

## ADOLESCENTS' AND PARENTS' ATTITUDES ABOUT MARRIAGE IN KOREA: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FREQUENCY OF PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATIONS\*

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*This paper examines the association of parental attitudes regarding marriage with the children's same attitudes in Korea using a national representative sample of 1,184 adolescents aged 10 to 18 and their mothers and fathers. This study also appraises the role of parent-adolescent communication as a transmitting mechanism. Results indicate strong generational associations between adolescents' and their parents' attitudes towards marriage in Korea. Adolescents whose mothers or fathers are liberal with respect to cohabitation, marriage, and divorce also tend to think of cohabitation and divorce as possible options and deny the absoluteness of marriage in life. This study also found that when parents and children communicate frequently, stronger generational associations occur, suggesting that parent-adolescent communications play a key role in generational transmission of attitudes towards marriage in Korea.*

**Key Words:** *Parental Attitudes, Marriage, Children's Attitudes, Generational Association, Cohabitation, Divorce, Communication.*

Transmission of maternal and paternal attitudes to adolescents' attitudes is one of the main topics in the literature on family because the degree of association represents generational gaps and competence in socialization. Previous researches on parent-adolescent congruence examine attitudes to parenting (Simons, Beaman, Conger, and Chao, 1992), work (Barak, Feldman, and Noy, 1991), politics (Dalhouse and Frideres, 1996), love (Inman-Amos, Hendrick, and Hendrick, 1994), religion (Dudley and Dudley, 1986) and gender roles (Kulik, 2002). These studies provide inconsistent conclusions about the generational transmission of orientations. While some evidence indicate that parental viewpoints are significantly associated with children's viewpoints (Booth and Amato, 1994), other studies have found that the degree of association

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is negligible (Inman-Amos et al., 1994). Studies reporting generational linkage usually depend on symbolic interaction and the social learning theory. These perspectives propose that communication between parents and teens is a key mechanism of generational transmission of attitudes.

It is argued in this paper that one reason for these inconsistent conclusions may be some limitations in the samples used in previous studies. First, most studies on generational congruence of attitudes focus on only mothers or fathers and/or only girls or boys (Kulik, 2004). Second, they examine non-representative samples of adolescents (Inman-Amos et al., 1994; Simons et al., 1992). These limitations in previous studies press researchers to analyze information from a representative sample of female and male adolescents and their fathers and mothers.

This paper examines the association of parental attitudes with children's attitudes regarding marriage in Korea. This article goes beyond existing literature by using a national representative sample of adolescents aged 10 to 18 and their mothers and fathers. This study also adds to existing literature on socialization by appraising the importance of parent-adolescent interaction as a transmitting mechanism.

This article is organized as follows: after Korean situations about marriage are briefly depicted, literature on the congruence of parent-adolescent attitudes is reviewed. The following section describes the data used in the analyses and introduces statistical methods. Then the results of the empirical analysis conducted are discussed to examine the transmission of attitudes to marriage and generational interactions as a transmitting mechanism. The article concludes with implications of findings, discussed in literature, on the congruence of the attitudes of adolescents and their parents.

## MARRIAGE IN KOREA

Over the past decade, the status of marriage as an imperative life stage has weakened in Korea. While 52.5% of young adults aged 25 to 30 and 85.4% of those aged 31 to 34 were in marital union in 1995, only 28.9% of adults in their late 20s and 67.7% of adults in their early 30s were married in 2005. Moreover, young Korean adults are getting married at later ages. The average ages of the first marriage were 25.4 and 28.4 for women and men in 1995, respectively, but increased to 27.7 and 30.9, respectively, in 2005.

Coupled with the erosion of marriage as an imperative life stage, the

dissolution of marriage has reached historically high levels in Korea. The number of divorces has been increasing from 45,694 in 1990 to 119,982 in 2000 and 128,468 in 2005. The crude divorce rate has changed from 1.1 in 1990 to 2.5 in 2000 and 2.6 in 2005.

Finally, cohabitation is believed to be gaining ground among Koreans. Still, most cohabitating adults hesitate to reveal their union status and so no data regarding cohabitation have been collected yet. However, many articles and anecdotes in mass media suggest that many couples live together without marriage because they hope to test their potential spouse or simply avoid marriage.

As Koreans have been experiencing significant changes in cohabitation, marriage, and divorce, their attitudes to these life events have been changing (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2005). More and more Koreans consider these three life events possible choices in life. Especially, young Koreans are becoming increasingly liberal about cohabitation, marriage, and divorce. A national survey in 2003 (Ministry of Gender Equality, 2003) found that less than half of young adults (45.2%) in their 20s think divorce can be a possible option in life, whereas only about one out of 10 (13.5%) adults aged 60 or older think in the same way. About three out of ten adults in their 20s (33.8%) agree that it is possible to cohabit if couples have the intention to marry, but only one of 10 (9.3%) old people aged 60 or older agree.

Accordingly, Korean adolescents tend to be liberal in their attitudes to marital behavior compared to older generations. Researchers have examined liberalization in teens' attitudes to gender roles because their orientations may predict familial changes in the near future in Korea. Scholars pay attention to the role of parents in the socialization of adolescents.

#### GENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF ATTITUDES

Parents are the most important agents in the socialization of children. Parents often act as role models to their children, due to which many adolescents internalize their parental codes of conduct and dispositions. Moreover, through rewards and punishment, parents try to shape their children's behavioral patterns and perspectives in the 'right' directions. Given this reasoning, most researches on the influence of parental attitudes on children's attitudes seem to support the 'lineage' perspective that parental values positively affect adolescents' orientations (Gecas and Seff, 1990).

Therefore, it can be expected that maternal and paternal attitudes about marriage are positively associated with adolescents' attitudes in Korea. Parents express their opinions about marriage, cohabitation, and divorce in diverse settings such as when parents and children watch television or talk causally together, and children may feel that those opinions are the legitimate attitudes to those life events. Moreover, some parents are actively involved in their children's acquaintances among the opposite sex, affecting the formation of adolescents' views about their future relationships with spouses.

However, some studies suggest that parental attitudes do not affect their adolescents' perspectives. This 'feeble' perspective points out that Korean family members get together much less frequently today than they did before. More and more mothers are joining the labor force (Min and Eun, 2004) and many adolescents are busy with extracurricular activities (Oh, 2005), limiting opportunities for parents and teens to exchange opinions about marital life. Even while together, children and parents usually talk about everyday issues such as housework or homework and much less about serious issues such as politics, sex, and marriage (Larson, Richards, and Perry-Jenkins, 1994; Smetana, 1989).

These days, moreover, friends are becoming increasingly important in the formation of Korean children's viewpoints because many adolescents spend much time with their friends at school or other academic institutions and feel more comfortable talking with their friends than their parents (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2005). Friends usually have more liberal opinions about marriage than parents (Myers and Booth, 2002), thus widening the generational gap between adolescents and their parents. Given their feeble perspective, it can be expected that parental orientations are not associated with their adolescents' marriage values.

Empirical studies have examined the generational association of attitudes to several topics. However, they have failed to provide consistent conclusions. Booth and Amato (1994) found that offspring of parents liberal about gender roles tend to have liberal gender role attitudes, supporting the lineage perspective. However, Inman-Amos et al. (1994) found that there is little correlation between college students' and their parents' attitudes to love, supporting the feeble perspective. Empirical tests using Korean samples also show conflicting conclusions. While Song and Shin (2002) found that college students' materialism is statistically associated with parental materialism, Baik and Park (2004) reported that male high school students' materialism is not correlated

with their mothers' materialism.

#### PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION

Empirical researches supporting the lineage perspective use the social learning theory and symbolic interactionism to explain generational transmission of attitudes. The social learning theory and symbolic interactionism point out parent-adolescent interactions as one of the main mechanisms of generational attitudinal linkage.

The social learning theory emphasizes that teens learn from observing significant others as their role models (Bandura, 1977). This theory argues that parents are the most important role models for their children in the latter's formation of values because of the unique position of parents in the lives of their children. Especially, regular interactions with their parents in many day-to-day activities provide children opportunities to imitate their parents. Also, the symbolic interaction perspective indicates that parents convey to their children how they are to act through symbolic interactions (Blumer, 1966), leading children to internalize and adopt parental attitudes to their performance.

These perspectives suggest that strong transmission of parental attitudes and practices occurs when children and parents often interact. Empirical studies support the transmitting role of parent-children communication. Fisher (2001) found that the frequency of communication enhances the correlation of the sexual attitudes of parents and adolescents. Brody, Moore, and Gleib (1994) reported that intimate relationships with fathers strengthen the similarities of parents' and children's beliefs about sex roles, child support, and teenage childbearing.

Consistent with these studies, Korean researches suggest that interactions with parents are important in the development and socialization of children. For example, warm and positive communication with parents enhances children's self-esteem (Kim and Lee, 2005). However, negative parental communication hampers children's psycho-social adjustment (Lee, Min, and Lee, 2005). Most researches report, though, that Korean adolescents hardly communicate with their parents, especially with their fathers (Kong, Lee, and Lee, 2005). A national report in 2005 showed that about one out of two teens (48.8%) feel that they lack opportunities to talk with their fathers, and one out of four teens (25.8%) feel the same way about their mothers (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2005).

## PARENTS' AND ADOLESCENTS' GENDER

Literature suggests that researches on attitudinal generational transmission should consider parents' and adolescents' genders because degrees of parent-children congruence differ for mothers and fathers and sons and daughters. However, previous studies do not report consistent patterns regarding the genders of two generations. While some studies have found that maternal influences are more important (Bao, Whitbeck, Hoyt, and Conger, 1999), others reported that fathers are more decisive (Rohner and Veneziano, 2001). Also, some researchers have found that degrees of generational transmission differ between boys and girls (Maccoby, 1990).

Moreover, the quantity and quality of parent-adolescent communication, a key mechanism of generational transmission, vary with parents' and children's genders. Concerning interactions between parents and their children in Korea, researches appear to have consistent conclusions. Girls are more likely than boys to communicate more frequently and openly with their parents (Kim and Kim, 2001), and mothers tend to interact with their children more often (Kong, Lee, and Lee, 2005) and to be more concerned about their children's opinions (Kim and Lee, 2005). These research results propose that studies on generational transmission should divide their samples according to parents' and adolescents' genders.

Therefore, I divided the original sample into four dyads of mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, and father-daughter and ran the same statistical analyses for these four groups. I found that results of multivariate analyses are substantively the same regardless of adolescents' gender. So in this paper, I report the results of the two groups, that is, a sample of mothers and adolescents and another sample of fathers and adolescents.

## OBJECTIVES

While many studies support the lineage perspective that the congruence of parents' and adolescents' attitudes occurs generally, accumulated evidence supports the feeble perspective that there is little correlation between generational attitudes. Empirical tests of these two perspectives suffer from sample limitations. Moreover, the social learning theory and symbolic interactionism suggest parent-children communication as a key mechanism of generational transmission.

This paper poses two research questions using a national representative sample of Korea. First, this study reveals whether or not parental beliefs about marriage are associated with adolescents' beliefs. Second, this study tests the transmitting role of parent-adolescent interactions by investigating whether or not transmission is stronger when parents and children interact frequently.

## DATA

The data for this study came from the 2003 Korean National Family Survey (hereafter referred to as "KNFS"). KNFS includes interviews with a representative national sample of 9,109 respondents aged 10 and above from 3,500 households. Trained interviewers visited households selected based on multi-stage area sampling, and encouraged the household members to take part in the study. The respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire independent of each other. The response rate was 64.7%. This article analyzes a sample of 1,184 Korean adolescents aged 10 to 18 and their mothers and fathers from KNFS.

KNFS has some advantages over the data used in previous studies. First, whereas previous studies dealt with a selected child-parent pair from non-representative samples, KNFS included information from a national representative sample of adolescents and their mother and father. Second, prior researches examined adolescents within a limited range of ages, but KNFS collected information from children aged 10 to 18.

## VARIABLES

*Attitudes to Marriage:* The major variables in this study's analysis were adolescents' and parents' attitudes to marriage. The respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with five statements: (1) It is OK to have a child without marriage, (2) It is better to get married than to remain single, (3) It is OK to cohabit without marital intention, (4) It is better to live together before marriage, and (5) Husbands and wives had better get divorced if they cannot solve their problems. The response scale ranged from 1 ("strongly agree") to 5 ("strongly disagree").

*Frequency of Parent-Children Communication:* This study investigates whether or not children internalize their parents' viewpoints through frequent communications between the two generations. The frequency of conversations was measured by the following three questions posed to

the adolescents: how often they (1) talked about their future with their parents, (2) talked with their parents casually, and (3) talked about their concerns with their parents. A four-point response was employed, ranging from "never" to "often". The responses to the three items were averaged to form a scale of frequency of communication ( $\alpha = 0.72$ ).

While KNFS has respectable information on both maternal and paternal attitudes, it did not ask the adolescents how often they interacted with their mothers and fathers separately. Studies generally report that while mothers have more opportunities than fathers to talk with their children, if teens communicate frequently with their mothers, they also interact frequently with their fathers (Kim and Kim, 2001 Kong, Lee, and Lee, 2005), suggesting that the inclusion of this aggregate item in the models may not cause serious trouble. It is noted, however, that the results of the analyses may require caution in interpretations.

*Control Variables:* The models of adolescents' attitudes to marriage include children's demographic characteristics and parental socioeconomic backgrounds, in addition to maternal and paternal attitudes. The models controlled the children's ages and genders because children tend to express liberal opinions with age and female teens are more open to divorce or cohabitation than their male counterparts (Yi and Park, 2002 Yoo, 2005). Maternal and paternal ages, education, and occupations were taken into account because adults are more liberal the younger they are, the lower their education level is, and the higher their occupation status is (Yoo, 2006). Due to relatively strong correlations between maternal and paternal features, these maternal and paternal social background variables were coded as dummy variables. Three dummy variables were employed to represent whether parents are in their 30s or below, 40s, or 50s or over. Four dummy variables were created to indicate whether parents are graduates of middle school or below, high school, two-year college, and four-year college or more. And three dummy variables were created to represent whether parents are out of work, have blue collar jobs or white collar jobs. Finally, a nine-point response was included in the models, which represented household incomes.

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of the variables in the analysis.



TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Independent Variables	
Adolescent	
Female	0.48
Age	13.74 (2.52)
Parental Age	
Mother: 30s or below	0.35
Mother: 40s	0.61
Mother: 50s and over	0.04
Father: 30s or below	0.11
Father: 40s	0.78
Father: 50s and over	0.11
Parental Education	
Mother: Middle School or below	0.13
Mother: High School	0.67
Mother: Two-Year College	0.07
Mother: Four-Year College or over	0.13
Father: Middle School or below	0.07
Father: High School	0.52
Father: Two-Year College	0.10
Father: Four-Year College or over	0.31
Parental Employment	
Mother: Out of Work	0.59
Mother: White Collar	0.35
Mother: Blue Collar	0.05
Father: Out of Work	0.02
Father: White Collar	0.53
Father: Blue Collar	0.46
Household Income	5.93 (1.68)
Communication with the Parents	2.78 (0.60)
N	1,184

\* Table entries are means and, in parentheses, standard deviations for continuous variables and percentage for categorical variables.

## METHODS

This study aims to test the association of maternal and paternal attitudes with marriage with their adolescent children's same attitudes. This study also attempts to examine whether or not day-to-day interactions between adolescents and their parents play a role in the generational transmission of their attitudes to marriage. For these objectives, differences in the adolescents', mothers' and fathers' attitudes to marriage were first examined, after which regression models were estimated to investigate the correlation of maternal and paternal attitudes with their adolescent children's attitudes. Ordered logistic regressions were estimated because this method is suitable for dependent variables whose categories are ordered but not interval-level measurements. Then some interaction terms were added between parent-children verbal exchanges and parental attitudes to the regression models to examine whether or not the generational associations of the attitudes differed according to the frequency of communication between the parents and their children.

## ANALYSIS

*Comparison of Parents' and Adolescents' Attitudes to Marriage*

This section compares how adolescents, mothers and fathers feel about marriage. Table 2 shows the averages of the three family members' responses to the five statements and the results of the t-tests between

**TABLE 2.** COMPARISONS OF ADOLESCENT'S, MOTHER'S AND FATHER'S ATTITUDES ABOUT MARRIAGE

	Adolescent	Mother	Father	Adolescent vs. Mother	Adolescent vs. Father	N
Single Parent	2.40	2.07	2.18	**	**	
Marriage over Singlehood	2.45	2.37	2.14	*	**	1,184
Cohabitation without Marital Intension	2.66	2.30	2.33	**	**	
Cohabitation as a Trial Marriage	2.83	2.40	2.38	**	**	
Divorce	3.02	2.93	2.83	*	**	

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

children and their parents.

Consistent with previous researches (Ministry of Gender Equality, 2003), this study found that Korean adolescents are more liberal than their mothers and fathers with respect to their beliefs about marriage. All the children's means were significantly larger than those of their parents. In particular, the teens and parents differed widely as to whether or not they affirmed cohabitation when a couple intended to get married. The differences with the mother and the father were .43 and .45, respectively. On the other hand, the generational gaps on the possibility of divorce were relatively small (.09 and .19 with the mother and the father, respectively), reflecting the recent trend of increasing divorces and the general toleration of marital disruption (Byun, 2004). Still, the adolescents held much more liberal attitudes towards marriage than their parents.

In absolute terms, however, Korean adolescents were found to be generally conservative regarding marriage. The first four means of the responses were tilted towards conservatism, with the last mean at around the middle. Especially, the Korean teens tended to believe that one should get married before having a baby and that one should not remain single during one's lifetime. They relatively accepted divorce, however, as a possible option when marriage was not salvageable.

Additional analyses indicated that on the whole, the female and male adolescents were similar in their orientations about marriage. However, boys were more likely than girls to believe that it is better to get married than not to get married ( $t = 2.62, p < .01$ ) and that it is fine to live together with marital intention ( $t = 2.40, p < .05$ ). Accordingly, the male adolescents did not differ from their mothers in their beliefs on the necessity of marriage and the possibility of divorce.

#### *Generational Association of Attitudes towards Marriage*

Five ordered logistic regression models were estimated to model the correlation of the fathers' and mothers' attitudes towards marriage with their adolescent children's attitudes towards the same, with several social and demographic variables controlled to test the generational transmission of attitudes. All the models below were estimated for girls and boys separately, and the same results were substantially obtained. Thus, the results of the analysis using the aggregate sample of adolescents are reported below.

On the whole, maternal and paternal socioeconomic factors were not

TABLE 3. ORDERED LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS OF ADOLESCENT'S ATTITUDES ABOUT MARRIAGE

Marriage over Singlehood	Single Paren		Marriage over Singlehood		Cohabitation without Marital Intention		Cohabitation as a Trial Marriage		Divorce	
	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.
Parental Attitude										
Mother	0.305	0.057**	0.175	0.058 **	0.332	0.056**	0.310	0.053**	0.087	0.055
Father	0.507	0.059**	0.378	0.059 **	0.426	0.056**	0.261	0.054**	0.307	0.056**
Adolescent										
Female	0.030	0.107	0.282	0.108 **	-0.074	0.107	-0.240	0.106*	0.036	0.107
Age	0.073	0.026**	0.044	0.026	0.124	0.026**	0.097	0.025**	0.118	0.026**
Parental Age										
Mother: 30s or below	Reference Group									
Mother: 40s	0.085	0.137	0.134	0.139	-0.046	0.137	0.165	0.136	0.022	0.138
Mother: 50s and over	0.354	0.355	0.563	0.355	0.086	0.368	0.840	0.361*	-0.044	0.363
Father: 30s or below	Reference Group									
Father: 40s	0.147	0.200	0.216	0.199	0.319	0.195	0.212	0.196	0.237	0.191
Father: 50s and over	-0.020	0.305	-0.202	0.304	0.401	0.302	-0.161	0.300	0.432	0.296
Parental Education										
Mother: Middle School or below	Reference Group									
Mother: High School	0.249	0.196	0.545	0.201 **	-0.003	0.200	0.412	0.194*	-0.074	0.198
Mother: Two-Year College	0.336	0.296	0.593	0.301 *	-0.014	0.298	0.259	0.294	0.089	0.289
Mother: Four-Year College or over	-0.042	0.256	0.802	0.264 **	0.121	0.258	0.468	0.254	-0.246	0.259
Father: Middle School or below	Reference Group									
Father: High School	-0.021	0.271	-0.066	0.278	-0.174	0.273	-0.310	0.272	0.150	0.279
Father: Two-Year College	0.016	0.323	-0.165	0.336	-0.328	0.332	-0.393	0.328	-0.015	0.333
Father: Four-Year College or over	0.224	0.315	-0.160	0.323	-0.250	0.317	-0.354	0.315	0.141	0.322
Parental Employment										
Mother: Out of Work	Reference Group									
Mother: White Collar	-0.006	0.118	0.028	0.119	-0.010	0.117	0.147	0.117	-0.126	0.118
Mother: Blue Collar	0.304	0.255	-0.005	0.245	0.152	0.247	0.251	0.249	0.449	0.253
Father: Out of Work	Reference Group									
Father: White Collar	-0.081	0.426	0.050	0.402	0.149	0.418	-0.338	0.417	0.851	0.423*
Father: Blue Collar	-0.179	0.431	0.061	0.409	0.117	0.425	-0.504	0.422	0.846	0.428*
Household Income	0.064	0.038	-0.033	0.039	0.049	0.039	0.042	0.039	0.047	0.038
Log Likelihood	-1568.396		-1537.292		-1577.921		-1626.351		-1627.715	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.057		0.032		0.058		0.040		0.028	
N	1,184									

\* p &lt; .05; \*\* p &lt; .01

associated with their children's beliefs about marriage. For example, children's orientations about single parenthood and cohabitation without marital intention did not differ even though their parents differed in age, education, occupation, and household income. Noticeable exceptions were that children of mothers who were highly educated were likely to think that it is better to get married than to remain single, and adolescent children of working fathers were likely to think that married couples had better get divorced if they could not solve their marital problems. However, the attitudes of adolescents from various social and economic backgrounds towards marriage generally did not vary a lot.

Both maternal and paternal attitudes, however, are important in children's views about marriage, cohabitation, and divorce. All but maternal orientations about divorce are statistically associated with their children's opinions about marriage, as opposed to weak associations of parental social and economic status with children's attitudes. For example, a one-point increase in maternal acceptance of cohabitation without marital intention is associated with an increase in the odds of the same attitude in any particular level or higher of 39% for adolescents ( $\exp[.332]=1.39$ ). Moreover, a one-point increase in paternal acceptance of out-of-wedlock childbirth is associated with an increase in the odds of the same attitude in any particular level or higher of 66% for adolescents ( $\exp[.507]=1.66$ ). Children whose mothers and fathers are open to single parenthood, single life, and cohabitation without marital intention or as a trial period express liberal opinions about these marital issues. Also, children whose fathers accept divorce as an alternative to a miserable marriage tend to confirm marital dissolution as a possible option in marital life.

#### PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION IN GENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF ATTITUDES ABOUT MARRIAGE

This section empirically tests whether or not adolescents internalize parental attitudes through frequent face-to-face interactions, by adding interaction terms to the models in Table 3. The models below were estimated for girls and boys separately, and almost the same results were found (not shown). Therefore, the results of the analysis from the total sample of female and male adolescents are reported below.

TABLE 4. ORDERED LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS OF ADOLESCENTS' ATTITUDES ABOUT MARRIAGE

	Single Parent				Marriage over Singlehood				Cohabitation without Marital Intension				Cohabitation as a Trial Marriage				Divorce							
	Mother		Father		Mother		Father		Mother		Father		Mother		Father		Mother		Father					
	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.	co.	s.e.				
Maternal Attitude	0.243	0.244			-0.553	0.260 *			-0.043	0.221			0.235	0.215			-0.020	0.229						
Paternal Attitude		0.065	0.262				-0.324	0.277					-0.254	0.226			.084	0.235				-0.261	0.235	
Communication with the Parents	-0.847	0.198 **	-1.010	0.222 **	-0.978	0.235 **	-0.835	0.223 **	-0.892	0.205 **	-1.051	0.209 **	-0.564	0.206 **	-0.629	0.214 **	-0.307	0.251	-0.685	0.248 **				
Maternal Attitude*	0.085	0.085			0.301	0.093 **			0.200	0.078 *			0.062	0.075			0.076	0.080						
Paternal Attitude*		0.191	0.092 *				0.274	0.099 **			0.294	0.080 **			0.103	0.082			0.213	0.082 **				
Log Likelihood			-1581.367					-1548.363																
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>		0.049	0.061		0.026	0	.035	0	0.049	0	.056	0	0.039	0	.035	0	0.019	0.019						
N																								

\* p &lt; .05, \*\* p &lt; .01

Note: All models include control variables in Table 1.

The social learning theory and symbolic interactionism suggest the interaction hypothesis that children are likely to internalize their parents' views as they make more frequent interactions with their parents.

Generally, the results of this study support this hypothesis, suggesting that parent-adolescent interactions may be key opportunities for parents to transmit their views about marriage to their children. This is especially applicable for fathers. For all the attitudes except that about cohabitation as a trial marriage, the correlation between the fathers' and their children's opinions were mediated by how often they talked with each other. If the children never talked about their future, concerns, and casual things with their fathers, their attitudes were hardly associated with their father's attitudes. If they often talked with their fathers, however, their orientations were strongly associated with their father's.

For adolescents who never talked about their concerns with their parents, a one-point increase in the paternal attitude towards 'marriage over singleness' was associated with a decrease in the odds of reporting this attitude in any particular level or higher of 5% ( $\exp[-.324 + .2741] = .95$ ). However, one positive change in this paternal attitude is related to an increase in the odds of 116% for children who frequently talked with their parents about their concerns ( $\exp[-.324 + .2744] = 2.16$ ). Also, while a one-point increase in the paternal attitude about divorce was associated with a decrease in the odds of reporting acceptance of single parenthood in any particular level or higher of 5% for children who never casually talked with their parents ( $\exp[-.261 + .2131] = .95$ ), one positive change in this paternal attitude was related to an increase in the odds of 80% for adolescents who frequently talked with their parents ( $\exp[-.261 + .2134] = 1.80$ ).

For mothers, two models using the attitudes about 'marriage over singleness' and 'cohabitation without marital interaction' support the role of parent-children interaction. Among children who never made interactions with their parents, a one-point increase in the maternal attitude about marriage vs. singleness was associated with a decrease in the odds of reporting acceptance of single life in any particular level or higher of 22% for children who never talked with their parents ( $\exp[-.553 + .3011] = .78$ ). However, if the adolescents often interacted with their mothers, a one-point increase in this maternal attitude was associated with a 91% increase in the odds ( $\exp[-.553 + .3014] = 1.91$ ).

## DISCUSSIONS

This study examines whether or not there is generational transmission of attitudes towards marriage and whether or not parent-adolescent verbal interactions act as a transmitting mechanism in Korea, using information from a representative sample of adolescents and their mothers and fathers.

The research results indicate strong generational associations between adolescents' and their parents' attitudes towards marriage in Korea. Adolescents whose mothers or fathers are liberal with respect to cohabitation, marriage, and divorce also tend to think of cohabitation and divorce as possible options and deny the absoluteness of marriage in life. This Korean case provides strong evidence of the lineage perspective in that many Korean families are recently having a harder time getting together and Korean adolescents are spending more and more time with their friends at school or private educational institutions. In these conditions, Korean adolescents tend to internalize parental viewpoints about cohabitation, marriage, and divorce.

This study also found that parent-adolescent interactions play a key role in generational transmission of attitudes towards marriage. When parents and children communicate frequently, stronger generational associations occur. Day-to-day interactions with parents repeatedly provide adolescents chances to observe and internalize what their parents think about cohabitation, marriage, and divorce, as the social learning theory and symbolic interactionism suggest.

Researchers and commentators have recently been expressing concerns about hastily widening generational gaps in attitudes and orientations in Korea. Consistent with this concern, this study also confirms significant differences between parents' and children's attitudes towards marriage. However, at the same time, this study prescribes various forms of interaction and contact as remedies for this social concern. In fact, many Korean adolescents and young adults still accept their parents as the central figures in their lives. For example, seven out of 10 young Korean adults in their 20s believe that they should follow their parents if they have different opinions, and eight of them think they have to consult their parents when they need to decide on all sorts of familial matters (Ministry of Gender Equality, 2003). Therefore, frequent interactions between parents and their children can narrow generational gaps in attitudes and behaviors.



Clearly, this study has some limitations. First, the data used are cross-sectional. Therefore, although the results, for example, support the role of interactions in the generational transmission of attitudes towards marriage in Korea, the possibility of reversed causality that parents and children who share similar attitudes tend to talk often with each other cannot be eliminated. Thus, research is necessary to replicate these findings with longitudinal designs to establish clear causality sequences. Second, KNFS asks how often adolescents interact with their parents but does not distinguish the separate frequencies of interactions with the mother and the father, which impairs the results of the analyses on the role of parent-adolescent interactions. While previous researches indicated that the frequencies of maternal and paternal interactions are strongly correlated (Kim and Kim, 2001; Kong, Lee, and Lee, 2005), it would be better to include separate items in the models.

Despite these limitations, this study reveals strong and consistent correlations between parents' and adolescents' attitudes towards marriage in Korea, a country which, in the recent decade, has observed significant generational gaps in attitudes towards family and marriage. This provides evidence that parents are still important agents of socialization to their children even in a society where children spend less time with parents and more time with friends. This study also shows that parent-adolescent verbal interaction is a key process in this generational transmission of attitudes. Thus, this study suggests that understanding the transmission of attitudes of parents to their adolescent children requires attention to various forms of generational interactions that enhance opportunities for observational learning and reinforce imitations in the transmission of attitudes.

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