

# A Comparative Study of a Slow City and an Urban Region: A Deeper Look into the Quality of Life in Hadong-gun and Busan\*

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this research is to advocate the establishment of slow cities by providing evidence that contrasts the lives of urban region residents to those of slow city residents. Methods such as factor analysis, correlation analysis, and t-testing were used to compare residents' perceptions of the quality of life in a slow city and in an urban region. The results show that slow city residents are generally satisfied with the conditions of the local infrastructure, including public safety, regional environment, economic conditions, and participation in the community. However, their level of satisfaction was lower in comparison to the residents in the urban region with regards to educational opportunities, cultural activities, and health care. This finding suggests that more attention needs to be placed on these areas, while maintaining current ways of living and preserving traditional values. The residents of the slow city need to be informed of the conflicts that arise between preservation and development. Any improvements that will enhance their quality of life need to be made within specific boundaries. The research provides grounds to justify both the designation of slow cities and promote the slow city movement by strengthening residents' understanding and support of the project.*

**Keywords:** slow city, urban region, quality of life, satisfaction, local infrastructure

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## Introduction

The rapid industrialization and economic growth that Korea has experienced during the past half century have influenced all areas of society (Oh and Hong 2009). As a result, Korean society has transformed from a rural to an urban setting (Park et al. 2008). Although city development policies in the 1980s focused on rebuilding cities to restore economic and social vitality, ideas such as creative cities, sustainable cities, and compact cities have become popular since the beginning of the 1990s (Chung 2009). Following the recent focus on the urban and regional development under the municipality, solving the problem of uneven regional development has been the main priority. For example, farming and fishing villages were attended to by fostering regional industries to enhance the quality of life of local residents (Cho and Kim 2009). However, such development has led to various problems, such as environmental destruction (Kang 2001; Sohn 2006), community disharmony, wasted time and financial resources, and the destruction of residents' living conditions (Cho and Kim 2009).

The problems aforementioned led to the development of the slow city campaign. Stemmed from the slow food movement, the campaign—initiated by such local organizations as the Cittaslow Core Network—promotes the values of slowness. The goals of the slow city campaign are to maintain regional tradition and culture, prevent premature developments, and enhance the quality of life of regional residents. Six regions were recently designated as slow cities in Korea, and these regions have conducted campaigns to enhance their quality of life while maintaining their current lifestyles. However, there has been no study, prior to the campaign, of the actual quality of life in these slow cities. Moreover, the residents have not been sufficiently persuaded by the reasons for the labeling of their cities as a slow city. Therefore, the legitimacy of restricting development in the selected regions has not been established. Government-led attempts to designate particular cities as slow without concrete evidence showing that the quality of life of residents in such cities is higher than that of other cities may cause conflicts with regional residents.

The purpose of this research is to examine the differences in the quality of life perceptions of the residents of the designated slow city, Hadong in Agyang-myeon, and Busan, a metropolitan city on the southeastern coast of South Korea. Through an improved understanding of regional residents, our aim is to elucidate the legitimacy of the selection of slow cities and establish the value of slow cities.

### **What is a Slow City?**

The purpose of labeling cities as “slow” is to support sustainable development. Slow cities refuse to focus on “speed”; instead, the focus is on preventing threats to humankind and the environment. Sustainable development advocates the return to a natural way of living similar to that of the past, rather than eschewing modern civilization (Park et al. 2008). In essence, slow cities are meant to rediscover cultural places, maintain traditional lives, and find the value of life based on a healthy environment (Knox 2005). The slow city movement is an international network of 20 countries launched by four local government officials in Italy in October 1999. There are 135 regions enrolled in the slow city movement worldwide. The movement is most active in Italy, where there are 68 participating regions.<sup>1</sup>

The mayors of Greve-in-Chianti, Orvieto, Bra, and Positano met to define the attributes that might identify a slow city. The four mayors committed themselves to a series of principles that include working toward calmer and less polluted physical environments; conserving local aesthetic traditions; and fostering local crafts, produce, and cuisine. They also pledged to use technology to create healthier environments, make citizens aware of the value of leisure, and share their experiences in seeking administrative solutions for a better life. The goal was to foster the development of places that enjoy a vibrant lifestyle based on good food, healthy environments, sustainable economies, and traditional life rhythms of the communities (Mayer

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1. See <http://www.cittaslow.org/section/association>.

and Knox 2006).

Baek (2008) defined the concept of a slow city as a philosophy to pursue living slowly in a speed-oriented society, rediscover regional tastes and flavors, refuse civilizations that threaten environments, and return to the past of more humane living. Parkins and Craig (2006) envisaged living slowly as an attempt to maintain sustainable pleasure. These definitions indicate that one of the objectives of a slow city is to promote happiness. According to the Cittaslow International Network, other objectives are to improve the local environment, preserve local produce and food, and enhance residents' quality of life. Regions designated as a slow city are pursuing various plans to improve the quality of life for residents and preserve traditional industries. For instance, the slow city of Italy conducted campaigns to preserve local industries and traditional culture by preventing global companies such as McDonalds or Wal-Mart from entering the market (Knox 2005). Through these campaigns, sustainable development and residents' quality of life are emphasized (Pink 2008).

Therefore, when promoting the agenda of a slow city, it is important to determine whether local residents' quality of life is better than that of other cities and whether diversity rather than consistent policy has to be presented throughout the region's identity. Williams and Jobes (1990) explained that the importance of the quality of life differs among regions with different living conditions. From this perspective, it would be helpful to conduct a comparative study on the quality of life between two regions. The wants and needs of local residents for their quality of life must be considered in the decision making for local area development (Oh and Hong 2009). Given this, slow city residents' perception of their quality of life should be surveyed to determine the feasibility of government-driven policies.

### **Slow Cities in Korea**

Figure 1 shows the geographic locations of the six designated slow cities in Korea. Their properties are described below.

Figure 1. Location of Slow Cities in Korea



The Slow City International Federation designated four regions (Cheongsan-myeon, Wando-gun; Jeungdo-myeon, Sinan-gun; Changpyeong-myeon, Damyang-gun; and Yuchi-myeon, Jangheung-gun) as slow cities on December 1, 2007, at a general meeting held in Greve in Chianti, Italy (Oh and Hong 2009). In 2009, Agyang-myeon, Hadong-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do province and Daeheung-myeon, Yesan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do province were additionally selected as international slow cities (Yu 2009).

Various characteristics were emphasized in individual slow cities. For example, traditional foods such as sweets, cookies, and rice taffy were highlighted in Changpyeong-myeon, Damyang-gun. This region

also boasted the presence of traditional Korean villages and the coexistence of modern and traditional styles of housing (Oh and Hong 2009). Jeungdo-myeon in Sinan-gun was highly regarded for its traditional sun-dried salt farms and environmentally friendly transportation system (Park, Jang, and Son 2008a). The salt farms in Sinan-gun were collectively designated as a God blessed land, which would become a slow city where humans, God, and nature would be harmonious. Furthermore, Jeungdo-myeon promoted its mud flat salt farms to become a world-famous slow city.<sup>2</sup> Yuchi-myeon in Jangheung-gun was recognized for fostering environmentally friendly agriculture and using traditional methods to produce Korean staples such as soy sauce and soybean paste (Baek 2008). Cheongsan-myeon in Wando-gun is known for preserving traditional agricultural methods. The survey by the federation's officials indicated that this region was equipped with perfect conditions to be a slow city, with its *haenyeo* (female sea divers harvesting sea products), low stone walls, and beautiful sea village.<sup>3</sup> They also commended the region for the beauty of its nature and people. In particular, they noted that the region's female divers were an especially valuable resource that must be preserved as part of a very distinctive culture (Han and Sohn 2010). Agyang-myeon, Hadong-gun, was designated as a tea-growing slow city at the general meeting of the World Slow City Federation in 2009.<sup>4</sup> Daeheung-myeon, Yesan-gun, scored highly in the areas of natural environment, traditional culture, and regional community; the beautiful Yedang reservoir was also praised. Daeheung-myeon was designated as the sixth slow city in Korea and the 121st slow city in the world (Yu 2009).

Much attention has been focused on preserving cultural values and other positive aspects of Korean slow cities. However, there is concern that a village chosen to be a slow city might be transformed into a run-of-the-mill cultural travel destination inconsistent with the fundamental ideas underpinning slow cities (Oh and Hong 209). In

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2. See [http://www.cittaslow.kr/new/sub02\\_01\\_01.asp](http://www.cittaslow.kr/new/sub02_01_01.asp).

3. See [http://www.cittaslow.kr/new/sub02\\_02\\_01.asp](http://www.cittaslow.kr/new/sub02_02_01.asp).

4. See [http://www.cittaslow.kr/new/sub02\\_05\\_01.asp](http://www.cittaslow.kr/new/sub02_05_01.asp).

the long term, the city's vegetation, wildlife, and forest areas could become degraded because of the increasing amount of visitors. To ensure that the goals of the slow city movement are preserved, it is important that the central government, local municipalities, local citizens, and the slow city movement council promote the project according to the specific needs of the region (Park et al. 2008). The regional characteristics also need to be considered for local preservation. Oh and Hong (2009) suggest that it is important to build a sustainable model specific to Korea.

A slow city must comply with the guidelines of the slow food movement and conserve the local environment (Pink 2008). The charter of the Cittaslow International Federation sets forth fifty-four provisions in six categories, including the environment, basic infrastructure, city landscapes, and beauty, in addition to policies that attach value to indigenous products, accommodate tourists, and promote citizen participation and perceptions. Certification in Korea requires adherence to twenty-four of the provisions and objectives (Cho 2008).

### **Introduction to Agyang-myeon and Its Selection as a Slow City**

Agyang-myeon is one of the twelve *myeon* (townships) in Hadong-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do province. The Hwagae traditional market is located beside the Jirisan mountain, which connects the Yeongnam and Honam regions. The most famous village is Pyeongsa-ri, the setting for Park Kyung-ni's epic novel *Toji* (The Land) (Lee 2005). In addition, Daebong persimmons and wild green tea are renowned specialties in Agyang-myeon. The area's most famous attractions are Choe Champan's residence, Pyeongsa-ri Park, the Maeam Tea Museum, the Hwagae traditional market, the Ssanggyesa temple, and Cheonghak-dong traditional village (Lee 2009). These locations can be toured on foot, which is consistent with the environmental requirements for a slow city.

Agyang-myeon's rich history contributed to its selection as a slow city. From the Bronze Age (circa 5000-500 BC), people started to build

settlements in this area. Another major factor leading to its selection was the area's green tea industry; green tea has been cultivated in Agyang-myeon since the Silla dynasty. More residents grow green tea in Agyang-myeon than in any other region in Korea. The quality of the tea produced in this region is excellent, and the tea is cultivated in accordance with the objectives of the slow food movement. Thus, the reasons for designating Agyang-myeon as a slow city are its historical background, highly valued traditional industries, and the attractive natural environment suitable for walking.<sup>5</sup>

### **Quality of Life in Slow Cities**

Today's fast-paced world is very much a product of the expansion of capitalism on a global scale (Knox 2005). It is reported that the increased pace of life in cities is associated with increased morbidity and mortality (Garhammer 2002). The slow city campaign recognizes these negative consequences, and the improvement of the quality of life in the designated regions is necessary. This research points to the need to reflect on the local residents' perceptions of quality of life when determining future policies for a region.

Although quality of life is sometimes used as a synonym for mental peace, subjective peace, or feelings of well-being (Evans 1994), it is more frequently used in reference to subjective welfare and satisfaction with living (King et al. 1992). Anspaugh and Hamrick (2000) defined quality of life as attitudes and acts to minimize one's potential power, while Cho (2009) considered it a concept related to health. However, these various concepts of quality of life are inconsistent with each other. Park (2003), therefore, proposed a number of indicators of quality of life that take into account the universal needs of humans. These include issues such as the human pain index, sustainable development, public selection, old age, lifestyle, and happiness. In Park's view, quality of life is subjective.

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5. See [http://www.cittaslow.kr/new/sub02\\_05\\_04.asp](http://www.cittaslow.kr/new/sub02_05_04.asp).

The concept of a slow city is closely related to sustainable development. Sustainable development refers to development that supports, rather than destroys, the regional environment and the lives of the region's inhabitants. Problems occur when environmental factors necessary for survival are destroyed or when severe damage is inflicted on the health of inhabitants (Park 2003). With regard to the living standards of the inhabitants of farming villages, Dillman and Tremblay (1997) noted that factors such as economic well-being, education, health management, domestic living conditions, regional environment, and leisure activities all affect quality of life.

The decline in overall quality of life of city residents in Korea recently became a big problem and received much public attention (Oh and Hong 2009), and there are a growing number of people returning to rural areas for education and economic opportunities (Park et al. 2006). This movement shows that perception of where to find the best quality of life is changing, and thus, the motivations behind it need to be verified. A preference for a rural life and a pursuit of ideals, according to Kang (2007), explained why people were leaving the city. These migrants are tired of the city life and problems with retirement and health; therefore, they are motivated by the desire to improve their quality of life. The results of this research partially support the explanation by Pink (2008) that a slow city can provide benefits that other cities cannot.

## **Study and Survey Design**

### *Study Task and Problem Setting*

To achieve the objectives of this study, small city residents' perceptions of quality of life must be compared with those of big city residents. Many rural areas are already in the form of a slow city, and six regions were designated as a slow city and managed by the government. Unlike other rural areas, Agyang-myeon, Hadong-gun, has to be administratively managed for sustainable development. Whether

or not limiting the urbanization of a slow city has a positive effect on its quality of life needs to be justified by comparison with the quality of life of a big city. In other words, slow cities can be justified if it is proven by comparison that the quality of life perceived by slow city residents is better than the quality of life perceived by urban residents. Therefore, to design the study, Agyang-myeon, Hadong-gun—one of the six slow cities in Korea—was selected to represent a slow city for this study and Busan was selected as its counterpart.<sup>6</sup>

The representative for the big city in this study, Busan, is in the same province as Agyang-myeon, Hadong-gun, and suitable as this study's subject because it includes a variety of urban infrastructures for public space, transportation, culture, medical treatment, local economy, education, welfare, and leisure. As the second largest city in Korea, it covers an area of 767.34 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 3,566,437 (Statistics Korea 2010). The city is situated at the southeastern end of the peninsula and borders Gimhae city in the west, Ulsan metropolitan city and Yangsan city in the north, and the Korea Strait in the south. It holds Korea's largest international trading port and an international airport, acting as a gateway to European countries and Japan (Busan Development Institute 2010). Busan has abundant cultural, historical, and other touristic resources, including beautiful beaches and a variety of festivals. With regard to its industrial structure, the service industry accounts for the largest portion, followed by the manufacturing industry, the retail and wholesale industries, and the construction industry (Busan Development Institute 2010).

Agyang-myeon is a traditional, rural area of 51.8 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 3,847. The significant difference between the two areas in terms of size and population is useful for comparing conditions in a

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6. Cheongsando, Wando-gun, and Jeungdo, Sinan-gun, were excluded from possible candidacy because they are islands, and it is difficult to compare them to a mainland city. Changpyeong-myeon, Damyang-gun, was excluded because it is near a big city, Gwangju metropolitan city. Furthermore, Daeheung-myeon, Yesan-gun, was not yet regarded as a slow city, which left only Yuchi-myeon, Jangheung-gun, and Agyang-myeon, Hadong-gun. From these two slow cities, Agyang-myeon, Hadong-gun, was selected.

slow city with those in an urban region. Although it is relatively easy to generalize about the difference between an urban region and a rural area, it is rather quite difficult to make such similar generalizations about the difference between an urban region and a slow city. Dillman and Tremblay (1997) contend that despite the differences between the two regions, comparison is possible by focusing on the differences in perceptions of quality of life. If quality of life according to subjective perception is used as a base to compare two regions of different sizes, environments, and industry structures, comparison of quality of life between an urban region and a rural area in Korea is possible, and thus, the comparison between a slow city (Agyang-myeon) and an urban region (Busan) appears to be possible as well (Park and Ma 2007). The research design draws on the methodology of previous, empirical studies, and depends on them to accomplish the objective of the study. A survey was conducted in January 2010 via questionnaires administered to 146 residents in Busan and 122 residents in Agyang-myeon (see Table 1). All the questionnaires completed by the subjects were valid. In addition, in order not to contaminate the results with responses from non-residents, the subjects' addresses were identified and confirmed. To minimize error, the researcher guided the subjects while they completed the questionnaire. A Likert five-point scale was used to rate the responses, and it was applied to all the items except for those concerned with demographic characteristics.

To examine the differences in the quality of life perceptions in relation, to various regional conditions between residents in a slow city and an urban region, the following three research questions were addressed:

1. How do residents rank their satisfaction with their quality of life in relation to various regional conditions?
2. How does satisfaction with the quality of life differ between the regions?
3. Given the quality of life of the residents, is the designation of a slow city suitable?

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Research Subjects

Characteristics of Respondents	Slow City (Agyang-myeon)		Urban Region (Busan)		Total Subject	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender						
Male	67	54.9%	70	47.9%	137	51.1%
Female	55	45.1%	76	52.1%	131	48.9%
Level of education						
Middle school graduate or lower	47	38.5%	16	11.0%	63	23.5%
High school graduate	29	23.8%	40	27.4%	69	25.7%
College graduate	7	5.7%	27	18.5%	34	12.7%
University graduate	24	19.7%	52	35.6%	76	28.4%
Graduate school	15	12.3%	11	7.5%	26	9.7%
Period of residence						
10 years or less	34	27.9%	19	13.0%	53	19.8%
11-20 years	23	18.9%	18	12.3%	41	15.3%
21-30 years	13	10.7%	61	41.8%	74	27.6%
31 years or more	52	42.6%	48	32.9%	100	37.3%
Total	122	100.0%	146	100.0%	268	100.0%

### Operational Definition of Questionnaires

Previous studies have shown that quality of life of residents and overall local factors are important in qualitative evaluations of the quality of life (Meyers 1987). However, countries differ in terms of how quality of life is measured (Glatzer 2008), and there is no standardized method for selecting the quality of life evaluation index. Therefore, most indices are chosen intuitively by the researcher, which makes it hard to formalize the selection process (Rogerson et al. 1989). Subjective parameters measure the degree of satisfaction of the critical factors in an individual's life, such as economic life, marriage life, family life, neighborhood conditions, health conditions, residential environ-

ment, leisure, and local community (Han 2004). This categorization is similar to Kwen's classification system.

This research classifies different areas of life that have been commonly used in previous studies. These include health, safety, family, education, public welfare, leisure, economy, public participation, and a basic interest in human lives (Kwen 2009). Specific factors were chosen to measure the eight categories, and the questionnaire devised by Kwen (2009) was used to measure quality of life. Based on quality of life, common parameters for the two regions must be developed so they reflect conditions in both a slow city and an urban region. Since it is not easy to compare residents' perceptions of a city and a rural area using only objective and quantitative parameters, the questions selected for this research must be subjective in order to be applicable to both a slow city and an urban region.

The subjective questionnaire that evaluates quality of life used in this research includes three items concerning health management conditions; three items for public safety conditions; four items for family and residential conditions; four items for the regional environment; three items for educational, cultural, and leisure conditions; and four items for community participation. The items for each factor were measured with a five-point criterion. The average of the extracted factors was used for the analysis. Table 2 shows the results of the factor analysis of the survey. Eight factors with an eigenvalue higher than one were extracted by the varimax method of orthogonal rotation, using a principle component. Since none of the items had a factor loading less than 0.5, all of the items were included in the research.

The following designated labels and descriptions for the eight factors were concluded from the factor analysis. Factor 1 is "health management." It describes the overall health management systems, medical facilities, and the medical treatments and services in the region. Factor 2, "public safety," includes safety-related matters such as police presence, public order, relief assistance following disasters or fires, security, crimes, and traffic accidents. Factor 3, "family life," includes family life, family visiting, and family communication, which indicates a stable family life and communication among family members.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results of Quality of Life,  
Related to Several Factors

Factors	Factor loading	Eigen-value	% of variance	Cumulative % of variance	Reliability coefficient
<i>Health management</i>					
Health management systems	.808	3.40	11.72	11.72	.885
Medical facilities	.882				
Level of medical treatments and services	.801				
<i>Public safety</i>					
Police presence, public order, and security	.730	2.37	8.19	61.81	.904
Crimes and traffic accidents	.719				
Relief assistance following disasters or fires	.720				
<i>Family life</i>					
Family life	.787	2.10	7.26	46.79	.725
Family visiting	.548				
Family communication	.503				
<i>Regional environment</i>					
Housing life environment	.535	3.35	11.56	23.28	.864
Environmental management	.748				
Water for living and living wastes	.817				
Natural environment	.739				
Leisure environment	.508				
<i>Educational, cultural, and leisure</i>					
Education	.620	2.24	7.72	69.53	.746
Culture	.858				
Leisure activity	.618				
<i>Economic conditions</i>					
Population	.510	3.32	11.45	34.73	.849
Income and consumer life	.658				
Working life	.734				
Amount of local tax and prices	.755				
Regional economy	.759				

<i>Social welfare</i>		2.38	8.23	53.61	.871
Social welfare facilities	.667				
Number of persons living in welfare facilities	.783				
Staff dedicated to social welfare and the budget	.789				
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<i>Participation in the community</i>		3.08	10.64	45.38	.891
Civil affair administration service	.749				
Social services	.866				
Local politics and autonomy	.750				
Participation in society	.708				

Note: The reliability was Cronbach's alpha = .946.

Factor 4, "regional environment," includes natural environment in regional proximity such as home environment, environmental management, water, natural environment, and leisure. Factor 5, "education, culture, and leisure," describes the region's educational facilities, service, cultural space, and recreational facilities. Factor 6, "economic conditions," describes the region's population growth and density, job security, tax, and prices. Factor 7, "social welfare," describes welfare-related facilities and policies such as the size, capacity, staff, and the budget of facilities. Lastly, "participation in the community," factor 8, indicates the level of satisfaction with the local government's services, outreach activities, and resident participation.

With respect to the reliability of each factor, the Cronbach's alpha for each factor were: health management, .885; public safety, .904; family life, .725; regional environment, .864; educational, cultural, and leisure opportunities, .746; economic conditions, .849; social welfare, .871; and participation in the community, .891. Thus, the reliability of the questionnaire was high, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of at least 0.7. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measurement of sampling adequacy, which indicates how well a factor explains the relationship between factors, was especially high at .909. The Bartlett sphericity was  $\chi^2 = 5666.671$  ( $p < .001$ ), pointing to the validity of the factor analysis and implying the presence of common factors.

## Test and Analysis of Study Problems

### *Analysis of the Correlation among Variables*

Table 3 shows the evaluation of the correlation among the quality of life variables. Relatively high positive correlations were found among each variable, indicating a positive effect. Health management appeared to be highly correlated with family life ( $r = .652$ ) and education ( $r = .613$ ). Public safety conditions were highly correlated with regional environment ( $r = .780$ ) and with family life ( $r = .672$ ). Family life was highly correlated with regional environment ( $r = .703$ ); educational, cultural, and leisurely opportunities ( $r = .689$ ); and economic conditions ( $r = .604$ ). Education, culture, and leisure were highly correlated with health-management conditions ( $r = .613$ ) and family life conditions ( $r = .689$ ). Economic conditions were highly correlated with participation in the community ( $r = .693$ ). As the results show, the variables show correlations, with the exception of regional environment and health management showing a low correlation.

*Table 3. Correlations between Quality of Life Variables*

Variables	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧
① Health management	-							
② Public safety	.396*	-						
③ Family life	.652*	.672*	-					
④ Regional environment	.292*	.780*	.703*	-				
⑤ Educational, cultural, and leisure	.613*	.394*	.689*	.479*	-			
⑥ Economic conditions	.430*	.502*	.604*	.541*	.564*	-		
⑦ Social welfare	.560*	.532*	.556*	.527*	.535*	.664*	-	
⑧ Participation in the community	.369*	.561*	.528*	.524*	.369*	.693*	.564*	-

Note: Pearson's linear correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) \* $p < .001$ .

In particular, relations between public safety conditions and regional environment and between family life and regional environment showed correlations of more than 0.7, a highly positive correlation. For

example, as satisfaction with public safety conditions increase, satisfaction with regional environment increases as well. Moreover, as satisfaction with family life conditions increases, satisfaction with regional environment increases as well.

### Differences in Satisfaction with the Quality of Life

A t-test was conducted to compare the average satisfaction levels of residents in the two regions with regard to the overall quality of life variable. In the slow city, the average value of satisfaction was 3.22, indicating that the level of satisfaction was relatively high. With regard to the individual variables, satisfaction with health management was higher in the urban region than in the slow city. Table 4 shows the differences in satisfaction with the quality of life between the regions. The results indicate that the level of satisfaction overall with the quality of life was 3.22 on average in the slow city and 3.04 on average in the urban region, thereby indicating that the level of

*Table 4. Quality of Life Satisfaction Levels of the Research Subjects and Their Comparison*

Variables	Slow City		Urban Region		Entire Regions		t(p)
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Health management	3.10	1.03	3.37	.79	3.25	.92	-2.396*(.017)
Public safety	3.63	1.04	3.00	.79	3.28	.97	5.524***(.000)
Family life	3.31	.87	3.31	.77	3.31	.81	.002(.999)
Regional environment	3.68	.94	3.06	.89	3.34	.96	5.562***(.000)
Educational, cultural, and leisure	2.98	.88	3.11	.89	3.05	.89	-1.139 (.256)
Economic conditions	2.89	.84	2.70	.72	2.79	.78	1.989*(.048)
Social welfare	2.83	.95	2.79	.79	2.81	.87	.444(.653)
Participation in the community	3.30	.86	2.98	.69	3.12	.79	3.251**(.001)
Total	3.22	.71	3.04	.59	3.12	.65	2.227*(.027)

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

satisfaction of the slow city residents was higher ( $p < .05$ ).

In terms of the individual variables of the slow city, satisfaction with the regional environment ( $M = 3.68$ ) was highest, followed by satisfaction with public safety conditions ( $M = 3.63$ ); family life conditions ( $M = 3.31$ ); participation in the community ( $M = 3.30$ ); health management conditions ( $M = 3.10$ ); education, culture, and leisure, ( $M = 2.98$ ); economic conditions ( $M = 2.89$ ); and social welfare conditions ( $M = 2.83$ ). These results indicate that residents in the slow city are relatively dissatisfied with educational and cultural conditions, economic conditions, and social welfare conditions.

The satisfaction levels of the residents of the urban region are listed in the following order: health management conditions ( $M = 3.37$ ); family life conditions ( $M = 3.31$ ); education, culture, and leisure ( $M = 3.11$ ); regional environment ( $M = 3.06$ ); public safety conditions ( $M = 3.00$ ); participation in the community ( $M = 2.98$ ); social welfare conditions ( $M = 2.79$ ); and economic conditions ( $M = 2.70$ ). These results indicate that residents in the urban region are relatively dissatisfied with participation in the community, social welfare conditions, and economic conditions.

Comparing the differences in satisfaction with the quality of life in the two regions showed that the level of overall satisfaction was higher in the slow city ( $p < .05$ ). When the differences in satisfaction with individual variables were each analyzed, the two regions revealed significant differences in the levels of satisfaction with health management conditions ( $p < .05$ ), public safety conditions ( $p < .001$ ), regional environment ( $p < .001$ ), economic conditions ( $p < .05$ ) and participation in the community ( $p < .01$ ). Residents in the urban region showed a higher satisfaction with health management conditions, whereas the residents of the slow city exhibited greater satisfaction with the other variables. In addition, for the variables regarding family, home, education, culture, leisure, and social welfare, differences in satisfaction with the quality of life were reviewed according to the individual content of the conditions. Overall, the fact that slow city residents are more satisfied than urban region residents justifies the existence of the current slow city. However, the study shows that the slow city needs

to show improvement in the areas of health management and economic conditions.

Based on the above results, the quality of life variables that had lower satisfaction levels were compared (Table 5).

*Health management conditions:* The results suggest that the level of satisfaction with medical facilities was higher among residents in the urban region ( $p < .001$ ). There were no differences in the levels of satisfaction with health management systems and the level of medical treatment and services. This result can be explained by the fact that a city has more medical facilities, therefore providing more opportunities for medical treatment and services than a slow city. This suggests medical services in slow cities need to be improved because rural areas tend to lack medical facilities (Yoo and Yoon 2006).

*Public safety conditions:* The levels of satisfaction were police, public order, and security ( $p < .001$ ); crimes and traffic accidents ( $p < .001$ ); and relief assistance in disasters or fires ( $p < .001$ ). The levels of satisfaction were higher among the residents of the slow city. In other words, it is perceived that a slow city has a lower crime rate and is safer from disasters such as traffic accidents or fires. Crimes tend to occur more frequently in a city than a rural area irrespective of the age or country (Lim 2004). In addition, research shows that the characteristics and lifestyles of the city make it vulnerable to crime (Bark 2010) and this justifies the slow city residents' perception of quality of life.

*Family life conditions:* The levels of satisfaction with family life, family visiting, and family communication in the urban region were similar to those in the slow city. This appears to mean that despite the differences in lifestyle or environment, residents of the two regions do not have significantly different perceptions in satisfaction.

*Regional environment:* Residents of the slow city showed greater levels of satisfaction with environmental management ( $p < .001$ ), water ( $p < .001$ ), and the natural environment ( $p < .001$ ). The residents of both regions showed similar levels of satisfaction with recreational environment. Slow city residents were more satisfied with drinking water, garbage, the natural environment, and environmental

management than urban residents. This justifies a slow city in its sustainable development because a city lacks the ecofriendly environment that a slow city enjoys.

*Conditions for education, culture, and leisure:* Residents in the urban region showed greater levels of satisfaction with education ( $p < .01$ ) and culture ( $p < .01$ ), whereas those in the slow city showed higher levels of satisfaction with leisure ( $p < .01$ ). It seems to be that the urban residents are more satisfied with educational or cultural activities because a city provides more opportunities for these activities. The educational gap between students in a city and a rural area is becoming greater not just for elementary or high school students, but also for college students and adults. The gap is due to the growth of private education (Ham and Kim 2010) and the many obstacles in providing quality education to rural areas (Lee and Yoon 1999). Accordingly, even though there needs to be improvement with education in small cities, there is still a sufficient satisfaction level for slow city residents.

*Economic conditions:* Residents in the slow city showed greater levels of satisfaction with work ( $p < .05$ ), local taxes, the prices of consumer goods ( $p < .01$ ), and the regional economy ( $p < .01$ ). Levels of satisfaction with population, income, and consumption did not show any statistically significant difference between the two regions, but slow city residents are more satisfied with work, taxes, prices of goods, and the local economy.

*Social welfare conditions:* Residents in the two regions showed similar levels of satisfaction with social welfare conditions. The levels of satisfaction with social welfare facilities, welfare facility populations, employees in the social welfare sector, and residents' budgets in the slow city were similar to those of the urban region.

*Community participation:* The levels of satisfaction with civil administration services ( $p < .01$ ), social services ( $p < .05$ ), local politics and autonomy ( $p < .01$ ), and participation in society ( $p < .05$ ) were higher in the slow city. In other words, it shows that slow city residents have greater satisfaction with citizen participation in local public administration and politics. Resident participation in public policies

Table 5. Differences in Satisfaction with the Quality of Life between the Regions

Variables	Slow City		Urban Region		Entire Region		t(p)
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
<i>Health management</i>							
Health management systems	3.18	1.11	3.31	.81	3.25	.96	-1.056(.292)
Medical facilities	2.98	1.18	3.47	.88	3.24	1.06	-3.789***(.000)
Level of medical treatments and services	3.15	1.13	3.35	.94	3.26	1.03	-1.569 (.118)
<i>Public safety</i>							
Police, public order, and security	3.57	1.17	3.00	.97	3.26	1.10	4.255***(.000)
Crimes and traffic accidents	3.68	1.14	2.88	.85	3.24	1.07	6.406***(.000)
Relief assistance in disasters or fires	3.65	1.10	3.11	.82	3.35	.99	4.464***(.000)
<i>Family life</i>							
Family life	3.34	1.09	3.32	.82	3.33	.95	.244 (.808)
Family visiting	3.16	1.25	3.22	.99	3.19	1.11	-.454 (.650)
Family communication	3.33	1.10	3.44	.92	3.39	1.01	-.893 (.373)
<i>Regional environment</i>							
Environmental management	3.86	1.06	3.05	.90	3.42	1.06	6.721***(.000)
Water for living and living wastes	3.83	1.05	3.11	.97	3.44	1.07	5.816***(.000)
Natural environment	3.84	1.29	3.04	1.11	3.40	1.25	5.360***(.000)
Leisure environment	3.20	1.23	3.04	1.11	3.12	1.17	1.134(.258)
<i>Education, culture, and leisure</i>							
Education	2.70	1.13	3.17	1.04	2.96	1.11	-3.510**(.001)
Culture	2.77	1.18	3.10	1.00	2.95	1.10	-2.404*(.017)
Leisure	3.48	1.08	3.05	1.00	3.25	1.06	3.296**(.001)
<i>Economic conditions</i>							
Population	2.83	1.14	2.86	.83	2.85	.98	-.284(.777)
Income and consumer life	2.79	1.02	2.78	.90	2.78	.95	.052(.959)
Working life	3.10	1.04	2.82	.92	2.94	.98	2.369*(.019)
Amount of local tax paid and prices	2.90	1.13	2.56	.94	2.72	1.04	2.688**(.008)
Regional economy	2.85	1.01	2.50	.92	2.66	.98	2.989**(.003)
<i>Social welfare</i>							
Social welfare facilities	2.80	1.07	2.78	.89	2.79	.97	.188(.851)
Number of persons living welfare facilities	2.80	1.02	2.81	.91	2.80	.96	-.111(.911)
Staff dedicated to social welfare and the budget	2.90	1.09	2.77	.88	2.83	.98	1.120(.264)
<i>Participation in community</i>							
Civil affair administration service	3.42	.93	3.08	.85	3.23	.90	3.188**(.002)
Satisfaction with social services	3.33	.94	3.08	.77	3.19	.86	2.374*(.018)
Satisfaction with local politics and autonomy	3.22	1.01	2.85	.87	3.02	.95	3.205**(.002)
Satisfaction with participation in society	3.21	.97	2.92	.84	3.06	.91	2.572*(.011)

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

is a very positive form of democracy because when there is participation in the traditional and unilaterally-implemented process, it builds up mutual cooperation to meet the city's objectives, which are self-protection and self-realization (Kang 2007). This greater satisfaction of slow city residents in public participation further justifies the designation of slow cities.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

This research found that the level of satisfaction of residents in the slow city was relatively higher than that of residents in the urban region. However, the residents of the urban region showed higher levels of satisfaction with health management.

Research question 1, "how do residents rank their satisfaction with their quality of life in relation to various regional conditions?" indicated that slow city residents are relatively dissatisfied with educational conditions, economic conditions, and social welfare conditions. This research found that residents of the urban region appeared to be relatively dissatisfied with participation in the community, social welfare conditions, and economic conditions. These findings show that the levels of satisfaction with life, in relation to the different conditions, are different between the two regions.

Research question 2, "how does satisfaction with the quality of life differ between the regions?" indicates that the level of overall satisfaction with the quality of life was higher in the slow city. There were significant differences in the levels of satisfaction between the regions in terms of health management, public safety, regional environment, economic conditions, and participation in the community. Residents in the urban region showed greater satisfaction with health management, whereas those in the slow city exhibited greater satisfaction with the other variables.

This research found that the level of satisfaction with medical facilities was higher among residents in the urban region. This difference is likely because the urban region has more medical facilities and

services available than the slow city. The results also suggested that the residents of the slow city showed higher levels of satisfaction with public safety, whereas the levels of satisfaction with other conditions, such as family life, family visiting, and family communication were similar between the two regions. Thus, residents in both regions are satisfied with their current living environments. The residents of the slow city showed greater levels of satisfaction with environmental management, water, waste management, and the natural environment. However, the levels of satisfaction with education and culture were higher among residents in the urban region. This difference points to problems with education in non-urban regions, requiring parents to send their children to the cities for education. According to Kim (2008), the education in Agyang-myeon can be evaluated from the fact that parents' enthusiasm for education is quite high throughout the whole nation.

Given the rich and varied cultural life in the urban region, it was presumed that the satisfaction of residents in the slow city would be lower than that of residents in the urban region; however, the residents of the slow city showed high levels of satisfaction with leisure. Based on this result, the designation of a slow city can be said to have a positive impact on the life of the region's residents. The levels of satisfaction with work life, local taxes, prices of goods, and regional economic conditions were higher among residents in the slow city. This difference may be attributed to the resident's perception that they receive more benefits in relation to prices, taxes, and employment. With respect to social welfare conditions, the levels of satisfaction between the two regions were similar. However, the levels of satisfaction with civil administration services related to participation in the community, social services, local politics, autonomy, and participation in society were higher among the residents of the slow city.

Research question 3, "given the quality of life of the residents, is the designation of a slow city suitable?" indicated that the residents living in the slow city showed greater levels of satisfaction than those living in the urban region. However, this does not automatically mean that the designation of a slow city would improve the lives of the

region's residents. As shown in the results and analyses, the residents' satisfaction with education, culture, and health management is lower than that of residents in the urban region. This difference is due to underdevelopment, which is evident in the slow city and other rural regions. Encouraging the positive aspects of the slow city and resolving shortcomings will improve the prosperity of the residents of rural regions and enhance the value of the slow city. Each slow city in Korea has a unique form of culture, which is accumulated over a long period of time. These unique cultures are values that cannot be reproduced (Cho and Lim 2009). If traditional cultures can be preserved and the quality of life of regional residents can be improved through slow cities, the objectives of the slow city will be achieved. However, if certain benefits are adversely affected by restrictions on development, the legitimacy of the slow city will be subject to controversy.

This research has limitations in that it compares a slow city with an urban region. Usually in researches of this kind, a comparison is supposed to be conducted between farming and fishing villages and an urban region. In this research, however, farming and fishing villages were selected as representative of a slow city. Nevertheless, this research should still provide an opportunity for residents not only in the slow city, but also in urban regions to see the values of slow cities. It should also serve as a solid foundation for future selections of slow cities.

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