

An Exploratory Study on Gender Differences in Marital Preparation Skills of College Students

The purpose of this study was to highlight the importance of 'marital preparation skill' by focusing on more substantial and tangible skills in marriage life, and to conduct an exploratory research to examine the current conditions and gender differences in marital preparation skills of college students. Data were gathered through a self-administered questionnaire in four universities located in Seoul and Gyeong-gi areas in the spring of 2013, and a total of 332 senior students chosen were used for data analysis. Based on the instrument used in Olson & Olson's(2000) PREPARE/ENRICH Program, the present study sought to suggest a measurement tool with the moniker of 'marital preparation skill' that included seven domains: conflict resolution skill, sexual relationship skill, household labor skill, financial management skill, leisure management skill, parenting preparation skill, and parental role skill. Each domain consisted of four items and thus, a total of 28 items were utilized for this study. Descriptive statistics were analyzed in order to examine the degree of marital preparation skills, and t-tests were conducted in order to assess the gender differences in marital preparation skills. The main results of this study are as follows: First, overall the degree of marital preparation skills of male students was higher than that of female students. Particularly, female students were lower than male students in the skills of financial management and conflict resolution. Second, regarding the basic household labor skill related to clothing and housing life, male students showed higher than female students, implying

the impact of military life. Third, even though the degree of consciousness about appropriate preparation of parenthood and parental role seemed to be heightened, the actual degree of readiness of college students revealed to be insufficient. Male students had a much higher degree of confidence and sacrifice acceptance about parenthood, and understanding about their parents' child-rearing style than female students, while the mindset of child-rearing participation of male students was lower than that of female students. Findings of this study can be used as basic data for developing more effective and differentiated educational programs of marital preparation skills for men and women.

Recently, as appropriate preparations for marriage life is needed as with many aspects of our lives, various programs on marital preparation education are conducted for both pre-married and newlywed couples by Christian or Catholic religious organizations and Health Family Support Centers, including local community centers and NGOs. Also, a large number of universities currently offer marriage and family-related classes in terms of marital preparation education for college students (Lee & Chun, 2004).

Marital preparation education can be largely divided into two types, depending on target groups, and thereby each type includes different educational objectives and topics. Namely, there are different types of marital preparation education according to whether the subjects have marriage partners or not. The objective of marital preparation education for pre-married couples and newlywed couples are specifically designed to provide couples with an

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Key Words: marital preparation skill, conflict resolution skill, sexual relationship skill, household labor skill, financial management skill, leisure management skill, parenting preparation skill, parental role skill

opportunity to healthily adjust to marriage life by understanding each other's values and psychological aspects and narrow the differences. Hence, this type of marital preparation education tends to focus on agreement making and managing conflict in role relationships in each area of marriage life. Meanwhile, in the second type, marital preparation education for college students who have not yet determined their marriage partner, regardless of whether they are in a relationship or not, is conducted with individuals to acquire knowledge of the adaptive challenges both in the stages of family life cycle and in each area of family life. Thus, even if the target group is different, the purpose of marital preparation education is to provide subjects with the opportunity to ultimately form a healthy and happy marriage life.

However, all educational programs of marital preparation should verify its effectiveness for the benefit of achieving the ultimate goal of healthy and happy marriage life, and a measurement tool is needed to assess the extent of marital preparation of the subjects prior to education. The main reason for examining the extent of marital preparation by target group prior to education and then conducting the program is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the program and to develop a more systematic program.

In this regard, main topics covered in the educational programs of marital preparation, and instruments for the verification of effectiveness and the measurement of the degree of marital preparation by target group were reviewed for the present study. In conclusion, the development of educational programs of marital preparation for pre-married couples who have already determined their prospective marriage partners was largely accomplished (Chung, 2005; Kim & Lee, 2003; Koh, *et al.*, 2003; Lee, *et al.*, 2004; Moon, *et al.*, 2006; Oh, 2001; Park & Im, 2009), whereas the development of educational programs of marital preparation targeting college students who have indefinite marriage partners was relatively minimal (Kim, *et al.*, 2006; Lee & Chun, 2004). Furthermore, specific topics on the educational programs of marital preparation by target group were not organized systematically or have not been agreed upon. Taken together, the topics covered in

educational programs by target group were self-understanding, love and intimacy, communication and conflict resolution, sexual relationship, kin relationship, household labor, family leisure, child birth and rearing, parental role, financial management, and so forth.

An instrument on the degree of marital preparation was first studied by H. S. Kim *et al.* (2001) in Korea, with the purpose of developing a scale of 'evaluation of premarital preparation.' By conducting Delphi tests, they attempted to construct an instrument of marital preparation diagnosis in the aspects of individual preparation, a couple's relational preparation, and preparation for marital life for the acclimation of marriage life (Kim & Park, 2001). Specifically, the aspects of marital preparation included practical contents such as sex, views about marriage, information about marital life, role division, giving birth and child rearing, financial management, understanding both families of husband and wife, and so forth. Later, in a research on married couples, a scale for evaluation of premarital preparation was developed, and a total of seven domains were included: child birth and rearing, financial management role division, maturity, understanding each other, love, sex, views about marriage, understanding family and friends, capacity of communication and conflict resolution, and independence from parents (Kim & Shin, 2002). Using this scale, another research on premarital preparation was done with single men and women who had prospective marriage partners (Kim & Lee, 2003). However, additional follow-up studies to support the scale of marital preparation they developed have not been conducted, and it seems to be unreasonable to apply this scale to college students who have undefined marriage partners.

Meanwhile, other tools to assess the degree of marital preparation in other countries are CMRE (California Marriage Readiness Evaluation) developed by Manson (1965), FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication) by Markey, Micheletto, & Becker (1985), focusing on the creed of Christianity, RELATE (Relationship Evaluation) started by Burr (1980) and was revised in Brigham Young University (1997), PREPARE (Premarital Personal and Relation-

ship Evaluation) developed by Fowers, Montel & Olson (1996), and the like. Among these, PREPARE is the scale that was the most recently developed and supported by extensive clinical outcomes. PREPARE consisted of 165 items designed to identify and measure couple relationship in a total of 19 areas: personality issues (assertiveness, self confidence, avoidance, partner dominance), intrapersonal issues (idealistic distortion, personality issues, spiritual beliefs, leisure activities, marriage expectations, marriage satisfaction), interpersonal issues (communication, conflict resolution, children and parenting, marital roles, role relationship, sexual relationship), and external issues (family and friends, financial management, family closeness and family flexibility). Olson & Olson (1999) introduced PREPARE/ENRICH program: Version 2000, and chose seven areas for healthy and happy couple relationships—communication, conflict resolution, role relations, financial management, parental role, sexual relationship, spiritual beliefs (Olson & Olson, 2000).

In order to develop a valid evaluation tool for Korean premarital couples, N. M. Kim (2009) attempted to develop the K-PREPARE of 11 factors (idealistic distortion, marriage expectation, personality and communication, conflict avoidance, financial management, role relationship, sexual intimacy, leisure activities, parenting, family and friends, and spiritual beliefs) with a total of 67 items through a multifaceted validity analysis on PREPARE. Even though the validation of the premarital inventory K-PREPARE was confirmed with 174 premarital and 46 newlywed couples by a recent research (Kim, *et al.*, 2012), consistent follow-up studies need to be conducted for a stable application of the K-PREPARE scale. Nonetheless, the K-PREPARE scale has a limitation in its application to college students who don't have definite marriage partners.

Similarly, the scale to measure the degree of changes through a pre-and-post test in order to verify the effectiveness of the educational programs of marital preparation also has not been agreed upon. While the effectiveness of the program was verified, targeted at marriage expectant couples, with the changes in gender role attitudes and communication skills shown in the results of the advance and

follow-up surveys (Park & Im, 2009), pre and post tests with an instrument were conducted with items composed of self-esteem, the realistic expectations of marriage, equal roles, communication and conflict resolution, and so on (Jung & Kim, 2001). In studying the effectiveness of premarital education with college students, Lee & Chun (2004) assessed the changes in six domains of attitudes toward marriage, family, love, spouse, sexuality and gender-roles, and Sohn & Kim (2005) measured the changes in students' views on marriage, family, love, spouse, sex, sex-role through pre-test and post-test.

As was shown in the above review on previous studies, due to the absence of appropriate measurement tools for marital preparation education (Kim, 2009), educational programs of marital preparation is being sporadically developed, and target-specific marital preparation has not been systematically assessed. In particular, because the measurement of marital preparation for college students seemed to be focused on ideological values like attitudes towards love, marriage, family, sexuality, and gender-roles, the supplementation of the items that are more substantial in behavioral aspects is decidedly needed. In addition, existing marital preparation programs largely focused on psychological aspects on the basis of understanding of marriage, and have selected topics like sex and intimacy, conflict resolution and communication skills, role expectation, and so forth as important variables. However, in order to solve the problems in real marriage life such as financial management and household labor and to make short-term and long-term plans of marriage life, managerial contents need to be included in educational programs (Lee, *et al.*, 2004).

Thus, the present study sought to highlight necessary aspects in the domain of marital preparation by focusing on more substantial and tangible skills, while excluding the emotional and psychological domain of personal aspects, and couple relationship aspects that have been stressed in the concept, 'evaluation of premarital preparation' of Kim *et al.* (2002) and the PREPARE Inventory of Olson & Olson (2000). This research suggested a measurement tool with the moniker of 'marital preparation skill' to assess the degree of skill

preparation before marriage, while dividing marriage life into conflict resolution, sexual relationship, household labor, financial management, leisure management, parenting, and parental role. Also, the items were modified for college students who have not yet determined their marriage partner, regardless of whether they are in a relationship or not.

Up to now, studies on present situations of gender differences in marital preparation skills have not been conducted by previous researchers, but in looking at the gender differences on marriage-related variables, male students showed to have a more positive attitude toward marriage image and higher expectations for marriage than female students (Jo, 2009; Lee, 2008; Park, 2012).

The main purpose of this study was to suggest current conditions of college students in seven domains of marital preparation skills with 28 items, and to use the results of this study as a basis for follow-up studies on marital preparation skills. Also, this research investigated gender differences in marital preparation skills of college students who have not yet determined their marriage partners. Ultimately, by suggesting a need for dealing with the domain of 'marital preparation skill' in detail in assessing the degree of premarital preparation, a more accurate scale of marital preparation skill to be developed in the near future is expected. Furthermore, important basic data for developing more effective and differentiated educational programs of marital preparation skills for men and women were provided for educators and researchers.

METHOD

Subjects

Data for the present study were collected at four universities located in Seoul and Gyeong-gi areas from May 15th to June 18th of 2013. Originally 620 upper classmen who registered in liberal arts courses were instructed to independently complete a self-administered questionnaire that assessed various aspects of marriage preparation skills. 596 students completed the questionnaire, representing a response rate of 96.1%. Then, 20 missing data were excluded

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of Subjects*

	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	172	51.8
	Female	160	48.2
Age	22~24	140	42.2
	25~27	164	49.4
	28~30	28	8.4
Major	Linguistics & Humanities	48	14.5
	Commerce & Business	91	27.4
	Engineering	144	43.3
	Arts & Athletics	49	14.8
Total		332	100.0

and, among the remaining 576 subjects, a total of 332 senior students who are the target of this study were finally selected for data analysis.

The subjects were selected by using purposive sampling method with the target of senior students. The target group was limited to senior students with the following reasons. First, as students advance through school, they naturally become matured in many aspects, especially men who have most likely completed their compulsory military service. The variable of year of study was not taken into consideration in this study. Second, an attempt was made to control the effect of year of study on the results of gender difference. Third, the issues of not only employment, but also dating and marriage, and childbirth become more real issues to senior students who are on the cusp of entering society. Fourth, senior students can be a target group for marital preparation education to be collectively conducted before entering into society.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 reveals that of the 332 respondents, 51.8% were males (N = 172) and 48.2% were females (N = 160). With regard to age distribution, 42.2% of the respondents fell within the range 22-24 (N = 140), 49.4% within range 25-27 (N = 164), and 8.4% within range 28-30 (N = 28). The academic field of the respondents was shown to be 14.5% in linguistics & humanities (N = 48), 27.4% in commerce & business (N = 91), 43.3% in engineering (N = 144), and 14.8% in arts & athletics (N = 49).

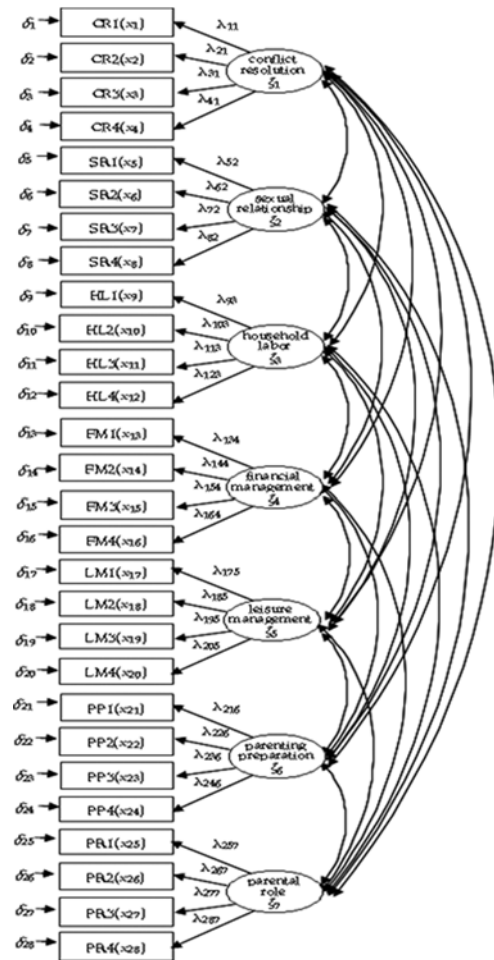
Measures

A measurement tool of marital preparation skills for the present study was based on the instrument used in Olson & Olson's (2000) PREPARE/ENRICH Program. As the seven crucial domains of healthy and happy couple relations, Olson & Olson(2000) chose communication, conflict resolution, financial management, parental role, sexual relationship and religion.

For this study, marital preparation skills were reconstructed in seven domains of marriage life: conflict resolution skill (active listening, sympathy, self-assertion, compromise), sexual relationship skill (control of sexual drive, frank talk on sex, respect for the value of sex, knowledge of contraceptives), household labor skill (equitable division of labor, diet, clothing, housing), financial management skill (saving habit, rational consumption, budget planning, financial information), leisure management skill (leisure sharing, leisure coordination, individual leisure activities, caring for individual leisure), parenting preparation skill (planned pregnancy, confident parenting, emotional and psychological motive, sacrifice and acceptance), and parental role skill (understanding parents, flexibility of child-rearing, importance of paternal role, knowledge of developmental stages). Each domain of marital preparation skills consisted of four items and thus, a total of 28 items were used for this study. Internal consistency for these items were verified through three professional scholars in the field of marriage and family. The result of analysis of Cronbach' alpha was 0.79, indicating a high level of reliability for the items used in this research.

Meanwhile, a confirmatory factor analysis¹ was performed in order to assess construct validity of 28 items in seven sub-domains of marital preparation skill variable. The goodness-of-fit in confirmatory factor analysis model for marital preparation skill revealed that the model didn't fit the data well

1 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are useful statistical techniques in assessing validity of sub-domain-specific factors (Kim & Kang, 2001). While EFA is to explore the minimum number of factors without considering hypotheses on the structure of factors, CFA is to determine how much the obtained data confirm or support hypotheses formulated through the goodness-of-fit that consider conceptual meaning.



$\chi^2 = 503.648$ ($p = 0.00$) $df = 329$ $RMSEA = 0.041$
 $SRMR = 0.043$ $GFI = 0.900$ $AGFI = 0.877$ $PGFI = 0.730$
 $CN = 258.36$

Figure 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model on Marital Preparation Skill.

because p -value on χ^2 was smaller than .05. However, other fit indices showed that $RMSEA = 0.041$, $SRMR = 0.043$, $GFI = 0.900$, $AGFI = 0.877$, $PGFI = 0.730$, and $CN = 258.36$, and it can be then concluded that the goodness-of-fit of the model was acceptable² (see Figure 1). Also, t -values of all estimates on each item were larger than 1.96, indicating that they are statistically significant (see Table 2).

2 Joreskog & Sorbom (1996) indicated that it is very dangerous to entirely depends on the value of χ^2 , thus we also need to consider several other fit indices in making a final conclusion. The standards of goodness-of-fit are as follows: $RMSEA \leq 0.05$, $SRMR \leq 0.05$, $GFI \geq 0.90$, $AGFI \geq 0.90$, $PGFI \geq 0.5$, $CN \geq 200$ (Kim & Kang, 2001).

Table 2. Parameter Estimates of Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Marital Preparation Skill

Factor	Item	Standardized coefficient	t value
ξ_1 Conflict resolution	1. I listen carefully to other people's opinions during disagreements (x_1).	0.594	12.866
	2. I try to understand other people's concerns during disagreements (x_2).	0.560	13.561
	3. I tell other people what I want without getting mad during disagreements (x_3).	0.659	13.518
	4. I don't have problems reaching a consensus during disagreements (x_4).	0.512	10.173
ξ_2 Sexual relationship	1. I can control my sexual desire by recognizing other people's sexual self-determination (x_5).	0.238	4.659
	2. I can speak frankly about my opinions about sex (x_6).	0.448	7.285
	3. I don't criticize and respect other people's sexual values (x_7).	0.388	7.768
	4. I am well aware of appropriate contraceptive methods (x_8).	0.417	7.120
ξ_3 Household labor	1. Dual-income couples should share household labor equitably (x_9).	0.142	3.377
	2. I can take care of my meals by cooking myself (x_{10}).	0.658	9.345
	3. I can maintain a clean home by tidying my room and dusting (x_{11}).	0.506	8.121
	4. I can use the washing machine and arrange my clothes after laundering (x_{12}).	0.695	11.065
ξ_4 Financial management	1. I am currently saving money regularly (x_{13}).	0.596	8.244
	2. I spend rationally while considering my financial situation (x_{14}).	0.582	10.006
	3. I make a long-term financial plan (x_{15}).	0.928	14.580
	4. I am very much interested in economic trends and financial information (x_{16}).	0.448	6.627
ξ_5 Leisure management	1. I enjoy spending my leisure time with those close to me (x_{17}).	0.768	12.516
	2. I don't have problems in coordinating leisure activities when there are disagreements among participants on planning activities (x_{18}).	0.815	13.283
	3. I have my own leisure activities that I participate in consistently (x_{19}).	0.655	9.994
	4. I can yield to or allow without qualm other people's personal leisure activities during group outings (x_{20}).	0.147	3.037
ξ_6 Parenting preparation	1. When I want a child, it will be a planned pregnancy (x_{21}).	0.169	4.382
	2. I feel confident that I will be a good parent (x_{22}).	0.661	13.129
	3. Loving each other and being happy are the reasons for having a child (x_{23}).	0.537	12.855
	4. I expect many difficulties in child-rearing but I can cope with those (x_{24}).	0.694	14.969
ξ_7 Parental role	1. I understand my parents' parenting style even if I am not satisfied (x_{25}).	0.292	5.106
	2. Parenting style can be flexible depending on the situation of children (x_{26}).	0.265	6.058
	3. Men also should participate in child-rearing (x_{27}).	0.158	4.050
	4. I am aware of the core developmental tasks by the stages of human development (x_{28}).	0.317	4.551

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed by using SPSSWIN 18.0. Frequency distribution and descriptive statistics were analyzed in order to assess the respondents' demographic characteristics and the degree of marriage preparation skills. MLE (maximum likelihood estimation) using confirmatory factor analysis was performed to estimate the validity of items measuring each sub-domain variable. Furthermore, in order to assess the gender differences in marital preparation skills, a *t*-test was conducted at 5% level of significance.

RESULTS

Marital Preparation Skill

Overall, college students' marriage preparation skill

was shown to be above average, at 3.68 out of 5 points. Table 3 depicts the sample's means and standard deviations for sub-domain variables of marital preparation skill.

First of all, analysis of responses on sub-domains of marital preparation skill showed that the average point was lower in the order of parental preparation skill ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .61$), sexual relationship skill ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .51$), household labor skill ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .62$), parental role skill ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .44$), leisure management skill ($M = 3.49$, $SD = .69$), conflict resolution skill ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .66$), and financial management skill ($M = 2.80$, $SD = .79$). Namely, parental preparation skill, sexual relationship skill, and household labor skill were shown to be high, whereas financial management skill, conflict resolution skill, and leisure management skill were relatively low.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Sub-Domains of Marriage Preparation Skill (N= 332)

Items of Marital Preparation Skill	M	SD
Conflict resolution skill	3.33	.66
1. I listen carefully to other people's opinions during disagreements.	3.39	.86
2. I try to understand other people's concerns during disagreements.	3.45	.77
3. I tell other people what I want without getting mad during disagreements.	3.15	.91
4. I don't have problems reaching a consensus during disagreements.	3.31	.88
Sexual relationship skill	4.13	.51
1. I can control my sexual desire by recognizing other people's sexual self-determination.	4.26	.74
2. I can speak frankly about my opinions about sex.	3.92	.89
3. I don't criticize and respect other people's sexual values.	4.19	.74
4. I am well aware of appropriate contraceptive methods.	4.14	.85
Household labor skill	4.03	.62
1. Dual-income couples should share household labor equitably.	4.51	.63
2. I can take care of my meals by cooking myself.	3.80	1.10
3. I can maintain a clean home by tidying my room and dusting.	3.73	.98
4. I can use the washing machine and arrange my clothes after laundering.	4.10	.98
Financial management skill	2.80	.79
1. I am currently saving money regularly.	2.33	1.22
2. I spend rationally while considering my financial situation.	3.25	1.01
3. I make a long-term financial plan.	2.82	1.04
4. I am very much interested in economic trends and financial information.	2.78	1.18
Leisure management skill	3.49	.69
1. I enjoy spending my leisure time with those close to me.	3.75	1.03
2. I don't have problems in coordinating leisure activities when there are disagreements among participants on planning activities.	3.56	1.06
3. I have my own leisure activities that I participate in consistently.	2.68	1.14
4. I can yield to or allow without qualm other people's personal leisure activities during group outings.	3.98	.79
Parenting preparation skill	4.15	.61
1. When I want a child, it will be a planned pregnancy.	4.52	.65
2. I feel confident that I will be a good parent.	3.94	.97
3. Loving each other and being happy are the reasons for having a child.	4.29	.83
4. I expect many difficulties in child-rearing but I can cope with those.	3.85	.89
Parental role skill	3.89	.44
1. I understand my parents' parenting style even if I am not satisfied.	3.70	.85
2. Parenting style can be flexible depending on the situation of children.	4.30	.62
3. Men also should participate in child-rearing.	4.69	.56
4. I am aware of the core developmental tasks by the stages of human development.	2.87	1.02

In particular, high means of parental preparation skill, sexual relationship skill, and household labor skill seem to be, unlike the past, due to the emergence of importance of prepared parents, the openness of sex and spreading of substantial sex education, the consciousness of gender equality on household labor, and so forth. On the other hand, since college students who are currently in their 20s have spent economically affluent childhoods under the financial support entirely from their parents and thus could not have opportunities to form proper habits of saving and consumption plans on a long-

term basis, their capacity of financial planning and financial management is very low (Im, 2013). Also, as a basic social interpersonal relationship skill in modern society which is becoming gradually individualized, conflict resolution skill and communication skill are very important not only in whole marriage life but also in all social life. Thus, a suitable supplementary study needs to be conducted on this matter.

The results of analysis by each item of sub-domains, based on means and standard deviations are found below.

Conflict resolution skill Analysis of responses on conflict resolution skill by item is shown in Table 3. The means of item number 2, 'I try to understand other people's concerns during disagreements' was 3.45 (SD = .77), item number 1, 'I listen carefully to other people's opinions during disagreements' was 3.39 (SD = .86), item number 4, 'I don't have problems reaching a consensus during disagreements' was 3.31 (SD = .88), and item number 3, 'I tell other people what I want without getting mad during disagreements' was 3.15 (SD = .91). These results indicate that the conflict resolution skill of college students is about average level and the deviation of responses was not high. And the total average point of conflict resolution skill was 3.33, that is slightly above the average level (see Table3). However, self-assertive speaking skill without anger seems to be somewhat low, compared to the skills of empathy and active listening,

Sexual relationship skill Sexual relationship skill showed an overall average point of 4.13, and particularly the mean of item number 1, 'I can control my sexual desire by recognizing other people's sexual self-determination' was 4.26 (SD = .74), which is very high. Also, means of item number 3, 'I don't criticize and respect other people's sexual values' and item number 4, 'I am well aware of appropriate contraceptive methods' were 4.19 (SD = .74) and 4.14 (SD = .85) respectively, which are relatively high. These results seem to be due to the positive impact of substantial sex and contraception education recently being conducted extensively in middle and high schools. Meanwhile, the mean of item number 2, 'I can speak frankly my opinions about sex' was 3.92 (SD = .89), which is the lowest among the items of sexual relationship skills. Namely, the consciousness of respect on sexual self-determination and sexual diversity is settling as a universal value for college students, whereas the skill of frank self-assertive expression on sex seems to be still low.

Household labor skill The household labor skill of college students showed a high level at total average point of 4.03 (SD = .62). Especially, the mean of item

number 1, 'Dual-income couples should share household labor equitably' was 4.51 (SD = .63), indicating that total respondents' consciousness of gender equality on household labor was very high and the deviation of responses was not high. Namely, as the proportion of younger generation of dual-earner couples has been rising steadily, a fair consciousness of sharing household labor was established in college students.

Meanwhile, the order of degree of household labor skill that is directly related to clothing, diet and housing revealed that item number 4, 'I can use the washing machine and arrange my clothes after laundering' was the highest (M = 4.10, SD = .98), followed by item number 2, 'I can take care of my meals by cooking myself' (M = 3.80, SD = 1.10), and item number 3, 'I can maintain a clean home by tidying my room and dusting' was the lowest (M = 3.73, SD = .98). This indicates that household labor skill regarding clothing, diet and housing is relatively high in the deviation of responses (Table 3). This result can be inferred from the fact that there are factors such as living independently separate from the family or military service through which college students inevitably experience household labor which contrasts from the situation of unmarried college students living with the family-of-origin who do not necessarily perform household labor.

Financial management skill Overall, the mean of financial management skill (M = 2.80, SD = .79) showed a below average level. If we take a look at the average point of items, item number 2, 'I spend rationally while considering my financial situation' seemed to be average level (M = 3.23, SD = 1.01). However, the other three items all showed below average levels, and particularly, the mean of item number 1, 'I am currently saving money regularly' was 2.33, which is very low and the deviation of responses was relatively high. Furthermore, the means of item number 3, 'I make a long-term financial plan' and item number 4, 'I am very much interested in economic trends and financial information' were 2.82 (SD = 1.04) and 2.78 (SD = 1.18) respectively, which showed a low level. Overall, the deviation of responses revealed to be large(see

Table 3). The skill of financial management such as regular saving habit, rational consumption, long-term budget planning, and interest in financial information cannot be acquired spontaneously after starting a career or getting married, but is an essential area that needs skill acquisition and habituation on a long-term basis. Hence, the supplementary of educational programs with regard to topics of economy and marital preparation is urgent for college students whose skill level of financial management is low.

Leisure management skill Overall, leisure management skill revealed an above the average level, at the mean of 3.49 (SD = .69) out of 5 points. Looking at the average point of items, item number 4, 'I can yield to or allow without qualm other people's personal activities during group outings' revealed to be high, at the mean of 3.98 (SD = .79), whereas item number 3, 'I have my own leisure activities that I participate in consistently' was very low, at the mean 2.68 (SD = 1.14). It seems to be that, even though the participation rate of leisure activities of senior students was overall low, the actual deviation of degree of participation in leisure activities is large. Thus, while some college students do leisure activities continuously even if they have time constraints, other students do not participate in leisure activities because of psychological constraints. Meanwhile, item number 1, 'I enjoy spending my leisure time with those close to me' showed a mean of 3.75 (SD = 1.03), and item number 2, 'I don't have problems in coordinating leisure activities when there are disagreements among participants on planning activities' showed a mean of 3.56 (SD = 1.06), which are slightly above an average level (see Table 3).

Parenting preparation skill The parenting preparation skill of college students showed a high level, at a mean of 4.15 (SD = .61), and the result by item is shown in Table 3. The mean of item number 1, 'When I want a child, it will be a planned pregnancy' (M = 4.52, SD = .65) showed a high level, and that of item number 3, 'Loving each other and being happy are the reasons for having a child' showed a mean of

4.29 (SD = .83), indicating that a positive motivation of having a child is high. This result is a reflection of current situations where child-bearing is not required but a choice, and indicated the importance of planned pregnancy by considering personal situations as well as the importance of personal and emotional motive rather than family succession and the acquisition of social status.

Also, the means of item number 2, 'I feel confident that I will be a good parent' and that of item number 4, 'I expect many difficulties in child-rearing, but I can cope with those' were 3.94 (SD = .97) and 3.85 (SD = .89) respectively, which showed a high level (see Table 3), college students have high level of consciousness to become good parents if they become parents.

Parental role skill Overall, the mean (M = 3.89, SD = .44) of parental role skill showed above average, and the result by item is shown in Table 3. The mean of item number 3, 'Men also should participate in child-rearing' (M = 4.69, SD = .56) revealed a very high level, and the deviation of responses was not large around the mean. Also, item number 2, 'Parenting style can be flexible depending on the situation of children' showed a high level, at a mean of 4.30 (SD = .62), The mean of item number 1, 'I understand my parents' parenting style even if I am not satisfied' was 3.70 (SD = .85). Meanwhile, the mean of item number 4, 'I am aware of the core developmental tasks by the stages of human development' at 2.87 (SD = 1.02) revealed a below average level, and the deviation of responses showed was relatively high (see Table 3). Namely, college students accept consciousness of gender equality in the tasks of child rearing like household labor as a universal value, and prefer democratic parental style rather than authoritarian style. But the knowledge of how to discipline children according to the actual developmental stage of children is low.

Marital Preparation Skill by Gender

T-tests were performed to determine the gender differences in seven domains of marital preparation skill (see Table 4). Marital preparation skill showed a statistically significant difference by gender ($p <$

.001), namely male students ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .34$) scored higher than female students ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .35$).

Looking at the results of t-tests by each domain, male students ($M = 3.50$) scored higher than female students ($M = 3.14$) ($p < .001$) in conflict resolution skill, male students ($M = 4.19$) scored higher than female students ($M = 4.07$) ($p < .05$) in sexual relationship skill, male students ($M = 4.12$) scored higher than female students ($M = 3.93$) ($p < .05$) in household labor skill, male students ($M = 2.90$) scored higher than female students ($M = 2.67$) ($p < .01$) in financial management skill, and male students ($M = 4.33$) scored higher than female students ($M = 3.95$) ($p < .001$) in parenting preparation skill. This result indicated that, in the above-mentioned five domains, the means of male students were statistically significantly higher than female students. Meanwhile, there were no statistically significant differences by gender in leisure management skill and parental role skill.

Conflict resolution skill by gender The results of t-tests on conflict resolution skill by gender are shown in Table 4. Overall, conflict resolution skill showed a statistically significant difference between male students ($M = 3.50$) and female students ($M = 3.14$), and the mean of male students was also statistically significantly higher than female students in all items.

For item, 'I listen carefully to other people's opinions during disagreements' (Conflict resolution skill1), male students ($M = 3.57$) scored higher than female students ($M = 3.21$) ($p < .001$), and for the item, 'I try to understand other people's concerns during disagreements' (Conflict resolution skill2), male students ($M = 3.60$) scored higher than female students ($M = 3.30$) ($p < .001$). And for the item, 'I tell other people what I want without getting mad during disagreements' (Conflict resolution skill3), male students ($M = 3.38$) scored higher than female students ($M = 2.91$) ($p < .001$) and for the item, 'I don't have problems reaching a consensus during disagreements' (Conflict resolution skill4), the mean of male students ($M = 3.46$) was statistically significantly higher than female students ($M = 3.15$) ($p < .001$) (see Table 4).

Sexual relationship skill by gender Overall, sexual relationship skill showed a significant difference by gender ($p < .05$). The gender difference by item is shown in Table 4. In items of sexual relationship skill 1~3, there was a statistically significant difference by gender. For item, 'I can control my sexual desire by recognizing other people's sexual self-determination' (Sexual relationship skill1), female students ($M = 4.40$) scored higher than male students ($M = 4.14$) ($p < .01$). For item, 'I can speak frankly about my opinions about sex' (Sexual relationship skill2), male students ($M = 4.10$) scored higher than female students ($M = 3.77$) ($p < .01$). And for item, 'I don't criticize and respect other people's sexual values' (Sexual relationship skill3), male students ($M = 4.31$) scored higher than female students ($M = 4.06$) ($p < .01$). Meanwhile, for item, 'I am well aware of appropriate contraceptive methods' (Sexual relationship skill4), there was no statistically significant difference by gender (see Table 4).

Household labor skill by gender Household labor skill showed a significant difference by gender ($p < .01$). The gender difference by item is shown in Table 4. For the item, 'Dual-income couples should share household labor equitably' (Household labor skill1), there was a statistically significant difference by gender, and the mean score of female students ($M = 4.60$) was higher than that of male students ($M = 4.42$) ($p < .01$). For item, 'I can maintain a clean home by tidying my room and dusting' (Household labor skill3), male students ($M = 3.91$) scored higher than that of female students ($M = 3.78$) ($p < .001$), and for item, 'I can use the washing machine and arrange my clothes after laundering' (Household labor skill4), the mean of male students ($M = 4.35$) was statistically significantly higher than that of female students ($M = 3.83$) ($p < .001$). Meanwhile, for item, 'I can take care of my meals by cooking myself' (Household labor skill2), there was no statistically significant difference by gender. Also, female students' consciousness of equitability was shown to be higher than male students, whereas male students' household labor skill such as clothing and housing was higher than female students. Especially, the gender difference was revealed to be the highest in

Table 4. *T*-tests for Seven Domains of Marital Preparation Skill by Gender (N = 332)

Domains of Marital Preparation Skill Sub-Scales	Male students (N = 172)		Female students (N = 160)		<i>t</i> -value
	M	SD	M	SD	
Conflict resolution skill	3.50	.63	3.14	.64	5.18***
Conflict resolution skill1	3.57	.83	3.21	.85	3.89***
Conflict resolution skill2	3.60	.76	3.30	.77	3.62***
Conflict resolution skill3	3.38	.88	2.91	.87	4.92***
Conflict resolution skill4	3.46	.85	3.15	.89	3.20**
Sexual relationship skill	4.19	.49	4.07	.51	2.11*
Sexual relationship skill1	4.14	.78	4.40	.67	-3.22**
Sexual relationship skill2	4.10	.85	3.77	.90	3.36**
Sexual relationship skill3	4.31	.68	4.06	.78	3.12**
Sexual relationship skill4	4.21	.81	4.07	.88	1.47
Household labor skill	4.12	.59	3.93	.63	2.83**
Household labor skill1	4.42	.66	4.60	.57	-2.65**
Household labor skill2	3.81	1.14	3.78	1.04	.28
Household labor skill3	3.91	.98	3.53	.95	3.63***
Household labor skill4	4.35	.79	3.83	1.10	4.91***
Financial management skill	2.90	.81	2.67	.74	2.77**
Financial management skill1	2.22	1.12	2.45	1.30	-1.76
Financial management skill2	3.39	1.03	3.11	.97	2.53*
Financial management skill3	2.93	1.05	2.70	1.01	1.98*
Financial management skill4	3.11	1.24	2.43	1.00	5.51***
Leisure management skill	3.53	.67	3.46	.71	.93
Leisure management skill1	3.67	1.01	3.84	1.05	-1.43
Leisure management skill2	3.55	1.05	3.57	1.08	-.19
Leisure management skill3	2.82	1.10	2.52	1.16	2.41*
Leisure management skill4	4.07	.72	3.90	.85	1.90
Parenting Preparation Skill	4.33	.51	3.95	.64	5.81***
Parenting Preparation Skill1	4.54	.66	4.50	.64	.44
Parenting Preparation Skill2	4.26	.80	3.58	1.02	6.68***
Parenting Preparation Skill3	4.42	.77	4.14	.88	3.08**
Parenting Preparation Skill4	4.08	.76	3.59	.95	5.16***
Parental Role Skill	3.89	.47	3.89	.41	.07
Parental Role Skill1	3.80	.84	3.59	.86	2.20*
Parental Role Skill2	4.34	.65	4.27	.58	1.02
Parental Role Skill3	4.58	.63	4.81	.43	-3.86***
Parental Role Skill4	2.85	1.09	2.88	.94	-.29

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

item, 'I can use the washing machine and arrange my clothes after laundering' ($p < .001$), implying the impact of military life on male students who completed their compulsory military service.

Financial management skill by gender With regard to financial management skill, overall, male students ($M = 2.90$) revealed higher scores than female students ($M = 2.67$) ($p < .01$). The difference by item is shown in Table 4. For item, 'I spend rationally while considering my financial situation' (Financial

management skill2), male students ($M = 3.39$) were higher than female students ($M = 3.11$) ($p < .05$), for item, 'I make a long-term financial plan' (Financial management skill3), male students ($M = 2.93$) were higher than female students ($M = 2.70$) ($p < .05$), and for item, 'I am very much interested in economic trends and financial information' (Financial management skill4), male students ($M = 3.11$) scored higher than female students ($M = 2.43$) ($p < .05$). Thus, in those three items, the means of male students were statistically significantly higher than those of female

students. Meanwhile, for item, 'I am currently saving money regularly' (Financial management skill1), there was no statistically significant difference by gender.

Leisure management skill by gender Although overall leisure management skill revealed no statistically significant difference by gender, for item, 'I have my own leisure activities that I participate in consistently' (Leisure management skill3) there was a significant difference by gender ($p < .05$). Specifically, the mean score of male students ($M = 2.82$) was higher than that of female students ($M = 2.52$) as shown in Table 4. In the meantime, item, 'I enjoy spending my leisure time with those close to me' (Leisure management skill1), item, 'I don't have problems in coordinating leisure activities when there are disagreements among participants on planning activities' (Leisure management skill2), and item, 'I can yield to or allow without qualm other people's personal leisure activities during group outings' (Leisure management skill4), revealed no significant difference by gender.

Parenting preparation skill by gender Overall, the mean score of male students ($M = 4.33$) revealed higher than that of female students ($M = 3.95$) ($p < .001$), with the difference by gender shown in Table 4. For item, 'I feel confident that I will be a good parent' (Parenting Preparation Skill2), male students ($M = 4.26$) scored higher than female students ($M = 4.14$) ($p < .001$), for item, 'Loving each other and being happy are the reasons for having a child' (Parenting Preparation Skill3), male students ($M = 4.42$) scored higher than female students ($M = 4.14$) ($p < .01$), and for item, 'I expect many difficulties in child-rearing, but I can cope with those' (Parenting Preparation Skill4), male students ($M = 4.08$) scored higher than female students ($M = 3.59$) ($p < .001$) Thus, in those three items, the means of male students were statistically significantly higher than those of female students. Meanwhile, for item, 'When I want a child, it will be a planned pregnancy' (Parenting Preparation Skill1), t -test found no statistically significant difference by gender.

Parental role skill by gender Although analysis on responses revealed that there was no significant difference overall in parental role skill by gender, significant difference exists by items shown in Table 4. For the item, 'I understand my parents' parenting style even if I am not satisfied' (Parental Role Skill1), male students ($M = 3.80$) scored higher than female students ($M = 3.59$) ($p < .05$), and this difference was statistically significant. For item 'Men also should participate in child-rearing' (Parental Role Skill3), females students ($M = 4.81$) scored higher than male students ($M = 4.58$) ($p < .001$), and revealed a statistically significant difference by gender.

Meanwhile, for both item 'Parenting style can be flexible depending on the situation of children' (Parental Role Skill2) and item 'I am aware of the core developmental tasks by the stages of human development' (Parental Role Skill4), t -test found no statistically significant difference by gender.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

There has been a suggestion from previous research that target-specific marital preparation scale has not systematically developed in Korea, and especially, the measurement of marital preparation for college students who have not yet determined their marriage partners has focused only on assessing psychological and ideological values. Thus, excluding the emotional and psychological domain of personal aspects, and couple relationship aspects that have been emphasized thus far, the present study sought to highlight necessary parts in the domain of marital preparation skill by focusing on more substantial and tangible skills in each area of marriage life. Hence, this research suggested a measurement tool with the moniker of 'marital preparation skill' after considering all the degrees of skill preparation that are required in domains of conflict resolution, sexual relationship, household labor, financial management, leisure management, parenting, and parental role, and attempted to examine gender differences in marital preparation skills of college students.

With regard to the major findings of the present research, more specific discussion and concluding

remarks can be made as follows.

First, financial management, conflict resolution, and leisure management that were shown to be low among marital preparation skills of college students are all important domains that need skill acquisition and habituation on a long-term basis. Particularly, financial management skill, shown as the lowest level in the present research, is a domain that is essential for college students to acquire through proper education and consciousness-raising before starting their economic activities in earnest. Since current college students have spent economically affluent childhoods and are receiving financial support from parents even during the early adulthood period, their financial management skill appears to be relatively low. Both male and female students were revealed to be lacking in regular saving habit and long-term financial plan, and the degree of interest in economy and finance was below the average level, and especially the financial management skill of female students who generally are in charge of financial management after marriage was much lower than that of male students. Hence, financial management-related content must necessarily be included in marriage and family-related courses, and particularly the necessity of long-term budget planning and interest in economy and finance need to be highlighted to female students.

Second, as a social interpersonal relationship skill, conflict resolution skill is the most basic for human beings to live together with other people during the whole life cycle, and it is also the most important skill that affects the quality of whole marriage life. In this study, the result that college students did not show a high level of conflict resolution skill suggests a very urgent problem. In particular, the conflict resolution skill of female students were overall lower than male students, and female students showed a below average level in the skill of transferring what they want without resentment. This result implies the characteristics of women who mainly use indirect speech and do not make open what they want from the onset due to prioritized consideration of the relationship between speakers. However, because this is a negative method of conflict resolution, we need to keep this point in

mind in the process of constructive conflict resolution education.

Third, leisure management skill is very crucial in achieving work-life balance, and thus should be learned before entering society. Particularly, results showed a very low level of participation in ongoing individual leisure activities due to the time of the preparation for employment and other psychological constraints for senior students. Yet the biggest obstacle of leisure limitation can be the psychological constraints. Because making good use of leisure is an important domain in our daily life, consistent participation in leisure activities is needed, and especially family leisure management in marriage life is essential in the quality of life. Thus, proper leisure consciousness education such as the method of overcoming leisure constraints, family sharing leisure after marriage, caring about individual leisure, and so forth is needed for college students.

Fourth, sexual relationship skill showed a high tendency overall compared to other domains. From the results by item, we can grasp the sexual mindset of college students and current social conditions. Specifically, college students tended to respect other's sexual self-determination and sexual diversity, and also revealed to have knowledge in proper methods of contraception to a degree by the influence of recent public education about contraceptive methods. Namely, the result of this study reflects today's open sex culture and sexual diversity of youth. However, we can observe a social atmosphere that sexual behavior is still more acceptable to men than women. Particularly, male students' ability to control sexual desire was shown to be significantly lower than that of female students, whereas female students' frank self-expression about sex was significantly lower than male students.

Fifth, even though the equitable sharing of household labor is to a degree a universal value for both men and women, such consciousness of female students was much higher than that of male students. Meanwhile, regarding the basic household labor skill related to clothing and housing life, male students showed higher than female students, implying that because the subjects of this study was limited to senior students, male students' household

labor skill could have been influenced by their military life. This result shows that household labor skill does not originally come from gender difference, but from experience and acquisition of skills. Therefore, it is important for not just women, but for men to have an opportunity to learn housework skills through everyday practical experience.

Sixth, it is encouraging that, regarding parenting preparation and parental role skills, male and female students are aware of the importance of a planned pregnancy, and they showed a high degree of emotional and psychological motives, democratic and acceptable parenting style, and paternal participation in child care. However, with regard to parental role skill for both male and female students, the knowledge of core developmental tasks about child-care was shown to be below the average. That is, even if the degree of consciousness about appropriate preparation of parenthood and parental role has been heightened, the actual degree of readiness can still be insufficient. Indeed, confidence and motivation to become a good parent is important, but if one is not equipped with prior parenting knowledge, improper parenting approaches witnessed in their childhood is likely to be repeated. Thus, practical education for knowledge acquisition needs to be conducted through marriage-related classes beneficial to effectively perform future parental roles according to the stages of child-rearing development.

In the meantime, the present research revealed that, male students had a much higher degree of confidence and sacrifice acceptance about parenthood, and understanding about their parents' child-rearing style than female students, while the mindset of child-rearing participation of male students was lower than that of female students. In reality, because women are pregnant for 9 months, and take care of children in their infancy and toddler stage rather than participating in social and economic activities, women's sacrifice seems larger than men. Thus, it is necessary to provide women with education for promoting the feeling of accomplishment and information on coping resources such as family-friendly support systems. Also, female students showed lower acceptance of their parents' parenting

style than male students. They need to know that one of the prerequisites of becoming good parents is to first understand their parents' parenting style and accept it, even though they are not satisfied with their parents' child-rearing style. Furthermore, it is necessary to provide men with an opportunity to heighten their consciousness to participate in child-rearing. Employers must also provide more systematic family-friendly support systems and programs to assist parents in both their roles and needs.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Suggestions for future research and limitations of this study are as follows. In this study, in order to emphasize the managerial and skill aspects that need to be acquired or augmented prior to marriage with the subjects of unmarried college students who have not yet determined their marriage partner, personal psychological, and couple relationship aspects were not taken into consideration. Hence, after including marital preparation skill suggested by this study, a scale of evaluation of premarital preparation should be developed in the future. Also, as an exploratory research, this study tried to examine the present conditions of marital preparation skill by gender with the subjects of senior students who are on the cusp of entering society. The present study showed gender differences in marital preparation skills, thus additional research needs to be conducted in order to determine the causes of gender differences through more in-depth research focusing on psychological characteristics variables or additional qualitative research. Furthermore, in addition to the gender of unmarried men and women, future research needs to extend the subjects and to examine the differences of marital preparation skill by various emotional and psychological variables, familial variables, and couple relationship variables. Finally, the results of this study is expected to greater highlight the importance of marital preparation skill that needs to be acquired in college life in order to form a happy and healthy family. Moreover, continued follow-up studies to verify the effectiveness of actual marital preparation skills is envisioned.

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Received October 11, 2013

Revised November 20, 2013

Accepted November 25, 2013