A Study on the Participation in Leisure Activities of Migrant Workers in Korea

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to look at the leisure activity participation of migrant workers living in Korea as well as the factors of limitations in leisure activities. In order to attain this purpose on-on-on in-depth interviews were conducted with migrant analyzed. The results of the study are as follows. First, it was revealed that the time spent b migrant workers are for passive leisure activities such as meeting friends, watching TV, surfing the internet and reading. Second, the study showed that the hindrances in leisure participation are due to time, social and financial factors, both mentor and mentee with cognitive, emotional and behavior development. Consequentially, this results have influence on improvement of following mentoring progress.

Keyword: migrant worker, current state of leisure activities, limitations of leisure activities

1 Introduction

After the 1890s, the Korean society has changed the employment structure as well as diversification of industrial structure through rapid economic growth. Also, as migrant workers introduced in the late 1980s because of the rise in the wage of local employment and avoidance of 3D careers, the Korean society has been transformed into multi-culture from homogenous culture dramatically. According to 2016 statistic results of the Ministry of Justice, the current foreign residents in Korea have been gradually increased to 1,879,880 people. The number of migrant workers has been also increased among those foreign residents, the majority workers were mostly Chinese(304,132 people), then Vietnamese, Indonesian, Cambodian, and Uzbeks. The tendency of migrant workers seems to be continued and long-termed if the Korean
economic system which needs importation of the workforce from foreign countries will not be changed.

In this point that the migrant workers moved into the Korean labor market, the way to find social integration and harmony with the workers in cultural diversity is needed in order to embrace them as a part of Korean society (Jo, In-Young, 2010). The migrant workers in Korean society associate with the residents from other nation, Korean, and other various minority groups having racial, ethnic and cultural differences. However, it can be very difficult for the migrant workers to adjust to the Korean culture because the Korean society still has very poor recognition for multiculturalism and people in the society are not used to interact with other races, having exclusive attitude and high bias towards migrant employees.

A high quality of life for modern people does not only mean the happiness in their lives but also consider how an individual can function in the society as one part of it (Ryff, 1989) and physical activities working with psychological reaction can affect positive mental health (Layman, 1972). Happiness for human means personal feeling for emotional stability and the migrant workers find this through leisure sports that can give them a feeling of belongingness, releasing stress, improvement of capacity for work, and maintaining good health, which the important key for migrant workers to adjust to Korean culture.

The migrant workers have been settling down more than 20 years now however, it is still difficult to find the study focused on their leisure sports. Therefore, this study is aimed to research on migrant workers' participation in leisure sports and restriction to take part of leisure sport. In order to reach out the goal of the study, here are questions to be asked:

1) What is the condition of migrant workers' leisure sports participation?
2) What is the restriction of migrant workers' leisure sports participation?

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Concept of Leisure

Free time except time spent normal life such as job, house work, and study is called leisure. According to M. Kaplan, leisure is defined as "time released from work, free time, time for a hobby, and personal time". As it mentioned, even though there is a difference of views about the definition of leisure, the agreement exists that leisure is considered as an element of free time. According to Packer (1979), the definition is centered on time to take out time for work, sleep, meal, physiological needs from 24 hours. Nash (1953) stated, "leisure is free time away from labor, sleep, and other necessary activities". Leisure is "time released from work, free time, personal time, time for the hobby, and rest".

As it is stated above, the concept of leisure is the time other than laboring hours. This time-based concept of leisure plays a role in shortening laboring hour to have more free time.
2.2 Participation in Leisure Activities

Introduce of migrant workers was started in the 1990s, it takes an essential part of the country's economy. As it is, the study of the migrant workers has begun in 1990 even today, mainly focused on providing varied program and establishing policies to increase the quality of their lives to adjust to the Korean society. In other words, there are many types of researches on the migrant workers. However, there are only a few studies about their leisure experiences.

Leisure is an activity that a person can be engaged with their interests away from the work duties, which is essential to balance between mental and physical conditions. When the quality of life is improved due to economic development, leisure activities are also increased. Industrial society has not only separated home from work but also leisure from life. That is the separation of leisure and work. Using time after work, weekends or holidays, people seek the opportunities to release their stress and strengthen themselves as they find and enjoy something that they like.

In this meaning, the migrant workers' participation in leisure activities is extremely important to be a part of Korean Society and that is the reason why the study of it is necessary. As mentioned previously, since the study of migrant workers' leisure activities participation is not much presented generally, this study is going to focus on their recognition of leisure activities and obstacles of participating leisure activities in Korean society.

3 Method of Study

This study has a purpose to research for the participation of migrant workers in leisure activities and the obstacles of their leisure activities. For this purpose, qualitative case study method is used to collect the experience that the migrant workers have through a one-on-one interview.

3.1 Research Participants

This study has a goal to find the migrant workers' participation in leisure activities living in Korea and the obstacles of their leisure activities to solve them. That is, in order to support the study, six men migrated to Korea from Kyrgyzstan and Egypt have been chosen to be interviewed in depth. The subjective is selected according to their understanding of the purpose of the research and to capacity to describe their situation. The specific contents are followed in <table1>

3.2 Data Collection

This study was conducted by qualitative case study utilized through personal interview. Data Collection and Method of Analysis was done by the following: First, Data Collection was carried out in Nov.14.2015 - Dec.10.2015 through the in-depth interview. The number of interviews done in person was once to twice, and whenever
there was a lack of interview contents or need of additional data, through phone calls and e-mails, they were collected. The place and time of interview were selected by the research participants after the approval before the interview by the researcher, and then there was an in-depth interview.

4 Result

Compared to the world that leisure is emerging as a determination of the quality of life as the society is switching over from work-centered to leisure-centered, there aren’t too many researchers for rapidly increasing number of migrant worker’s leisure in Korea and researchers for migrant worker’s leisure would be highly necessary. Therefore, this study progressed for the purpose of investigation for migrant workers that reside in Korea of their participation in leisure activities and restrictions. In other words, the reality of migrant worker’s leisure participation and the restriction was the research, and next is the result shown by in-depth interview.

4.1 Current Leisure Participation

After analyzing the interview data from research participants, leisure participation of migrant workers were polar opposites. In other words, most of the migrant workers did not even recognize the concept of leisure. They recognized leisure activity only as some activity that you do other than a hobby or work. The result of research is as it follows. The research showed that the leisure activities for migrant workers were watching TV, meeting friends, the internet, reading, game, mosque, cook, shopping, etc. Leisure activities of migrant workers show strong passive character, which isn’t too much different from character is shown by ‘2008 Leisure Dictionary’ of Koreans. (Shim, Jae Myoung, 2009).

4.2 Leisure Restriction

Jackson(1993) stated that leisure restriction is the cause of disturbance for an individual to enjoy and participate in leisure activities, and Pyo, Young Hee(1997) stated that it means disturbing leisure participation and preferred activities, and in social and psychological sense it means inner mental state, nature, or character’s extrinsic environment experienced by force of restriction upon personal leisure activities.

4.2.1 Long Working Hours

Migrant workers feel that long working hours in Korea interferes in leisure activity. They spend their after-work time to watch movies or chat, but it is seen that they cannot have reputable leisure activities. The research has shown that most of the research participants were interfered with their leisure activities because of long
working hours. According to the research of laboring condition of migrant workers, done by Lee, Hye Kyoung(2003), among production workers, migrant workers are working over 14 hours per week average than local workers, and only Filipinos get paid as much as local production workers below high school diploma would receive, and others much lower.

4.2.2 Financial Difficulty

Financial difficulty is dealt as very important part of leisure restriction. It is shown by this research as well that migrant workers have difficulty in having leisure activities because of financial burdens. A research participant B explained that after sending money to the family back in hometown, it is not sufficient to enjoy leisure activities. Also, research participant E and F responded that they can’t participate in sports in reason of the location and the cost.

4.2.3 Difficult to be in Contact with Coworkers

It is true that accepting and adjusting to the culture that is not of your own, that you grew up in, is difficult. The migrant workers find it difficult getting used to the Korean culture. They spend many hours in factories working life away for too many hours. Because of that, they desire to spend time with their coworkers, but discrimination, prejudice, indifference keeps them even further away from spending free time with others. Most of the research participants said that it is difficult to spend leisure time together because of discrimination and prejudice by native coworkers. Research participants C and D responded that they are shocked because of discrimination and prejudice which makes it difficult to spend time with them. It was also answered by a participant E that coworkers ignore them although it is desired for them to talk to and approach them.

5 Conclusion and Proposal

This study has a purpose of getting to know leisure participation as well as leisure restriction of foreign migrant workers that resides in Korea. Proper leisure life keeps and strengthens one’s psychological, social, mental, physical health. Migrant workers of the outside of Korea would also be able to adapt much easier to the Korean culture and live more meaningful life through leisure activities.

For this cause, the in-depth interview was done conducted one-on-one with foreign migrant workers; the following is the summary.

First, analyzing how foreign migrant workers use their leisure time showed that they meet friends, watch TV, internet, reading, etc. which are passive leisure.

Second, what constraints the foreign migrant workers from leisure activities is time, social, financial limitation.

The leisure participation and restrictions are found above as written.
Therefore, to the conclusion, it is necessary to encourage foreign migrant workers to participate in leisure activities, which is floating as an important factor in improving the quality of life.

References