

일본과 한국 대학생의 생활력에 관한 국제비교

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University Students' Life Skill Comparison in Japan and Korea

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Abstract

This study held two objectives. One was to clarify life skill differences between Japanese and Korean university students. The other was to gain suggestions for further development of Japanese and Korean home economics education. A survey on life skills was delivered to university students in Japan and Korea in 2008. The survey included 82 life skills. The participants were asked the same three questions for each life skill: if the life skill was one a participant was already practicing ("Practice"), if the life skill was one the participant wanted to learn more to improve his/her life ("To be improved"), and if the life skill was one the participant expected people should learn in Home Economics ("Expectation").

The results did not show outstanding differences with the "Practice" rates between Japan and Korea, but characterized strength and weakness of each country's life skill "Practice." Both Japanese and Korean participants mainly showed a greater desire to improve the life skills they indicated low "Practice" for. As well, the Korean participants revealed significantly lower "Expectation" to learn most of the life skills.

As a result, this study created several implications for Japanese and Korean home economics education. For example, one implication is necessity to increase substantively enough class hours for all school levels. Another is promoting the social understanding for the meaningfulness of home economics education.

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I. Introduction

The home economics class hours in Japan were reduced when the course of study was revised in 1998 and 1999. There is concern if children can still create truly affluent lives as human beings with these limited home economics class hours. Fundamentally, “home economics undertakes development of comprehensive knowledge that we need for our life as the foundation of “Zest of Living” (Naito, 2000, p.20). However, it is unsure that children, given only the limited home economics class hours, can efficiently develop in order to manage their current and future lives, and further develop enough life skills to pursue a better life.

As well, the situation of home economics education in some countries reports that the content of home economics education recognized in Japan is not necessarily taught under “Home Economics”¹⁾. However, Korea has mandatory home economics education at the elementary school, junior high school and senior high school levels as Japan does. Are there differences between Japan and Korea in terms of life skills when those countries have similar home economics education? What kind of life skills do people have in both countries where they have already finished their elementary, junior high and senior high school education? What life skills are the ones to be improved in each country?

Therefore, one of this paper’s research objectives was to clarify differences of high school graduates’ life skills between Japan and Korea in order to suggest what life skills need to be improved on in each country. The other objective was to gain some directions for further

development of home economics education in Japan and Korea.

II. Review of Literature

1. Home Economics and Technology & Home Economics in Japan and Korea

Table 1 shows the trend of Japanese required home economics class hour change since the 1989 course of study where the complete co-ed home economics education started. The 1989 course study (Ministry of Education, 1989) allotted a yearly offering of 70 class hours for elementary school ‘Home Economics’ for grade 5 and 6 respectively, and allowed junior high school ‘Technology and Home Economics’ to offer 70 class hours or more for each junior high school year. And, whichever subject was chosen, students received 4 credits, which were 140 class hours a year in total (1 credit is 35 class hours a year), for their senior high school graduation. This was because all the three subjects for the senior high school level, ‘General Home Economics,’ ‘Life Technology’ and ‘General Life,’ were 4-credit subjects. This abundance of class hours disappeared when the 1998 and 1999 course of study was put into practice, as illustrated in Table 1.

Korean home economics education seems to have been suffering from a similar situation. Table 2 shows the trend of Korea’s required home economics class hour change since the 5th Curriculum. The 5th Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1987) allowed the elementary school subject

Table 1: Trend of Japanese required home economics class hour change

Levels & Subjects	Grades	1989 Course of Study	1998 & 1999 Course of Study	2008 & 2009 Course of Study
Elementary School 'Home Economics'	Gr. 5	70	60	60
	Gr. 6	70	55	55
Junior High School 'Technology & Home Economics'	1st year	70	70	70
	2nd year	70	70	70
	3rd year	70 - 105	35	35
Senior High School 'Home Economics'	One of the three subjects during the senior high education	'General Home Economics' (4 credits=140) 'General Home Life' (4 credits=140) 'Home Life Skills' (4 credits=140)	'Basic Home Economics' (2 credits=70) 'Comprehensive Home Economics' (4 credits=140) 'Home Life Skills' (4 credits=140)	'Basic Home Economics' (2 credits=70) 'Comprehensive Home Economics' (4 credits=140) 'Life Design' (4 credits=140)

'Practical Arts' to have 68 class hours a year for each of the 4th and 5th grade, and 102 hours for the 6th grade. The junior high school subject 'Technology & Home Economics' had 3 credits(102 class hours a year) for the 1st year junior high, and 4 to 6 credits(136 to 204 class hours a year) for the 2nd year junior high. The senior high school 'Home Economics' had even 8 credits(272 class hours a year)(Ministry of Education, 1988). However, home economics education was required only for girls in junior and senior high schools. Through the 6th Curriculum(Ministry of Education, 1992), home economics education became co-ed, but the total home economics

class hours were drastically reduced, especially with the 7th Curriculum. The 7th Curriculum(Ministry of Education, 1997) offers 'Practical Arts' for 68 class hours a year in each of the 5th and 6th grade. The junior high school 'Technology & Home Economics has 2 credits(68 class hours a year) for the 1st year junior high, 3 credits(102 class hours a year) for each of the 2nd and 3rd year junior high. 'Technology & Home Economics' has extended to the 1st year senior high as a required subject, but has only 3 credits(102 class hours a year).

Most university students, enrolled at the time when this study started in 2005, were high school graduates who

Table 2: Trend of Korean required home economics class hour change

Levels & Subjects	5th Curriculum (1987&1988)	6th Curriculum (1992)	7th Curriculum (1997)
Elementary School	'Practical Arts' Gr. 4: 68 Gr. 5: 68 Gr. 6: 68	'Practical Arts' Gr. 3: 34 Gr. 4: 34 Gr. 5: 34 Gr. 6: 34	'Practical Arts' Gr. 5: 68 Gr. 6: 68
Junior High School	'Technology & Home Economics' 1st year: 3 credits=102 2nd year: 4 to 6 credits =136 to 204	'Home Economics' 1st year: 2 credits=68 2nd year: 1 credits=34 3rd year: 1 credits=34	'Technology & Home Economics' 1st year: 2 credits=68 2nd year: 3 credits=102 3rd year: 3 credits=102
Senior High School	'Home Economics' (8 credits=272)	'Home Economics' (8 credits=272)	'Technology & Home Economics' (3 credits=102)

studied under the 1989 course of study in Japan and the 7th curriculum in Korea. The Japanese 1989 course of study offered a minimum of 490 class hours for Home Economics and Technology & Home Economics. Korea had 510 class hours for Home Economics and Technology & Home Economics. At a glance, it seems that Korea had more class hours for Home Economics and Technology & Home Economics through out all the school levels. However, there is a report saying that Korean ‘Technology & Home Economics put more emphasis on technology education’ (Makino, 2005, p.79).

It will be left for another paper to conduct a detail curriculum analysis. For this paper, Table 3 and 4 provide a brief outlook of Home Economics and Technology & Home Economics of the Japanese 1989 course of study and the Korean 7th Curriculum. Table 3 illustrates them in content of the 1989 course of study Home Economics and Technology & Home Economics in Japan. For the senior high school level, the ‘General Home Economics’ content is indicated in Table 3, due to the fact that it was the most chosen subject under the 1989 course of study. Table 4 offers the main content of the 7th Curriculum Home Economics and Technology & Home Economics in Korea. The content related to technology education is highlighted in grey. As for home economics education content, Japan and Korea both teach about families, food, clothing,

housing and resource management. With these tables, it is certain that Korea includes more technology-related content than Japan. Japan does not embrace technology content as a required element at the elementary school level nor at the senior high school levels, but only at the junior high school level. On the contrary, about a half of the Korean 7th Curriculum Technology & Home Economics is related to technology education. This fact leads to the question if the technology emphasis in Korea would create obvious life skill differences between Japan and Korea.

2. Life Skills

The word, ‘life skills,’ originates in the health education field. Aoki (2007) points out two main stream ‘life skill’ origins that were introduced to Japan. One is a health education program called “Know Your Body” created by the American Health Foundation. “Know Your Body” is a comprehensive, skill-based health promotion program in order to empower students with the knowledge, attitude, skills and experience necessary to practice positive health behaviors (Resnicow, Cross & Wynder, 1993, p.189). The other main stream is the World Health Organization’s project, “Life skills education in schools.” WHO defines

Table 3: Main contents of the 1989 course of study home economics subjects in Japan

Elementary School ‘Home Economics’	Junior High School ‘Technology & Home Economics’	Senior High School ‘General Home Economics’
Grade 5 A. Clothing B. Food C. Family Life and Housing	A. Woodwork B. Electricity C. Metalwork D. Machinery E. Cultivation F. Basic Information Technology	(1) Family and family life (2) Household management and consumption (3) Planning of clothing and clothes making (4) Planning for eating and cooking (5) Planning housing and house organization (6) Child rearing and parenting roles (7) Home projects and family life club activities
Grade 6 A. Clothing B. Food C. Family Life and Housing	G. Family Life H. Food, I. Clothing J. Housing K. Child rearing	

Table 4: Main contents of the 7th Curriculum home economics subjects in Korea

Elementary School 'Practical Arts'	Junior High School 'Technology & Home Economics'	Senior High School 'Technology & Home Economics'
<p>Grade 5</p> <p>A. Understanding Families & Work -Family Life & Me</p> <p>B. Living Arts -Children's Nutrition & Meals -Making Simple Articles for Daily use -Dealing with Electric Tools & Making Electric Kits -Growing Flowers & Vegetables -Dealing with Computers</p> <p>C. Life Resources & Environmental Management -Management of Allowance -Cleaning up the Surroundings</p> <p>Grade 6</p> <p>A. Understanding Families & Work -World of Work and Jobs</p> <p>B. Living Arts -Simple Cooking -Dealing with a Sewing Machine -Making Wooded Articles -Growing Animals -Utilization of Computers</p> <p>C. Life Resources & Environmental Management -Resource Utilization -Beautifying Residential Environment</p>	<p>1st Year</p> <p>A. Understanding Families & Work -Understanding Me & Family</p> <p>B. Living Arts -Nutrition & Meals for Adolescents -Technological Development & Future -Basic Drawing -Computer & Processing Information</p> <p>2nd Year</p> <p>B. Living Arts -Purchase & Management of Clothing -Understanding Machinery -Usage of Materials</p> <p>C. Life Resources & Environmental Management -Resources Management & Environment</p> <p>3rd Year</p> <p>A. Understanding Families & Work -Industry & Career</p> <p>B. Living Arts -Management of Family Meals -Electricity & Electric Technology</p> <p>C. Life Resources & Environmental Management -Family Life & Housing</p>	<p>1st Year</p> <p>A. Understanding Families & Work -Family Life Planning</p> <p>B. Living Arts -Practice of Family Life -Energy & Transportation Technology -Basis Construction Technology</p>

life skills as “abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable in individuals to deal effectively with the demands and changes of every day life”(WHO, 1997, p.1). However, these life skills were developed in the health education field, and differ from life skills that home economics education focuses on. According to Aoki(2007), life skills in home economics are skills to identify new challenges to cope with in our life and improve and enhance our life with concrete solutions by looking into our life structure(p.11). She also mentions that those skills are to create personal lives as well as society(p.11). There related concepts have been also discussed in many publications of the Japanese home economics education field. Naito(2000) writes that home economics is responsible for the development of necessary integral

knowledge for life(p.20). Tanaka(2000) notes that through home economics education we want to develop an ability to support inter dependently as well as ability to practice independent life(p.22). Saito(2000) says that skills home economics should nurture are skills for individuals, whether men or women, to live their lives independently(p.37). There are other definitions for life skills, such as “independent ability of life”(Yamada & Takagi, 1994), “not only knowledge and techniques, but also integrated skills related to life”(Nakata, Onishi & Saito, 2005), “ability to live”(Torii et al., 2009).

Learning from these concepts of life skills, this study defined life skills as necessary skills for individuals to live independently and interdependently, as well as to create better personal and family lives and society for now and

the future. The word, ‘skills,’ includes attitude, knowledge and practical techniques. This study also suggests that home economics education contributes to the development of such life skills.

III. Research Method

Therefore, a questionnaire was created to conduct a survey on life skills. The life skills included in the original questionnaire were brought from an American home economics textbook “Skills for Life.”²⁾ There as on to have referred to “Skills for Life” was that its title itself stood for life skills. It was also found that the life skills defined in this study conform to the elements in “Skills for Life.” It encompasses abroad range of life skills as it is designed to help students achieve success for now and the future(Couch, 2000, p.xxxi). It contains the same elements the Japanese 1989 course of study home economics taught, as well as some elements that can be expanded on in future home economics education, such as

career planning, health and self-concept. In order to make a questionnaire, first overlaps of the “Skills for Life” content and the Japanese 1989 course of study home economics education content were extracted. Then, some life skills in the areas of career planning, health and self-concept from “Skills for Life” were brought back into the questionnaire. A pre-study was conducted with 47 participants to define life skills for the questionnaire in 2005. A few life skills were added because of the pre-study results. So the original questionnaire had 143 life skills. They included attitude, knowledge and practical techniques. Another pre-study was conducted in 2007 by delivering the questionnaire to 560 participants in Japan. It was found that the 143 were too many to answer. Then, an attempt was made to leave only critically necessary life skills. The 143 life skills were modified to 82 life skills.

The finalized questionnaire included 82 life skills from 13 categories; Decision making and resource management, Consumerism and Economics, Environment and natural resources, Career planning, Health management, Self-concept, Family, Human relations, Citizenship, Child rearing, Clothing, Foods and Housing. The 13 categories were put into three broad groups; “Event”, “Human” and

Table 5: Delivered questionnaire numbers, effective collected questionnaire numbers and rates and participants' gender

Country	Delivered number	Effective collection number	Effective collection rate	Males	Females	Gender N.A.
Japan	500	272	54.4%	107	163	2
Korea	600	589	98.2%	290	297	2

(N)

Table 6: Participants' majors at their universities

Country	Education	Life Science	Other Arts	Other Sciences	Total
Japan	132	102	18	20	272
Korea	173	0	163	253	589

(N)

Table 7: Japanese and Korean University Students' Life Skill Comparison in Event Group

Life skills		Practice			To be improved			Expectation		
		Ja ¹⁾	Ko ²⁾		Ja	Ko		Ja	Ko	
1. Decision making and resource management										
JK	Planning activities and carrying out the plans	50.4	34.1	***	43.4	51.1	*	39.0	21.9	***
JK	Using human resources around you (ex. Family, friends etc.)	47.1	40.4		48.2	44.3		38.6	19.5	***
JK	Using social services (ex. income assistance, health insurance etc.)	17.6	13.4		59.6	45.5	***	63.6	47.4	***
J	Making effective decisions	71.3	47.5	***	33.8	41.4	*	17.6	15.4	
K	Identifying resources (ex. time, money etc.)	38.2	36.2		50.2	47.2		43.8	22.2	***
S	Understanding wants and values effect your decisions	66.5	65.2		38.2	28.7	**	20.6	10.5	***
Average 1		48.5	39.5		45.6	43.0		37.2	22.8	***
2. Consumerism and Economics										
JK	Making appropriate choices in obtaining products and services	49.3	42.3		43.4	46.2		46.0	16.1	***
J	Understanding different kinds of illegal business practices and their characteristics	29.0	16.5	***	52.6	44.3	*	66.9	45.3	***
J	Using financial services (ex. Banks, credit cards etc.) effectively	22.4	21.6		58.8	46.7	**	60.7	38.0	***
K	Making an effective and fair complaint with your unsatisfactory purchase	25.7	30.6		52.6	45.0	*	48.2	31.2	***
Average 2		31.6	27.8		51.9	45.6	***	55.5	32.7	***
3. Environment and natural resources										
JK	Identifying the limitation of natural resources	41.2	59.6	***	40.8	28.5	***	54.0	19.4	***
JK	Practicing recycling and energy saving	38.6	46.3	*	43.8	41.4		59.6	21.2	***
Average 3		39.9	53.0		42.3	35.0	***	56.8	20.3	***
4. Career planning										
J	Identifying family contributions to workplace	36.4	43.1		50.0	41.6	*	47.1	22.6	***
S	Distinguishing among work, job and career	37.1	49.4	**	54.0	39.0	***	35.7	17.0	***
S	Identifying the skills employers want	27.2	37.5	**	64.7	48.4	***	29.4	22.9	*
S	Identifying ways to investigate different job options	31.6	27.7		61.8	56.0		34.6	25.8	**
Average 4		33.1	39.4		57.6	46.3	***	36.7	22.1	***
5. Health management										
JK	Understanding health problems caused by smoking	59.9	69.4	**	21.0	19.4		54.4	19.9	***
JK	Understanding dangers associated with alcohol consumption	57.0	65.9	*	23.9	22.9		54.0	19.0	***
JK	Understanding dangers associated with unsafe sex	52.2	55.5		26.1	26.7		61.0	27.3	***
J	Maintaining physical health	56.6	54.5		47.1	39.4	*	39.3	14.3	***
K	Understanding dangers associated with illegal drugs	55.9	63.2	*	25.4	22.9		57.4	21.2	***
S	Maintaining mental and emotional health	61.0	48.6	**	46.7	44.5		29.8	15.6	***
S	Managing stress	58.1	39.9	***	47.1	48.2		25.4	18.3	*
Average 5		57.2	56.7		33.9	32.0		45.9	19.4	***

1) Ja: Japan 2) Ko: Korea ***: P<0.001 **: P<0.01 *: P<0.05

“Thing.”

A multiple choice questionnaire was used for the survey. The participants were asked the same three questions for each life skill. One was if the life skill was one which the participants assessed they already possessed and were practicing. It was defined as “Practice.” Another question was if the life skill was one which the participants wanted to learn more about in order to improve their life. It was defined as “To be improved.” The other question was if the life skill was one which the participants expected people should learn in Home Economics. It was defined as “Expectation.”

In order to discuss the results by referring to the Japanese and Korean curricula, each life skill was marked by either “J,” “K,” “JK,” “S” or “P” as Table 9 to 21 illustrates. “J” stands for life skills included as required content in the Japanese 1989 course of study home economics. “K” stands for life skills included as required content in the Korean 7th Curriculum home economics. “JK” stands for life skills that are overlaps of the Japanese 1989 course of study home economics and the Korean 7th Curriculum home economics. “S” stands for life skills from “Skills for Life.” “P” stands for life skills from the pre-study.

The questionnaire sheets were delivered to the participants through their university instructors before the classes, and collected at the following week classes. The Japanese participants were 272 university students: 143 from the Chubu region and the rest of 129 from other regions in Japan. They were either 3rd or 4th year university students and finished their school education under the 1989 course of study. The participants in Korea were 589 university students in Daegu and Kyungu in Korea. They were either 3rd or 4th year university students and had their school education under the 7th curriculum.

The survey was undertaken in March, October,

November and December, 2008 in Japan, and October and November, 2008 in Korea. Table 5 shows delivered questionnaire numbers, effective collected questionnaire numbers and rates and participants’ gender. Table 6 provides the Participants’ majors at their universities.

The application software SPSS Basic version 16 was used to conduct the statistical analysis. There was no significant difference between the male and female participants with a t-test on the population mean value of the two gender groups in either country. Therefore, this paper only analyzed and discussed differences between Japan and Korea.

The researchers are aware of the limit in causal explanation because the two countries have not only curriculum differences, but cultural differences. Those embedded differences can influence people’s life skills in each country. However, a comparative study still brings some aspects for each country to learn from each other for further improvement. Therefore, this study attempted to emboss some characteristics of Japanese and Korean participants’ life skill differences.

IV. Findings and Discussion

1. Life skills in “Practice”

First, a “Yes” to “Practice” rate of each of the 82 life skills was accounted for, and a chi-square test was applied to the “Practice” rates in order to compare Japan with Korea. There were twenty nine life skills out of the 82 that Japan was significantly higher in as compared to Korea. On the contrary, Korea showed a significantly higher difference with twenty one life skills out of the 82 (Table 7·8·9). Japan had slightly more life skills with significantly higher differences than Korea. There was not

an outstanding difference with the “Practice” rates between Japan and Korea. Next, the Japanese average “Practice” percentage of each of the 13 categories was compared to the Korean average. The top and bottom three “Practice”

Table 8: Japanese and Korean University Students’ Life Skill Comparison in Human Group

Life skills		Practice			To be improved			Expectation		
		Ja ¹⁾	Ko ²⁾		Ja	Ko		Ja	Ko	
(%)										
6. Self concept										
JK	Understanding physical and mental development during Adolescence	48.9	56.2	*	35.3	27.7	*	42.6	22.2	***
K	Identifying your uniqueness as an individual	62.1	56.2		33.1	34.3		22.1	14.6	**
S	Understanding and accepting yourself	65.4	53.7	**	43.4	39.6		16.9	11.4	*
S	Improving your self-concept	58.1	48.7	*	45.4	41.8		16.2	11.7	
Average 6		58.6	53.7		39.3	35.9	*	24.5	15.0	***
7. Family										
JK	Building positive relationship with family	80.1	66.9	***	29.4	29.0		28.3	11.4	***
JK	Understanding meaning and functions of family	53.7	57.4		32.7	28.7		50.7	19.5	***
K	Identifying different family forms	62.5	75.9	***	26.5	16.6	**	51.1	12.7	***
K	Understanding each family has different customs, culture, religions	52.6	69.4	***	31.6	19.7	***	48.5	14.3	***
K	Understanding the necessity of sharing values, finance, family planning before marriage	36.8	44.8	*	61.0	44.7	***	34.2	19.4	***
S	Dealing with family crises when they come	34.2	45.2	**	56.6	43.5	***	32.4	17.3	***
Average 7		53.3	59.9		39.6	30.4	***	40.9	15.8	***
8. Human relations										
JK	Building relationship with elderly people	55.1	44.3	**	46.3	40.7		32.7	19.2	***
J	Communicating effectively to take care of elderly people	25.0	18.3	*	55.9	49.7		54.0	37.2	***
K	Communicating effectively	63.6	41.1	***	44.5	49.7		17.3	16.3	
S	Understanding the relationship between communication and culture	40.1	59.8	***	58.1	31.6	***	28.7	16.3	***
S	Making and keeping friends	77.9	68.9	**	29.0	27.8	*	12.1	8.8	
S	Relating to people of different gender	65.1	52.0	***	40.8	39.7		14.3	13.8	
S	Resolving conflicts with others	54.0	25.3	***	52.9	60.8	*	19.1	21.2	
Average 8		54.4	44.2		46.8	42.9	**	25.5	19.0	***
9. Citizenship										
K	Accepting personal responsibility for being a good community citizen	29.4	32.6		55.9	50.8		43.8	22.1	***
S	Identifying that poverty, drugs and social insecurity cause crime and violence	39.3	51.3	**	43.4	32.3	**	49.6	24.1	***
Average 9		34.4	42.0		49.7	41.6	***	46.7	23.1	***

1) Ja: Japan 2) Ko: Korea ***: P<0.001 **: P<0.01 *: P<0.05

Table 8: 표 연결

Life skills		Practice			To be improved			Expectation		
		Ja ¹⁾	Ko ²⁾		Ja	Ko		Ja	Ko	
10. Child rearing										
JK	Understanding challenges of parenting	27.6	35.8	*	63.2	42.3	***	47.8	29.0	***
JK	Understanding the importance of health management for having children	30.1	49.9	***	52.9	30.1	***	55.1	28.9	***
JK	Understanding child development	27.6	22.2		50.0	47.9		58.5	38.0	***
JK	Caring for children	32.7	22.1	**	57.4	49.9	*	47.1	30.7	***
J	Understanding children's learning through play	47.8	34.1	***	42.4	46.9		46.0	25.6	***
K	Understanding challenges and dangers in teen parenthood	36.4	52.0	***	37.9	25.6	***	64.2	31.7	***
S	Identifying special needs for children with disabilities	18.4	19.2		59.9	45.3	***	57.4	42.4	***
S	Identifying special needs for children who are adopted	11.0	18.8	**	64.7	51.1	***	37.9	34.6	
S	Identifying special needs for children of single parents	19.9	19.9		62.9	52.0	**	40.1	34.5	
S	Identifying special needs for children of teen parents	14.0	17.8		65.4	49.2	***	37.5	38.9	
S	Identifying special needs for children who are abused	13.2	26.1	***	64.0	41.8	***	52.2	38.5	***
Average 10		25.3	28.9		56.4	43.8	***	49.4	33.9	***

1) Ja: Japan 2) Ko: Korea ***: P<0.001 **: P<0.01 *: P<0.05

categories were examined. It was not possible to look into details of all the categories in this paper due to the space limitation. With the same reason, the top and bottom three categories of “To be improved” and “Expectation” were analyzed in the following sections.

The Japanese highest “Practice” category was “Self-concept” (58.6%). The second was “Health management” (57.2%) and third was “Human relations” (54.4%). All of them were less than 60%, even though they were the top three. The Japanese lowest “Practice” category was “Child rearing” (25.3%). The second lowest was “Consumerism and economics” (31.6%) and third lowest was “Career planning” (33.1%).

The Korean highest “Practice” category was “Family” (59.9%). The second was “Health management” (56.7%) and third was “Self-concept” (53.7%). As the same as the

Japanese top three, all of them were less than 60 %, even though they were the top three. The Korean lowest “Practice” category was “Consumerism and economics” (27.8%), second from the bottom was “Foods” (28.3%), and third from the bottom was “Child rearing” (28.9%).

Both Japanese and Korean “Self-concept” “Practice” rates were in the top three. As Table 8 shows, the Korean “Practice” percentage of “Understanding physical and mental development during Adolescence” was significantly higher than the Japanese (P<0.05). This was understandable because this life skill was included in Korean home economics. However, Japanese home economics embraced it as well. This topic needs to be improved in Japanese home economics. Japan was significantly higher in “Understanding and accepting yourself” and “Improving your self-concept.” They were from “Skill for Life.” It is

Table 9: Japanese and Korean University Students' Life Skill Comparison in Thing Group

(%)

Life skills		Practice			To be improved			Expectation		
		Ja ¹⁾	Ko ²⁾		Ja	Ko		Ja	Ko	
11. Clothing										
JK	Identifying functions of clothing	50.7	46.3		30.1	39.9	**	60.7	19.7	***
JK	Planning and building a personal wardrobe	60.3	48.4	**	37.1	39.9		32.7	18.0	***
JK	Understanding that style, colour, line and fabric of your clothing affect your appearance	58.1	37.4	***	40.4	43.8		33.8	26.5	*
JK	Understanding that culture and tradition have an influence on clothing	33.5	29.7		39.3	48.0	*	52.2	29.5	***
JK	Making satisfying clothing choices	74.6	73.7		26.5	23.9		27.9	9.8	***
JK	Using garment label information to select clothes	37.9	41.9		38.2	42.8		66.2	24.1	***
JK	Cleaning clothes following the care instructions	36.8	44.3	*	40.1	39.6		68.8	24.4	***
JK	Repairing clothes (ex. Reattaching buttons, hemming, repairing rips etc.)	42.6	36.3		37.5	38.9		66.2	32.3	***
JK	Ironing clothes appropriately	50.4	50.4		29.4	35.5		62.5	20.4	***
J	Using a sewing machine	38.2	15.4	***	34.6	34.6		66.5	53.5	***
S	Taking care of your appearance	71.0	63.2	*	33.5	32.8		23.9	9.2	***
Average 11		50.4	44.3		35.2	38.2	*	51.0	24.3	***
12. Foods										
JK	Recognition of nutrition for a healthy body	42.6	41.3		42.6	42.3		66.5	25.0	***
JK	Understanding the functions of meals	48.5	53.7		39.3	35.8		64.3	16.1	***
JK	Identifying merits and demerits of food additives	32.4	24.6	*	47.1	45.0		72.4	39.7	***
JK	Using food label information to select food	32.7	24.4	*	47.1	47.0		68.4	38.2	***
JK	Applying sanitation in cooking	37.1	31.2		51.8	45.3		62.9	32.9	***
JK	Applying kitchen safety	44.5	36.7	*	44.1	50.6		61.4	21.2	***
JK	Preparing healthy food	35.3	25.5	**	56.2	48.6		57.0	34.8	***
JK	Setting the table matching to the cultural cuisine	22.8	16.0	*	52.2	46.3		55.1	44.7	**
JK	Following table manners appropriate for one's culture	23.2	21.2		55.9	45.2	**	54.8	39.2	***
S	Preparing nutritious snacks	29.4	23.9		50.7	46.5		49.3	37.2	**
P	Identifying merits and demerits of supplements	29.4	29.0		51.5	45.5		66.9	32.1	***
P	Cooking regional or cultural-specific food	22.8	12.4	***	58.1	50.1	*	54.4	41.8	**
Average 12		33.4	28.3		49.7	45.7		61.1	33.6	***
13. Housing										
JK	Understanding the functions of a family's home	41.2	55.2	***	36.4	35.0		54.0	14.3	***
JK	Using personal space as well as handling shared space positively	46.0	54.2	*	44.1	38.9		44.1	12.4	***
JK	Cleaning and tidying your living space	53.3	65.7	**	41.9	30.4	**	39.7	11.2	***
JK	Accident prevention and safety management inside the house	41.5	39.9		41.5	46.9		48.5	21.9	***
JK	Preparing for natural disasters	26.1	22.6	*	51.5	53.7		57.4	30.1	***
J	Making living spaces comfortable (ex. Adjusting lighting, room-temperature, air circulation etc.)	55.5	39.2	***	40.1	46.9		43.4	18.8	***
Average 13		43.9	46.1		42.6	42.0		47.9	18.1	***

1) Ja: Japan 2) Ko: Korea ***: P<0.001 **: P<0.01 *: P<0.05

assumed that other education, rather than home economics, helped the Japanese participants' development of these life skills.

"Health management" was also in the top three for both Japan and Korea. Korea showed a significantly higher difference with "Understanding health problems caused by smoking," "Understanding dangers associated with alcohol consumption" and "Understanding dangers associated with illegal drugs" ($P < 0.01$, $P < 0.05$, $P < 0.05$). Again, this was understandable because those life skills were ones the Korean home economics included. However, Japanese home economics encompassed "Understanding health problems caused by smoking" and "Understanding dangers associated with alcohol consumption" as well. These two life skills need to be reinforced in Japan. Japan was significantly higher in mental health life skills such as "Maintaining mental and emotional health" and "Managing stress." These two life skills were from "Skill for Life." It is assumed that the Japanese participants had gained these life skills outside the home economics curriculum.

It was characteristic that the other Japanese top three "Practice" category was "Human relations," which included friendship and communication skills with elderly people. Japan showed a significantly higher difference with all the "Human relations" life skills except "Understanding the relationship between communication and culture." "Family and family life" in the Japanese senior high school home economics taught the content regarding elderly people's life and welfare, including "Building relationship with elderly people" and "Communicating effectively to take care of elderly people." However, the "Communicating effectively to take care of elderly people" rate was as low as 25.0 %. This suggests reinforcement for this life skill. Further, Japanese home economics did not embrace the other life skills in the "Human relations" category. It is assumed that other areas of education assisted those life skills of the Japanese participants. Further, "Understanding

the relationship between communication and culture" was significantly lower than Korea. It was not included in Japanese home economics, but can be developed in the future.

The other Korean top three "Practice" category was "Family." In particular, Korea was significantly higher than Japan with "Identifying different family forms," "Understanding each family has different customs, culture, religions" and "Understanding the necessity of sharing values, finance, family planning before marriage" ($P < 0.001$, $P < 0.001$, $P < 0.05$). This reveals that Korean home economics education gave strong support to the participants' development of these life skills such as "Family Life & Me," "Understanding Me & Family" and "Family Life Planning." Korean "Practice" rate for "Dealing with family crises when they come" was also significantly higher than Japan ($P < 0.01$), although this life skill was from "Skill for Life." But, Korea "was significantly lower than Japan with Building positive relationship with family" ($P < 0.001$). This life skill was in Korean home economics. This indicates a possibility for further reinforcement of this life skill in Korea.

Overall, all the top "Practice" average rates were less than 60%. It is problematic that over 40% of the participants were not practicing these life skills. This implies that both Japan and Korea still need to improve in practice of these life skills.

The "Child rearing" category was in the bottom three "Practice" for both Japan and Korea. The reason why "Child rearing" was one of the lowest categories is assumed that the "Child rearing" category included understanding special needs for children with disabilities, children who are adopted, children of single parents, children of teen parents and children who are abused. These five life skills were from "Skill for Life." As well, most participants in both Japan and Korea were unfamiliar with those special needs children. The other six life skills

were included in at least either Japanese home economics or Korean home economics. There were significant differences between Japan and Korea with some of the skills. However, most of the “Practice” rates were around 30%. It might have been difficult to expect high “Practice” rates in “Child rearing” since the university student participants were not at that stage of life.

“Consumerism and economics” was also in the bottom three “Practice” for both Japan and Korea. Except “Making appropriate choices in obtaining products and services,” the “Practice” rates of the other life skills in this category were around 30% or lower. They were “Understanding different kinds of illegal business practices and their characteristics,” “Using financial services effectively” and “Making an effective and fair complaint with your unsatisfactory purchase.” These skills were included either in Japanese or Korean home economics. Most participants, as university students, might not have practiced those life skills in their daily life. However, they would need those skills for their future life. Both countries have great potential to further develop these life skills.

“Career planning” was in the Japanese bottom three. All the Japanese “Practice” rates in this category were lower than 40%. Even “Identifying family contributions to workplace,” which was included in Japanese home economics, was less than 40%. It could be because the participants were not yet in the workforce. Yet, they need career plans. “Career planning” is an area to be developed further in Japan.

Korea had “Foods” in the bottom three. Nine out of the twelve “Food” skills were included in the Korean as well as Japanese home economics. Especially, Korea showed low “Practice” rates in “Cooking regional or cultural-specific food” (12.4%), “Setting the table matching to the cultural cuisine” (16.0%), and “Following table manners appropriate for one’s culture” (21.2%). It is assumed that this result was caused by the fact that food

culture content was taken away from the Korean home economics textbook when home economics class hours were reduced (Yoo & Lee, 2009).

2. Life skills “To be improved”

As with “Practice,” a “Yes” to “To be improved” rate of each of the 82 life skills was accounted for, and a chi-square test was applied to the “To be improved” rates in order to compare Japan and Korea. Thirty out of the 82 were Japanese “To be improved” life skills with a higher significance and only four out of the 82 were Korean “To be improved” life skills with a higher significance (Table 7·8·9). It means that the Japanese participants were interested in improving more life skills.

Next, the top and bottom three “To be improved” categories were examined. The Japanese highest “To be improved” category was “Career planning” (57.6%). The second was “Child rearing” (56.4%) and third was “Consumerism and economics” (51.9%). Again, as with the “Practice” results, all of them were less than 60 %, even though they were the top three. The Japanese lowest “To be improved” category was “Health management” (33.9%). The second lowest was “Clothing” (35.2%) and third lowest was “Self-concept” (39.3%).

The Korean highest “To be improved” category was “Career planning” (46.3%), which was the same as the Japanese. The second was “Foods” (45.7%) and third was “Consumerism and economics” (45.6%). All of them were less than 50 %, even though they were the top three. The Korean lowest “To be improved” category was “Family” (30.4%), second lowest was “Health management” (32.0%), and third lowest was “Environment and natural resources” (35.0%).

The Japanese top three “To be improved” categories were the same as the Japanese bottom three “Practice”

categories. It can be said that the Japanese participants showed a larger desire to improve those life skills because of their mismanagement. On the contrary, the Japanese high "Practice" categories such as "Health management" and "Self-concept" fell into ones of the lowest "To be improved" categories. It means that they were not so interested in improving those life skills because they were already able to practice them. It was characteristic that Japan had "Clothing" in the bottom three. There were "To be improved" life skills that Japan were significantly lower than Korea in "Clothing" category because the Japanese "Practice" rates of those life skills were significantly higher. Further, it can be also assumed that the result came from the fact that clothing life skills were not so emphasized in the 1989 home economics course of study or in Japanese current daily life.

"Foods" and "Consumerism and economics" were in the Korean top three "To be improved." This is attributed to the Korean low "Practice" rates of those categories. The Korean "Career planning" category average "Practice" rate was 39.4%. It was not as low as the Korean bottom three, but "Career planning" category was Korea's highest "To be improved" category. The Korean participants seemed to be still interested in improving "Career planning" life skills. The Korean high "Practice" rate categories, such as "Family," "Health management" and "Environment and natural resources," showed the lowest "To be improved" rates.

3. Life skill learning "Expectation"

As with "Practice" and "To be improved," a "Yes" to "Expectation" rate of each of the 82 life skills was accounted for, and a chi-square test was applied to the "Expectation" rates in order to compare Japan and Korea. Seventy three out of the 82 life skills were Japanese life

skill learning "Expectation" with a higher significance, and Korea did not show a higher significance with any of the 82 life skills (Table 7·8·9). This result could be partly caused by the Korean participants' university majors. About 40% of the Korean participants majored in sciences. It is assumed that they did not have a great interest in home economics.

Again, the top and bottom three "Expectation" categories were examined. The Japanese highest "Expectation" category was "Foods" (61.1%). The second was "Environment and natural resources" (56.8%) and third was "Consumerism and economics" (55.5%). Again, in common with the "Practice" and "To be improved" results, all of them, except "Food" category, were less than 60%. The Japanese lowest "Expectation" category was "Self-concept" (24.5%). The second lowest was "Human relations" (25.5%) and third lowest was "Career planning" (36.7%).

The Korean highest "Expectation" category was "Child rearing" (33.9%). The second was "Foods" (33.6%) and third was "Consumerism and economics" (32.7%). All of them were less than 40%, even though they were the top three. The Korean lowest "Expectation" category was "Self-concept" (15.0%), second lowest was "Family" (15.8%), and third lowest was "Housing" (18.1%).

Both Japanese and Korean participants showed high "Expectation" in "Foods" and "Consumerism and economics." This must be because foods are traditionally home economics content both in Japan and Korea. As well, recent consumer issues, such as falsifying best-before dates for foods in Japan, and using non-edible additives in foods in Korea, seem to have drawn the participants' high "Expectation" rates.

"Environment and natural resources" was also in the Japanese top three "Expectation." Concern about "Environment and natural resources" has been a recent, great social issue in Japan. Japanese home economics

education started to put more emphasis on this topic with the 1989 home economics course of study.

“Child rearing” was also in the Korean top three “Expectation.” “Child rearing” has been traditionally home economics content in Korea as well as it has less overlaps with other subjects. Further, it was reported that the home economics textbooks the Korean participants used had more pages assigned to child rearing in comparison with other topic areas, and both male and female students showed their interest in studying child rearing (Kim & Chae, 2008).

On the contrary, “Self-concept” was the lowest “Expectation” category for both Japan and Korea. “Self-concept” was also in both Japanese and Korean top three “Practice” categories. Because the participants of both countries showed high “Practice,” it seemed that they had a lower desire to improve and learn in home economics class.

“Human relations” was in the Japanese bottom three. On the other hand, according to the “Human relations” average “To be improved” rates, more than 40 % of both Japanese and Korean participants showed a desire to improve their “Human relations” life skills. But, they did not expect to be taught these skills in home economics. It is assumed that the participants expected other classes, for example “Moral education,” to teach “Human relations” life skills.

Likewise, the Japanese participants’ low expectation to study “Career planning” in home economics can be explained by their expectation toward “Integrated Studies,” which often comprises of career planning content. The senior high school home economics education the Japanese participants attended only taught the relation between family life and work. But, the other skills were not taught in Japanese home economics. This may explain why the participants did not expect home economics to teach the “Career planning” life skills. However, the Japanese

highest “To be improved” category was “Career planning.” This implies possibility to develop “Career planning” contents in Japanese home economics.

Korea revealed low expectation in “Family.” With each “Expectation” percentage of the six life skills in the “Family” category, it is found that all of them were less than 20 %, and significantly lower than Japan. As well, the Korean “Practice” rates of most of the life skills in the “Family” category were significantly higher than the Japanese rates, and the Korean lowest “To be improved” category was “Family.” It can be said that the Korean participants did not show a high desire to improve the “Family” category life skills or learn them in home economics class because they were already able to practice them.

“Housing” was in the Korean bottom three “Expectation.” All of the “Expectation” rates of the six life skills in the “Housing” category were significantly lower than the Japanese rates. The “Housing” life skills could be considered as technology education content since the housing content was taught in Technology & Home Economics. This might have lowered their desire to learn them in home economics.

V. Summary, Conclusions and Implications

The “Practice” results characterized strengths and weaknesses of each country. Japan showed high “Practice” in “Self-concept,” “Health management” and “Human relations.” But, Japan may need to consider strengthening areas such as “Child rearing,” “Consumerism and economics” and “Career planning.” The Korean three highest “Practice” categories were “Family,” “Health

management” and “Self-concept.” On the contrary, the life skills in “Consumerism and economics,” “Foods” and “Child rearing” were ones Korea may need to improve on.

The Japanese top three “To be improved” categories were the same as the Japanese bottom three “Practice” categories. They were “Career planning,” “Child rearing” and “Consumerism and economics.” The Japanese participants showed a larger desire to improve the life skills they had poor “Practice” performance with. As for Korea, “Foods” and “Consumerism and economics” were in the top three “To be improved.” This is also attributed to the Korean low “Practice” rates of those categories. “Career planning” was not one of the lowest “Practice” categories in Korea. Yet, it was one of the Korean top three “To be improved.” The Korean participants seemed to have a great deal of interest in improving their career planning skills. Mainly, both Japanese and Korean participants seemed to desire to improve certain life skills when they were not confident to practice them. Thus, an implication from this result is that life skill development education needs to be offered enough in order to support students’ confidence in practicing the life skills.

As well, Korea had life skills with a significantly lower “Expectation” in all 13 categories. Not many Korean participants expected to learn life skills in home economics. Behind these results, about 40 % of the Korean participants’ university majors were sciences. As well, Korea had ‘Technology & Home Economics,’ in which its emphasis was placed more on technology education, and the senior high school subject ‘Home Economics Science’ is only an elective. Further, “though Home Economics has a long history as a taught subject, it is not so welcomed by schools and society. And the crisis of its being welcome is becoming greater and greater as time goes by” (Yoon, 2005, p.9). The Korean participants’ low “Expectation” unfortunately reveals that they had little

understanding of the meaningfulness of home economics education. Japan also had some categories where low “Expectation” was indicated. Therefore, an implication from this is promoting a social understanding for the meaningfulness of home economics education. Home economics educators, in Japan and Korea, tend to be a minority at school because fewer teachers are allotted to one school as compared to other subject teacher. That is why cooperation is required among home economics educators and related specialists. We, as home economics educators, are obligated at school, in society, and even beyond, to appeal that home economics is a necessary subject to support children’s life skill development and create a better world for the future.

In overall of this comparison study, Japanese participants indicated slightly better results with “Practice,” “To be improved” and “Expectation” as compared to Korean participants. The fact of less home economics class hours in Korea can be one of the reasons for this result. Therefore, it implies that securing a substantive amount of class hours for all school stages is important. The Japanese participants for this study accomplished their education under the 1989 course of study, which had more class hours than the current course of study. However, if the Japanese participants were people who had studied under the current course of study, the results of this study could be totally different. It can be said that both the 1998 and 1999 course of study, and newest 2008 and 2009 course of study, have a greater difficulty to develop life skills with less class hours and credits for home economics education. Only by regaining the much-needed class hours, Japanese home economics education may sustain the same life skills as what the Japanese participants of this study demonstrated. Likewise, Korean home economics may need more class hours and credits to improve high school graduates’ life skills.

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Footnotes:

1) The situation of home economics education in other countries can be found in "Kateika no kariyuramu nokaizen ni kansuru kenkyu: Shogaikoku no doukou [A study for the home economics curriculum reform: Movement in other countries]" by National Institute for Educational Policy Research(2005) and "Igrisu, amerika, kanada no kateika kariyuramu[Home economics curricula in UK, US and Canada] by Nihon kateika kyoiiku gakkai oubei kariyuramu kenkyukai [Japan Association of Home Economics Education European and North American curriculum research study group](2000).

2) This study referred to "Skills for Life [Student Edition] 2 Ed." (West Publishing Company, 2000, 604p.) by Couch, Sue; Felstehausen, Ginny; Hallman, Patsy.

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<국문초록>

본 연구는 일본과 한국 대학생을 대상으로 국가별 학생들의 생활력 차이를 명확하게 밝히고 일본과 한국 가정과교육에의 시사점을 고찰하는 것을 목표로 하였다. 본 연구는 2008년에 일본과 한국 대학생들에게 생활력(일상 생활을 위한 능력)에 관한 설문 조사를 실시하였다. 설문지는 생활력에 관한 것을 알아보기 위한 것으로 82문항을 만들었는데, 각각의 문항에 대해 조사 대상자가 스스로 생각하기에 생활에 이미 실천하고 있는지(이하 “실천”) 여부, 보다 나은 생활을 위해 더 배우고 싶다고 생각하는지(이하 “과제”) 여부, 또한 그러한 능력개발은 중등학교 가정과교과를 통해 배워야 한다고 생각하는지(이하 “기대”) 여부를 묻는 형태로 구성하였다.

연구결과, “실천”에 관해서는 일본과 한국 각각 특징적인 결과가 나타났는데 일본과 한국의 두 나라 사이에 통계적으로 유의한 차이는 발견되지 않았다. “과제”에서는 두 나라 모두 주로 “실천”이 낮게 나타난 항목에서 생활력 향상을 위해 좀더 배우고 싶다는 높은 의욕을 나타내었다. 게다가 “기대”에서는 대부분의 항목에서 한국이 일본에 비해서 통계적으로 유의하게 낮은 기대를 표하는 것으로 나타났다.

본 연구 결과, 일본과 한국 가정과교육의 과제로서는 초·중·고교에서 가정과교육을 실시하는데 필요한 충분한 수업 시간 수를 확보하고, 가정과교육의 중요성에 대한 사회적 이해와 지지를 구하기 위한 노력을 하는 데 있다고 하겠다.

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