that job stress and belief in happiness of early childhood teachers make a significant effect on a sense of happiness but belief in happiness has relatively higher explanation power.

This study is different from a precedent study in a sense that it has verified a significant explanation power of job stress and belief in happiness for improving a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers. As mentioned above, it was identified that belief in happiness perceived by early childhood teachers heighten the sense of happiness. Verifying the fact through results of this study is considered meaningful even though it is considered as a natural outcome.

Suggestions for a follow-up study based on the conclusion of this study are as follows.

There are limitations to generalize the research results because this study was only conducted on early childhood teachers from a specific region. Therefore, it would be necessary to put effort for raising a possibility of representativeness and generation of this study by progressing research on early childhood teachers in various regions.

This study investigated a relationship between job stress, belief in happiness, and a sense of happiness of early childhood teachers. The significance of these research findings is that they have provided important information pertaining to job stress of early childhood teachers as the data for investigating a sense of happiness. Also, according to the results of this study, development of teacher training and program in educational institution is considered necessary for promoting beliefs in



happiness for teachers to perceive usefulness of beliefs in happiness and to make positive experience. Furthermore, there will have to be a support system for teachers to feel pride as a teacher and a sense of happiness even in hard everyday life and under job stress by various tasks. To do so, this study suggests that multilateral interest and effort of educational officials are necessary.

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