

GENDER ROLE EQUITY AND MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG KOREAN COUPLES*

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This study examines gender role behaviors and attitudes related to marital satisfaction. Nontraditional attitudes and behaviors are expected to affect negatively marital satisfaction due to the lack of guidelines and due to the other positive alternatives to marital roles. Data, collected from a survey of 291 married couples in Seoul, Korea in 1991, largely support the hypotheses, which are fairly consistent with the results of studies of American couples. Nontraditional gender role attitudes and wife's employment are related to lower marital satisfaction. However, the housekeeper role has changed somewhat more than the male provider role, so that nontraditional tendencies, in attitudes and behaviors, with respect to the housekeeper role have been related to higher marital satisfaction. Findings of this study show that measures of actual division of household labor are better related to marital satisfaction than are measures of perceived division of household labor. The consistent trends in marital satisfaction in Korea compared with those in the United States suggest a future high marital instability in Korea.

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars claim that married people have greater individual well-being than the never married, the widowed, or the divorced (Gove *et al.* 1990; Gove and Shin 1989; Glenn and Weaver 1981), arguing that the affectionate and nurturing functions of the marriage constitute well-being. However, as Glenn and Weaver (1988) have found, the positive association between marriage and individual well-being has steadily declined since the early 1970s, as changes in adult roles and marriage have occurred.

Marriage was once taken for granted, as were prescribed marital roles performed in the family. But now, as people seek individual gratification and take on diverse adult roles, they are satisfied with marriage only so long as spouses continue to meet their needs. The ideal of love in modern culture is changing from one of commitment, attachment, self-sacrifice, and self-

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restraint to one of freedom, rebellion, self-realization, and self-gratification (Swidler 1980). To the extent that individuals place greater emphasis on personal goals than on commitment to the relationship, nontraditional gender roles and family attitudes should be related to lower marital satisfaction.

Gender Role Attitudes

Modernization and other social changes have led to an increasing diversity of acceptable adult roles (Mason *et al.* 1976; Bernard 1981; Scanzoni 1978; Davis 1984; Goode 1984). Individuals' adult roles are no longer defined automatically by their gender. Increased women's labor force participation, reduced fertility, prolonged life expectancy, and so on make traditionally defined adult roles — men as providers and women as housekeepers — less rewarding for both men and women (Davis and van den Oever 1982).

When everyone partakes of traditionally described gender roles, there is "spontaneous consensus" about what to do and what ought to be (Scanzoni 1978). As indicated by Lye and Biblarz (1990), couples who both have traditional gender role attitudes may be guided by well-defined traditional gender role norms. On the other hand, those with nontraditional gender role attitudes must themselves define gender role behaviors and negotiate their role performances (Lye and Biblarz 1990). The process of redefinition and negotiation requires energy and time, and may be an occasion of tension and conflict; thus, it detracts from marital satisfaction.

Numerous previous studies have examined changing aspects of marriage. Despite the volume of literature, relatively little is known about effects of changing gender role attitudes and their interaction effects with gender role behaviors on marital satisfaction. In Korea, rapidly changing gender role attitudes and behaviors are attributed to modernization, urbanization, and industrialization. I expect nontraditional gender roles to have similar effects on marital satisfaction in Korea, although there is less variation in adult roles in Korea than in the United States. In Korea, gender role behaviors and gender role attitudes have been studied in relation to marital satisfaction (Lee, J. 1982; So¹ 1985; Kim, M. 1985; Park 1983; Ki 1988). The studies have usually examined the effect of gender role behavior and gender role attitudes in separate models. Studies that have addressed the effects of gender role attitudes or behaviors usually have been based on wife's responses only, and have relied on small nonrandom samples.

In this paper, I will examine the consequences of changing gender role attitudes and gender role behaviors from a cross-cultural perspective. In addi-

¹I use the McCune Reischauer romanization in this paper.

tion, I will examine possible interaction effects of attitudinal discrepancies between spouses, and gender role consistency between behaviors and attitudes on marital satisfaction.

Sexual Division of Labor

One of the consistent findings from marriage research is that married women are less satisfied in their marriage than married men (Bernard 1982; Gove and Tudor 1973); therefore researchers have hypothesized that gender role behaviors might explain the difference in the marital satisfaction (Gove and Tudor 1973; Kessler and McRae 1981). They conjectured that employment outside the home might be sources of satisfaction, while housework and raising children might be a source of dissatisfaction. Koreans also have experienced a similar sexual division of labor and the consequences of it (Choi 1986; Lee, D. 1976, 1983; Kim and Hurh 1988).

However, researchers could not provide a consistent picture of the relationship between these gender role behaviors and marital satisfaction. Some researchers find that employed wives are more satisfied than housewives (Kessler and McRae 1982; Ferree 1976), while others find no significant difference (Glenn and Weaver 1978; Locksley 1980), and still others find that it may detract from wives' own marital satisfaction (Booth *et al.* 1984).

The effect of wife's employment on her husband's satisfaction is similarly mixed. Some researchers find that wife's employment reduces her husband's satisfaction (Kessler and McRae 1982; Burke and Weir 1976), or has no effect (Glenn and Weaver 1978).

Likewise an equal division of household labor may enhance both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction (Benin and Agostinelli 1988), or enhance only wife's marital satisfaction (Kessler and McRae 1982; Ross *et al.* 1983), or may not be related to wife's marital satisfaction at all (Hiller and Philliber 1986; Thompson and Walker 1989).

These inconsistent findings may be attributed to the lack of consideration of more complex and intervening factors involved between gender role behaviors and marital satisfaction (Houseknecht and Macke 1981; Kessler and McRae 1982; Ross *et al.* 1983). These include such factors as preference for work (Benin and Nienstedt 1985; Ross *et al.* 1983), gender role attitudes (Kessler and McRae 1982; Kraus and Markides 1985), economic well-being (Nye 1974; Waite 1981), and also the presence of children (Kessler and McRae 1982).

Although some researchers have suggested that preference for wife's employment and the pattern of division of household labor are important to understanding the effect of wife's employment of marital satisfaction (Lock-

sley 1980; Ross *et al.* 1983; Houseknecht and Macke 1981; Kessler and McRae 1982), few studies examined these factors together (except Ross *et al.* 1983). Those that have examined the effect of wife's employment tend to be limited by small and unrepresentative samples (e.g., Burke and Weir 1976; Ferree 1976; Booth 1977) or have relied on only one spouse's response (Booth 1977; Kessler and McRae 1982; Locksley 1980; Glenn and Weaver 1978).

Studies which are based on the Korean data present similar problems and limitations. The wife's or the husband's preference for wife's employment in the association with wife's employment and marital satisfaction has not been investigated (Choi 1986). Samples that relied on one spouse as a respondent are also a problem (Lee, D. 1976; Kim and Hurh 1988). Using married couples, I will examine the relation between the wife's employment and marital satisfaction after taking into account both the preference of the wife's employment and the division of household labor.

DATA AND METHODS

Data were collected in a survey conducted in Seoul, Korea in 1991. Respondents were couples in their first marriages, married between 5 and 10 years, in which the wives were in the age group of 25 to 35 at the time of the survey. Limiting the sample to a specific family stage simultaneously minimized the effects of age, period, and cohort. In view of the fact that about 71 percent of divorced couples in 1988 had been married less than five years, the sample reflects surviving marriages, which represent about 99 percent of all marriages (*Choson Ilbo*, November 2, 1989, p. 9).

I used an area sampling method to draw respondents. From a total of 494 *t'ongs*, I chose randomly 30 *t'ongs* and a *t'ong* and *pan* drawn from each *t'ong*. Approximately ten households were drawn from each *t'ong* and *pan*. If there were more than two eligible couples in a selected household, the wife with the earlier birth date was selected. The total sample size was 293 married couples. The return rate from 348 total contacts with the eligible population was 84.2%. Two wives who were in their second marriage, and their husbands, were excluded from the analysis. The sample resulted in 291 married couples.

Independent Variables

The following information was obtained from each respondent: educational level, age, income, employment status, the number of children, gender role attitudes, allocation of housework and child care, and marital satisfaction.

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES: Items for the attitude measures were selected from the NSFH (National Survey for Families and Household) and GSS (General Social Survey), which are widely used. Based on results from factor analysis with principal axis extraction and varimax rotation, four measures of attitudes toward gender roles and family life were constructed: attitudes toward women's labor force participation, attitudes toward men's provider role, attitudes toward nontraditional family life, and attitudes toward equal sharing of housework. Higher scores on the scale indicated traditional attitudes. The items for these four measures are reported in the Appendix.

ALLOCATION OF HOUSEWORK AND CHILD CARE: Household tasks and child care were assessed by 7 items reported in the Appendix. Scores on each item could range from 1 ("I do the most: underbenefited") to 5 ("Spouse does the most: overbenefited"). Since some items were not applicable to some couples, the mean of the scores of applicable items was used, rather than the sum of the score of all items. The means ranged from 2.40 to 5.00 for husbands and from 1.00 to 3.35 for wives. The distribution was highly skewed toward wife's tasks, as expected. The mean scores were 4.05 and 1.86 for husbands and wives, respectively.

Dependent Variables

Previous studies have used measures of subjective feelings, rather than objective evaluation, about the spouse and the marital relationship in the study of marital satisfaction. Considering the length of the questionnaire, I decided to use Hendrick's (1988) Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) as a dependent variable that was organized by subjective evaluation only. Items are reported in the Appendix.

Although the social desirability bias is an ongoing problem in self-reported measures, the self-reported measures are generally preferred by researchers due to their convenience. In the United States, this social desirability bias seems to be reflected in the distribution of the responses to marital satisfaction measures (Glenn 1990). The majority of respondents belong to the category of "highly satisfied."² To ease the skewness, I used two alternative transformations of marital satisfaction measures: natural logarithm and dichotomization. I compared the results using several different measures of marital

²About two-third of American respondents indicated that their marriages were "very happy" (General Social Survey; Davis 1989). Also over one-half (54.1%) of respondents in the NSFH (National Survey of Families and Households) sample said that they were very happy with marriage, and over three-quarters (79.7%) of valid answers in this sample scored the highest two categories of seven possible points (A National Survey of Families and Households; Bumpass *et al.* 1990).

satisfaction: the conventional marital satisfaction scale as an interval variable, the dichotomized continuous marital satisfaction measure, and the marital satisfaction scale normalized by the natural logarithm of the scores.

Other Variables

There were several other control variables for individual and couple characteristics that were previously identified as important factors in marital satisfaction (Glenn 1990; Glenn and Weaver 1978; Renne 1970). These variables included the age of respondent, the age of the spouse (or age difference between the spouses), respondent's age at marriage, the spouse's age at marriage, the duration of marriage, and the number of household members. Preliminary analyses showed that none of these variables had a significant association with husband's or wife's marital satisfaction; thus they were dropped from the analysis. Only the educational attainment level was included in the model.

FINDINGS

The results of analyses were fairly similar to those findings in the United States.³ Husband's educational attainment level was positively related to his marital satisfaction (Table 1). Husband's high education was also related to wife's marital satisfaction in logistic regression analysis (Table 1). Income level was positively related to both husband's and wife's marital satisfaction (Table 1). I expected the economic well-being factor to affect husband's marital satisfaction more than wife's marital satisfaction because the husband is normally expected to be a major provider in Korea; this expectation was borne out in analyses using dichotomous measures of marital satisfaction (Table 1). Only husband's marital satisfaction was associated with income level in logistic regression analysis. Interestingly, husband's marital satisfaction was positively related to wife's income more strongly than to his own income, while the relationship between wife's marital satisfaction and her own income was not significant (Table 1).

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES: The correlations between traditional atti-

³Because of social desirability bias in self-reported measures of marital satisfaction, I compared the results with two alternative transformations of the marital satisfaction scale: the natural logarithm transformation on the scale of the marital satisfaction measure, and the transformation into a dichotomized variable of the results of the scale measure of marital satisfaction. Because the results of parallel models using the scale measure under the natural logarithm transformation were similar to results from the original scale measure of marital satisfaction, I will not report the results with natural logarithm transformation.

TABLE 1. MULTIPLE REGRESSION MODELS OF GENDER ROLE BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES IN RELATION TO MARITAL SATISFACTION

Independent Variables	Marital Satisfaction			
	Standardized		Logistic Regression	
	Husband's	Wife's	Husband's	Wife's
<i>Demographic variables</i>				
H's education	.17**	.10	.23**	.24*
W's education	—	-.04	—	-.18 ⁺
No. of children	.04	.03	.00	-.36
<i>Labor force participation</i>				
H employed	.02	.07	.68	-.06
W employed	-.29***	-.23**	-1.74**	-1.35 ⁺
<i>Economic well-being</i>				
H's income	.10 ⁺	.12*	.00	.00
W's income	.18*	.05	.02**	-.00
<i>Division of household labor</i>				
H's time spent	.05	.03	.03	-.03
W's time spent	-.12 ⁺	-.15*	-.00	-.01
Allocation ^a	-.18**	.21***	-.82*	.84 ⁺
<i>Husband's gender role attitudes on:</i>				
W's employment	.10	.00	.15*	.02
M's provider role	.01	.13*	-.10	.15
Family life	.05	.00	.06	.01
Housework	-.19**	-.20***	-.44**	-.23
<i>Wife's gender role attitudes on:</i>				
W's employment	.08	.14*	.05	.13 ⁺
M's provider role	-.09	.04	.04	.08
Family life	.06	.17**	.07	.31**
Housework	.08	.13*	.12	-.05*
R ²	.19	.24	—	—
N	282	284	282	284

⁺p < .10 *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

^aThe opposite direction in the relation of housework allocation to marital satisfaction for husbands and wives represents the same positive association of the husband's increased participation in housework with higher marital satisfaction.

tudes and marital satisfaction are positive, except for traditional attitudes about equal sharing of housework (Table 1). Husband's traditional attitudes⁴ about equal sharing of household labor were negatively related to husband's and wife's marital satisfaction. These positive associations between traditional gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction are much more prominent among wives. When wives have experienced more diversity in gender roles than husbands, wives with traditional attitudes about marital roles may have more affirmative guidelines for their traditional gender roles — housekeeper roles — and may not search for other meaningful adult roles.

The consistently negative effects of husband's traditional attitudes toward sharing of household labor, even among couples with housewives, seemed to reflect already-changed expectations about the division of household labor. If the majority of people believe ideologically that household labor should be shared by spouses, the objection to this notion, based on the traditional ideology, may produce conflicts by not conforming to changing new egalitarian norms about the division of household labor.

ATTITUDINAL AGREEMENT: I expected that spouses' agreement in traditional attitudes would have an interaction effect on marital satisfaction. Attitudinal agreement between spouses had significant associations only with husband's marital satisfaction, not with wife's (Table 2). However, the effects of attitudinal agreement between the spouses were not consistent. Agreement between the spouses in attitudes toward the men's provider role had a positive effect, as expected, but agreement in the attitudes toward women's employment had a negative effect on husband's marital satisfaction.

This contradictory finding may be attributed to the changing expectations about women's employment. Agreement in traditional attitudes toward women's employment, where an increasing number of women is in the labor force, may negatively affect husband's marital satisfaction because he cannot expect help from his wife in providing for the family. However, agreement in traditional attitudes toward men's provider role may be an acknowledgement that the husband is a primary provider, regardless of whether or not the wife actually helps providing for the family through employment, and thus may be related to the husband's higher marital satisfaction.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Wife's employment tends to reduce marital satisfaction for both spouses (Table 1). The negative effects of wife's employment on marital satisfaction may be attributed to factors other than the employment

⁴In logistic regression analysis, wife's traditional attitudes about equal sharing of housework were negatively related to wives' own marital satisfaction as well as husbands' marital satisfaction whose wives were employed.

TABLE 2. INTERACTIONAL EFFECTS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES ON MARITAL SATISFACTION^a: STANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

Independent variables	Marital Satisfaction	
	Husbands	Wives
Attitudinal discrepancy toward:		
women's employment	-1.28*	-.00
men's provider role	1.53**	.27
nontraditional life	-.17	.07
sharing of housework	.09	-.14
Wife's employment and own attitudes toward:		
Women's employment	-.36	-.23
Men's provider role	.44	-.57
Nontraditional life	.80	-.78
Sharing of housework	-.02	-.14
Wife's employment and spouse's attitudes toward:		
Women's employment	-.21	.41
Men's provider role	-.25	-.08
Nontraditional life	-.29	.71
Sharing of housework	-.02	-.61**
Division of household labor and own attitudes toward:		
women's employment	-.86	1.68*
men's provider role	1.55	-1.12
nontraditional life	.29	-.48
sharing of housework	.38	-.27
Division of household labor and spouse's attitudes toward:		
women's employment	1.75*	-.36
men's provider role	-1.34	1.88*
nontraditional life	1.06	-.83
sharing of housework	.53	-.82
N	273	275

*p < .05 **p < .01

^aAll coefficient from multiple regression analyses, controlling for difference in education, husband's income, wife's income, wife's employment, wife's hours spent on housework, division of household labor, perceived rewards in overall family roles, old children, religious homogamy, arranged marriage, period of dating, wife's age at marriage for the model concerning the wife, frequencies of contacts with husband's mother, husband's father, and wife's mother, close relation with kin, joint meeting with parents, emotional support for the model of the husband, and husband's and wife's gender role attitudes toward women's employment, men's provider role, nontraditional life, and sharing of housework.

itself (Eggebeen and Hawkins 1990; Nye 1974; Burke and Weir 1976). Negative associations of wife's employment with marital satisfaction were consistent with findings in earlier research in the United States (Burke and Weir 1976; Nye 1974), which claimed that the economic necessity for the wife's employment was a reason for the negative associations. Indeed, in this study, among all the demographic factors, the husband's income level was the sole factor that determined the wife's employment. The analysis of multiple contingency tables supported the preference hypothesis that wife's employment is positively related to women's marital satisfaction when the income level per family member is high.

This preference was also operationalized as gender role attitudes. Traditional gender role attitudes interacted negatively with wife's employment for wife's marital satisfaction but not for husband's (Table 2). When husbands had traditional gender role attitudes about equal sharing of housework, but their wives were employed, their wives had lower marital satisfaction. When wives had traditional attitudes about men's provider role, but were employed, this inconsistency was related to wife's lower marital satisfaction.⁵

DIVISION OF HOUSEHOLD LABOR: Husband's increased participation in household labor, up to a relatively equal share, was positively related to marital satisfaction for both spouses⁶ (Table 1). Husbands who did much less housework than their wives were less satisfied with marriage than those who shared relatively equal household labor. This result is consistent with the finding of a previous study which was based on the United States data (Benin and Agostinelli 1988).

⁵There were two exceptions to this negative gender role inconsistency with respect to wife's employment in the logistic regression analysis. Unlike the wife's own traditional gender role attitudes toward men's provider role, which did interact negatively with her employment on her marital satisfaction, her husband's traditional attitudes positively related to her marital satisfaction. As long as the husband holds traditional attitudes about his provider role, he may not be threatened by his wife's employment. Thus, such a situation may enable the wife to take her job in stride. She may perceive her employment as her choice, rather than as a "must" to provide for the family. This plausibly explains the positive association of marital satisfaction with gender role inconsistency between husband's traditional attitudes toward men's provider role and wife's employment. Husband's traditional attitudes toward nontraditional life also had a positive interaction effect with respect to wife's employment on her marital satisfaction. Because the measure of gender role attitudes toward nontraditional life is not as directly related to women's employment as are the other measures, traditionalism in this measure may affect marital satisfaction more strongly than the inconsistency may.

⁶Results of logistic regression showed that the dichotomized equal sharing was not significantly related to both spouses' marital satisfaction. This suggests that the husband's increased share in the division of household labor was not necessarily equitable enough with the wife's to have positive effects on marital satisfaction.

Previous research has suggested that the effects of housework allocation differ according to wife's employment status (Kessler and McRae 1982; Ross *et al.* 1983; Kraus and Markides 1985). The husband's increased participation in household labor was strongly related to the higher marital satisfaction of employed wives (Table 3), while it was not strongly related to the housewife's marital satisfaction (Table 3). Although husbands of employed wives tended to increase their share of household labor, the increased share of household labor among husbands of employed wives was not related to their marital satisfaction (Table 3), a finding consistent with those among American couples (Kessler and McRae 1982; Ross *et al.* 1983). Rather, husbands of housewives were more satisfied with marriage when their own share of household labor was increased (Table 3). For the couples with housewives, the role of housekeeping is probably assumed to be the wife's responsibility. Increased participation in housework among husbands of housewives can be interpreted as a voluntary activity to increase the wife's well-being and reduce her burdens, because the husbands presumably are exempted from housework responsibilities. On the other hand, husbands of employed wives may increase their share of household labor because they have to. Different expectations for their share of housework may explain the different effects of the house-

TABLE 3. STANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS OF HOUSEHOLD DIVISION OF LABOR ON MARITAL SATISFACTION: COMPARISON AMONG COUPLES WITH EMPLOYED WIVES AND AMONG COUPLES WITH HOUSEWIVES

	Marital Satisfaction ^a			
	Husbands		Wives	
	Employed wives	Housewives	Employed wives	Housewives
<i>Time on housework:</i>				
Husband's time	.17	.01	-.05	.02
Wife's time	-.13	-.12 ⁺	-.03	-.15 [*]
Division of household labor	-.23	-.16 [*]	.57 ^{**}	.15 ⁺
N	51	231	53	231

⁺.05 < p < .10 ^{*}p < .05 ^{**}p < .01

^aFull models include husband's education, wife's education for the models concerning the wife, number of children, wife's employment, wife's income, husband's income, husband's hours of housework, wife's hours of housework, the division of household labor, and husband's and wife's gender role attitudes — regarding women's employment, men's provider role, nontraditional family life, and sharing of housework.

hold division of labor on marital satisfaction between the husbands of employed wives and those of housewives.

Although husband's increased share of housework contributed to higher marital satisfaction, there were many wives who did not seem to be bothered by a lopsided division of household labor (Hiller and Philliber 1986; Thompson and Walker 1989). Although some husbands may have increased their share of household labor, it has been pointed out that gender is still the most critical factor determining the division of household labor (Calasanti and Bailey 1991): wives do most housework. Husbands' participation in household tasks — assessed either in time-budget surveys or in task allocation studies — has increased over time but is still far less than wives' (Gershuny and Robinson 1988; Maret and Finlay 1984; Pleck 1985; Ross 1987). Women are reluctant to give up family work, and men resist taking it on (Hunt and Hung 1987).

Thompson (1991) suggested two major reasons why wives may not be bothered by a lopsided division of household labor: they perceived the division of household labor as fair based on differential outcome values and differential comparison referents. The first derives from the differential values attached to husband's and wife's housework. Men's participation in housework, especially traditional female tasks, gets appreciation from wives (Hochschild and Machung 1989; Ross *et al.* 1983; Kessler and McRae 1982) when most men and women believe that housework is women's responsibility (Warner 1986; Szinovacz 1984). The second reason is that the criteria for the evaluation of husband's housework are within-gender comparison referents. When women observe that most wives do the major proportion of housework and that other men do less housework than their husbands, their situations seem not so bad (Hochschild and Machung 1989; Hood 1983). Husbands also use "within-gender comparisons". When they compare themselves to their fathers or grandfathers (LaRossa 1988), they see a more favorable picture of their own household labor contributions. Thus, perceptions of fairness can go hand in hand with very different patterns of division of household labor.

The effect of the division of household labor could interact with gender role attitudes. Traditional attitudes interacted positively with the traditional pattern of household division of labor (i.e., the wife's major responsibility for housework) on both spouses' marital satisfaction (Table 2). Wives whose husbands had traditional attitudes toward men's provider role had higher marital satisfaction when the actual division of household labor was also traditional. The wife's traditional attitudes toward women's employment also positively interacted with the traditional household division of labor in association with both spouses' marital satisfaction.

Measures of perceived division of household labor could have different effects on marital satisfaction from measures of actual division of household labor. Using exchange theory perspectives, I tested whether the association of housework allocation with marital satisfaction is linear or curvilinear: I found that measures of perceived division of housework were linearly related. The perception of being underbenefited was related to wife's lower marital satisfaction (Table 4): wives were less satisfied when they perceived that they were doing more than a fair share of housework. Husband's marital satisfac-

TABLE 4. STANDARDIZED REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS OF PERCEIVED HOUSEHOLD DIVISION OF LABOR ON MARITAL SATISFACTION: TEST OF LINEAR AND CURVILINEAR MODELS

	Husband's Marital Satisfaction ^a					
	Linear			Curvilinear		
	All	Employed	House-wives	All	Employed	House-wives
<i>Division of household labor:</i>						
Interval:	-.03	-.15	-.04			
Dichotomized:						
Underbenefited				-.02	-.33*	-.07
Overbenefited				-.05	-.43**	-.01
N	282	51	231	282	51	231
	Wife's Marital Satisfaction ^a					
	Linear			Curvilinear		
	All	Employed	House-wives	All	Employed	House-wives
<i>Division of household labor:</i>						
Interval:	.14*	.30*	.12 ⁺			
Dichotomized:						
Underbenefited				-.10 ⁺	-.27	-.10
Overbenefited				.30	.00	-.01
N	284	53	231	284	53	231

⁺.05 < p < .10 *p < .05 **p < .01

^aFull models include husband's education, wife's education for the models concerning the wife, number of children, wife's employment, wife's income, husband's income, husband's hours of housework, wife's hours of housework, the division of household labor, and husband's and wife's gender role attitudes—regarding women's employment, men's provider role, nontraditional family life, and sharing of housework.

tion was not associated with measures of perceived housework allocation (Table 4) — either linearly or curvilinearly — except among the husbands of employed wives (Table 4). Husbands of employed wives were the most satisfied when they perceived their share of housework as fair (Table 4), as found in the United States (Keith and Schafer 1987).

When I tested the additive curvilinear effects of perceived fairness, dummy variables of perceived fairness were not significant in adding to the positive effects of actual sharing of household labor, except for couples having employed wives. Couples with employed wives had higher marital satisfaction when they perceived that housework was shared fairly than when they perceived housework allocation was unequal, net of effects of actual division of household labor.

When I tested the additive linear effect of the measure of perception about housework in the multiple regression model, R square increases and the coefficients of added measures of perception were not significant, except for housewives. Marital satisfaction of housewives increased linearly when they perceived themselves as being overbenefited in housework allocation, which was consistent with the findings in the United States (Yogev and Brett 1985), but the statistical significance was weak (Less than .10; Table 5). Thus, the actual division of household labor is more closely related to husband's and wife's marital satisfaction than is the perceived division of household labor.

Net of the division of household labor pattern, total hours spent on housework was related to marital satisfaction (Table 1). When wives spent much time on housework, they were less satisfied with marriage, and husbands were also less satisfied to a lesser degree (Table 1). Husband's total amount of time spent on housework was not related either to wife's or husband's marital satisfaction (Table 1). Among couples with employed wives, total hours of housework were not correlated with their marital satisfaction (Table 3). For employed wives who spent less time on housework than housewives (at .001 significance level), the actual share of housework was more important for their marital satisfaction than time spent on housework.

Results of the analysis of factors related to housework and child care suggest that defining housework and child care as largely the wife's responsibility is negatively related to both spouses' marital satisfaction. Sharing housework and child care is much more important to marital satisfaction of employed wives, who also share provider roles, than to that of housewives (Table 3). Because wives who are not employed full-time still believe that housework and child care are their responsibilities, a relatively unequal sharing in the division of household labor did not detract from housewife's marital satisfaction as much as long hours of housework did (Table 3).

CONCLUSION

In sum, the above findings suggest that Korean marriages have many similarities with American marriages. Husband's higher educational level and husband's and wife's combined high income level were positively associated with both spouses' marital satisfaction. Traditional attitudes toward women's employment, men's provider role, and nontraditional family life were associated with wife's higher marital satisfaction. In this traditional attitudinal context, wife's employment was related to low marital satisfaction for both spouses. However, husband's traditional attitudes toward sharing of housework had negative effects on both spouses' marital satisfaction, although wife's traditional attitudes toward sharing housework still had a positive effect on their marital satisfaction. Reflecting changing expectations toward sharing of housework, the husband's increased share of housework and child care was positively related to both spouses' marital satisfaction.

Results of the model suggest that the base of marital satisfaction in Korea has become diverse; while it is not based on segregation of roles, it is also not based on equal sharing of marital roles. Wives were more satisfied when they had help from the husband in housework and husbands were more satisfied when they had financial help from the wife. A subsidiary contribution from the wife in supporting the family, rather than explicit sharing of the provider role, had positive effects on husband's marital satisfaction. As suggested in the study of American couples (Hiller and Philliber 1986), the husband's and the wife's participation in tasks traditionally defined as belonging to the other spouse was more satisfying.

Marital satisfaction of Korean couples was positively influenced by both traditional and nontraditional factors, indicating that marriage and family patterns are in flux. In the process of transition, there is no simple dominant pattern of association with marital satisfaction; rather, a traditional tendency in the sexual division of labor had positive and sometimes negative effects on marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction in Korean marriages, as is American marriages, seems to be based on a diversity of factors.

Readers should also note that this study is based on a one-time survey and that causal assumptions about the associations could be misleading. For example, the wife's employment may lead to low marital satisfaction, but it is also possible that wives who were not satisfied with marriage might seek employment. Thus, the explanations of the associations in this study, as with other one-time research, are speculative.

Although the model of this study explained about 19 and 24 percent of the variance for husbands and wives respectively in marital satisfaction, a large

proportion of variance remained unexplained. While there are certainly measurement errors, there are also many unmeasured variables that are unrelated to the family, such as working conditions, or idiosyncratic ones, such as personality.

Given these limitations, this study provides an opportunity to examine Korean family from a cross-cultural perspective, although the comparison of the level of marital satisfaction between two countries can only be relative (remember that the measurement of marital satisfaction is based on the different reference framework of expectations for the marital relationship). Some findings, such as those about wife's employment, converge with those from an earlier period of American marriage (Nye 1974; Waite 1981); some findings, such as those concerned with gender role attitudes and their interaction effects, are similar to those from the recent period of American marriages (Lye and Biblarz 1990).

This change in norms and the bases of marital satisfaction implies possible future changes in marital stability in Korea, as in the contemporary United States. In the United States, about two-thirds of new marriages may end in divorce or separation (Martin and Bumpass 1989). Increased emphasis on emotional support and individual gratification and the weakening of barriers to divorce are often suggested as reasons for the high divorce rate (Goode 1963; Gove *et al.* 1990; Heaton and Albrecht 1991). Marriage becomes just one source of individual gratification, not the sole source, and marital satisfaction is then based on diverse adult roles depending on diverse expectations (Gove *et al.* 1990). Considering the convergence of Korean family patterns with American ones, the changing bases of marital satisfaction toward gender roles and intimate relationships in Korean marriage lead me to predict an increase in divorce rates in Korea. In fact, divorce rates in Korea recently have begun to rise, after a long period of stagnation (about 11 percent of marriages ended in divorce in 1986, compared to about 5 percent in 1975; Han'guk Yösong Munjae Kaebal Yön'guso 1991, p. 100). Thus, further research on the relationship of marital satisfaction to divorce is needed.

APPENDIX

Gender Role Attitudes

1) Attitudes toward women's labor force participation:

1. Mothers who work full-time when their youngest child is under age 5.
2. Mothers who work part-time when their youngest child is under age 5.
3. Children under three years old being cared for all day in a day care center.

4. A married woman earning money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her.
Cronbach's alphas were .76 for husbands and .60 for wives. Means were 15.8 for husbands and 13.6 for wives.
- 2) Attitudes toward men's provider role:
 1. It is much better for everyone if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and the family.
 2. It is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself.
The scale had relatively high Cronbach's alphas: .74 for husbands and .71 for wives. Means of the scale were 7.9 for husbands and 7.3 for wives.
- 3) Attitudes toward nontraditional family life:
 1. It is all right for an unmarried couple to live together as long as they have plans to marry.
 2. It is all right for an unmarried couple to live together even if they have no interest in considering marriage.
 3. Women who have a child without getting married.
Cronbach's alphas of the scale were .57 for husbands and .73 for wives. Means were 12.3 for husbands and 12.5 for wives.
- 4) Attitude toward equal sharing of housework was assessed by a single item, which was not loaded with any other factor. The item asked whether respondents strongly agreed or strongly disagreed on the question of whether, if a husband and a wife both work full-time, they should share household tasks equally. Means were 2.61 for husbands and 1.95 for wives. Higher scores represent the traditional attitude.

Allocation of Housework and Child Care

Items for household task and child care were as follows:

1. Repairing things around the house.
2. Doing the dishes.
3. Cooking the meals.
4. Vacuuming the carpets.
5. Doing the laundry.
6. Making arrangements to have repairs done around the house.
7. Making complaints to the landlord/lady.
8. Cleaning the bathroom.
9. Taking out the trash.
10. Doing the grocery shopping.
11. Taking care of the plants and lawn.
12. Ironing clothes.

13. Fixing a treat for company.
14. Punishing the child.
15. Taking the children to their activities and appointments.
16. Playing with the child.
17. Buying large items for the family.

Reliability in Cronbach's alpha was .81 for husbands and .80 for wives.

Marital Satisfaction

Items were as follows:

1. Taking things all together, how would you describe your marriage?
2. In general, how well does your marriage meet your needs?
3. In general, to what extent has your marriage met your original expectation?
4. To what extent has your relationship with the spouse met your original expectations?
5. How well does your spouse meet your economic needs?
6. How well does your spouse meet your emotional needs?
7. How good is your relationship compared to most?
8. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?
9. How many problems are there in your relationship related to the spouse?
10. How much do you love your spouse?

Reliability testing by Cronbach's alpha showed that the marital satisfaction scale was highly reliable: .87 for both husbands and wives. Mean scores were 36.41 for husbands and 33.66 for wives.

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