

Collectivism and Its Relationships to Age, Education, Mode of Marriage and Living in Koreans*

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This study was conducted to find out what kind of relationship the Korean traditional collectivism has with sex, age, level of education, and type of marriage. This study investigated 580 married men and women between the age of 31 and 65. Equal number of subjects were sampled for each age and sex group. The results showed that there was no significant sex difference in collectivistic tendency. There was, however, a significant difference in collectivistic tendency between age groups. This is, for both men and women, the older the group, the more collectivistic they were. There was a significant difference in collectivistic tendency among educational groups. This is, the higher the level of education received, the less collectivistic they were. There was no significant difference between subjects married for love and those whose marriage was arranged. Subjects living with parents and those not-living with parents did not show any significant difference in their tendency of collectivism.

Empirically-oriented scientific psychology has historically allied itself methodologically with the natural sciences rather than the social sciences. Perhaps as a consequence, many psychologists not only have as implicit goals the discovery of empirical relationships and the formulation of integrative

theories that are universal significance, but they also appear to assume that their research findings have this universality. Thus the particular historical period or sociocultural context in which data have been collected is presumably of little or no importance (Spence, 1985).

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But it seems indisputable that many of the empirical findings and theoretical concepts must be bound to particular cultures and times. Whatever their intentions, psychologists are the product of their society and time, and their construction of social reality is shaped by the world view and values of the culture in which they were reared. Accordingly, greater attention to the cultural milieu in which the real life behaviors of purported interest occur may lead to more useful and controlled investigations and to richer, more significant theories.

One of the major constructs in theoretical discussions in cross-cultural psychology is that of collectivism-individualism (Leung and Bond, 1984). Collectivists are more concerned with the consequences of their behaviors on their in-group members and are more likely to sacrifice personal interests for the attainment of collective interests. Individualists are less concerned with the consequences of their behaviors on people in social environment, be they of the same group or different ones. Individualists are more concerned with the relation of their behaviors to their own needs, interests, and goals.

After an extensive review of the literature on individualism and collectivism, Triandis (1983) has defined individualism and collectivism on the basis of in-group/out-group differences. He defined collectivism as the following :

great emphasis on (a) the views, needs, and goals of the ingroup rather than that of oneself, (b) social norms and duty defined by the ingroup rather than on pleasure, (c) beliefs shared with the ingroup rather than on beliefs that distinguish oneself from ingroup, and (d) great readiness to cooperate with ingroup members.

The corresponding definition of individualism is as follows :

great emphasis on (a) one's own views, needs, and goals rather than those of others, (b) on

pleasure, fun, personal enjoyment rather than on social norms or duty as defined by others, (c) one's beliefs that are unique, and (d) maximizing one's own outcomes.

Using individualism-collectivism construct, much interesting research has been carried out. Hofstede (1980) reported a positive relationship between the individualism and McClelland's need of affiliation. He commented, "In the most individualistic countries, affective relationships . . . must be acquired by each individual personality. Thus making friendships becomes more of an issue for the individual." Several reviews have suggested a prominent theme of fear of rejections as inherent in the need of affiliation construct (Wheeler, Reis & Bond, 1989).

Using the experience sampling technique (Csikszentmihalyi, Larson, & Prescott, 1977), McAdams and Constantian (1983) concluded that those high in need of affiliation desire relationships to fill the perceived lack. Those high in need of intimacy find their relationships satisfactory and do not mind being alone. Wheeler, Reis and Bond (1989) suggested that individualists are relatively high in need of affiliation and that collectivists are relatively high in need of intimacy.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of collectivists is that they delineate sharply between the ingroup and outgroup. Leung (1988) found that collectivist Chinese were more likely than individualist Americans to pursue a conflict with a stranger but less likely with a friend. Harmonious relationships with members of the ingroup are essential, but the outgroups can be damned. Individualists, in contrast, do not make such a sharp distinction because who is "in" depends more on the activity or situation. In other words, collectivists are collectivistic only toward ingroup members. Toward outgroup members they become individualistic.

— The Social Character of Koreans —

The characteristics of members of a nation or ethnic group are defined by many terms such as 'national character' or 'social character', but because these are basically 'relatively persistent personality characteristics and behavior patterns of members of a society', the present study will call them social characters.

There has been a continuous interest in the social character of Koreans, but there are few and integrated researches and most of them are just subjective and fragmented descriptions. The following are the more systematic researches of social scientists among them.

Choi Jae Suk (1965), through a content analysis of words that have been used since old times, defined the social character of Koreans as the following :

First, Koreans are highly family-oriented. That is, Koreans have a strong tendency of placing high values on maintaining and the function of family. To them family is important as it is the basic unit of living group. They also have a tendency of viewing idealistic social relationships as the interpersonal relationships of family.

Second, Koreans acknowledge the authority (power) of government officials. They respect the occupation of government officials and give it absolute authority. Everyone tends to acknowledge this.

Third, the behavior patterns are clear and differentiated by social class for maintaining the system of social classes and the the form of executing these behavior patterns is well-developed.

Fourth, to depend on groups, there is a tendency of taking the legitimacy of forming factions and factious behaviors for granted. Lastly, individuals are not differentiated from the community. That is, the individual characters don't get expressed well. Therefore, there is a tendency of ignoring the life of each individual, emphasizing the interrelations among social members, and

ignoring the responsibility of individuals.

There is another interesting research related to the social consciousness of Koreans by Koh, Kurzeja, Koh, and Sakauye (1984). They defined cognitive schema as the values, attitudes, standards, or morals related to the learned behaviors or personalities formed in a social or cultural system and studied as what kind of characteristics this cognitive schema shows up among Caucasian, second generation Japanese-American, and Korean elderly people. The results show that Korean elderly people show strong collectivism, duty and responsibility, class consciousness, obedience, and dependency. They show specially a great amount of interest in the family's honor or relatives.

These researchers agree that collectivism is one of the most distinctive characteristics of Korean culture. According to Kim (1987) which reviewed studies on the social character of Koreans published since 1960, including the above studies, collectivism was considered to be the first characteristic of Korean's social character. That is, rather than expressing one's own individuality and developing his ability independently, Koreans strongly tend to identify themselves with their ingroup and prefer group cohesiveness, immersing themselves in the ingroup's activities, and group similarity, forming a consensus of opinions rather than respecting individual opinions. In relation to such collectivism Kim(1987)suggests that the second characteristic of Korean's social character is the fixed sense of order. That is, because the group is more emphasized than individuals, the sense of order is emphasized as a rule for the diverse members to form harmonious relationships within the group. Therefore, the tendency of trying to resolve conflicts that can occur among members and their interests with the authority of the person with an upper rank and the obedience of the person with a lower rank shows

up. Besides these two characteristics he mentions emotionality and the tradition of shamanism.

As it can be deduced from the above results, most of the researchers that have studied the social character of Koreans mention the strong collectivistic tendency as the first characteristic. This collectivism has a big influence on family life and social life. But today Korea is showing many changes in family life or social life. The traditional large-family system is quickly deteriorating and is substituted by the nuclear-family system centering on the husband and wife. The distribution of resources used to be done by the age and order, but is now changing towards distribution by ability. As a result, the family and society formed around the elderly are now gradually changing towards a family and society centered on the young. This change will probably appear more clearly in the generations that have been influenced by the education system and values of America, where individualism is considered to be most developed. That is, the more education one has received and the younger, the less collectivistic tendency is expected. An example of such tendency is the change in the mode of selecting one's spouse preferred by Koreans.

According to the investigation by Lee (1990), in 1958, the percentage of people preferring arranged-marriage (parents first choose the potential spouse for their children and then the persons-to-be-married consult together on whether they should marry each other), 35.9%, and that of people preferring a love marriage (persons concerned decide first to get married and then get the permission from their parents), 35.2%, were very close. However, according to the investigation done by Cho (1980) twenty years later the preference percentage of arranged marriage dropped to 16.7% and the preference percentage of love marriage increased to 77.7%. However, considering the fact that the percentage of people preferring the method of

deciding marriage just by the persons-concerned without consulting the parents was only 3.4%, we can see that the collectivistic tendency is still being maintained. Thus it can be said that both collectivism and individualism are present in today's Korea and influence the social and the emotional life of Koreans.

Research Objectives

As discussed in the above it can be hypothesized that the collectivistic tendency in Korea differs by age, education, mode of marriage and the mode of living with parents. Therefore, our study's main objective is to find out what kind of relationships the collectivistic tendency has with these four variables. Four working hypotheses are made and tested. Our hypotheses are: first, higher the age, stronger the collectivistic tendency; second, higher the level of education completed, weaker the collectivistic tendency; third, people by arranged marriage than love marriage will have a stronger collectivistic tendency, and fourth, people living with their parents will have a stronger collectivistic tendency than that of people living without their parents.

In addition to the main objective the present study also looked for the presence of sex difference in collectivistic tendency and the relationship between collectivistic tendency and subjective psychological well-being, such as marital, family and life satisfaction.

II. Research Method and Procedure

1) Subjects

The present study investigated 580 married men and women between the age of 31 and 65. Equal number of subjects were sampled for each age and sex group. The age variable contained three

levels, 31-40 years old, 41-50 years old, & 51-65 years old.

2) Measurement Instruments

The present study was conducted as a part of the Pan Asia Family Study, in which 14 countries are participating. The questionnaire used is the Korean-translated version of the original questionnaire used by all 14 countries. The questionnaire is divided into six parts, and this article is based on the data of part (collectivism vs. individualism) and part (demographic data and others). Part consists of thirteen items on collectivism and three items on marriage satisfaction, family life satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Subjects were to rate each item on a seven-point scale (see appendix for questionnaire).

3) Procedure

Data was collected from October 1st, 1989 till December 14th, 1989 by undergraduate and graduate students of psychology, who received instructions for the questionnaire and were familiar with the research objectives. Questionnaires with unanswered items or responses that are clear not trustworthy were excluded from the data by the supervisor.

2. Sample Characteristics

Level of income, which was one of the sample characteristics measured, was answered by choosing one of the five levels: high, higher-middle, middle, lower-middle, and low, but only few subjects responded as 'high' or 'low'. Thus the income level was recoded by three levels of high, middle, and low. Level of education completed was divided into five levels: junior-high school, high-school, professional school, college, and graduate school or higher. The distinction between professional school and college was vague, so level of education completed was recoded by junior-high school, high school, and professional school or higher. The distribution of sample

<Table 1> Distribution of Sample Characteristics

	Number of cases	Percent
Total	580	100.0
Sex		
Male	307	53.0
Female	272	46.9
Age		
31-40	219	37.7
41-50	204	35.2
51-65	157	27.1
Level of education		
Middle school	219	37.7
High school	110	19.0
College or higher	251	43.3
Income		
High	177	30.5
Middle	317	54.7
Low	86	14.8
Living/not-living with parents		
Living with	151	26.0
Not-living with	429	74.0

characteristics are presented in <table 1>.

III. Result

Collectivism, marital satisfaction, family satisfaction, and life satisfaction were measured on a seven-point scale. The means and standard deviations for the four variables are presented in <table 2>. The average score of item #1-12 was used as the score of collectivistic tendency (item #6 was recoded in the opposite direction). Item #13 was omitted from the analysis because it was found to be inappropriate for this study.

〈Table 2〉 Means and Standard Deviations of All Subjects for Collectivism, Marriage Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction

	M	SD
Collectivism	5.15*	0.79
Marriage Satisfaction	5.34**	1.31
Family Satisfaction	5.40	1.27
Life satisfaction	4.87	1.49

* higher the mean, stronger the collectivistic tendency

** higher the mean, stronger the satisfaction

1. Collectivistic tendency as a function of sample characteristics

1) Collectivistic Tendency as a function of age

The means and standard deviations of collectivistic tendency for each age group are presented in 〈table 3〉.

〈Table 3〉 Group Means and Standard Deviations for Collectivistic Tendency

Age	M	SD
31-40	4.98	0.78
41-50	5.14	0.73
51-65	5.34	0.82

The differences of the age groups' collectivistic tendency were tested by analysis of variance and the result, presented in 〈table 4〉, showed that the differences were statistically significant ($F(2, 557)$

$=9.90, p < .001$). The post-hoc comparison result, following Duncan's procedure, show that differences between all groups were significant at the level of $p = .05$. That is, the higher age group has a stronger tendency of collectivism.

To test the sex difference in collectivistic tendency of each age group, analysis of variance was used. The result showed that men show a significant difference by age ($F(2, 290) = 6.19, p < .002$), and according to the post-hoc comparison result only the differences between the age groups of thirties and forties, and the age groups of thirties and fifties were statistically significant. Women also showed significant differences ($F(2, 255) = 5.56, p < .004$), and according to the post-hoc comparison result only the differences between the age groups of thirties and fifties and of forties and fifties were significant. That is, for both men and women, as the age increases, the collectivistic tendency also increases. In case of men, the degree of collectivistic tendency changed sharply around the age of forty, and in case of women, the degree of collectivistic tendency changed sharply around the age of fifty. These findings indicate that though men and women both displayed a stronger tendency of collectivism as they got older, the point where the collectivistic tendency increased considerably in men preceded that of women by ten years.

2) Collectivistic tendency as a function of sex

The means and standard deviations for col-

〈Table 4〉 Analysis of Variance for Collectivistic Tendency and Age

Source of variation	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Variance estimate	F
Between	2	11.97	5.98	9.90**
Within	557	336.53	0.60	
Total	559	348.50		

** $p < 0.001$

<Table 5> Means and Standard Deviations for Collectivistic Tendency of Male and Female

	Collectivistic tendency							
	Total		31-40		41-50		51-65	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Male	5.14	0.83	4.90	0.79	5.18	0.73	5.29	0.88
Female	5.18	0.75	5.05	0.76	5.11	0.73	5.42	0.71

lectivistic tendency of male and female are presented in <Table 5>.

The sex difference in collectivistic tendency was tested by t-test, but the sex difference was not statistically significant. The sex difference was tested for each age group, but none of them was statistically significant. This result showed that there was not a sex difference in collectivistic tendency regardless of age.

3) Collectivistic tendency as a function of education

The means and standard deviations for collectivistic tendency of all three education groups are presented in <table 6>.

<Table 6> Means and Standard Deviations for Collectivistic Tendency of education groups

	M	SD
Middle school	5.27	0.77
High school	5.29	0.79
College or higher	4.98	0.79

The differences in collectivistic tendency of the education groups were tested by analysis of variance and the result showed that they were statistically significant ($F(2, 559)=9.85$, $p < .0001$). According to post-hoc comparisons the collective tendencies of groups with junior-high school and

high-school level of education did not differ significantly, but the tendencies of groups with junior-high school and professional school or higher level of education differed significantly(<table 7>).

Thus, the higher the level of education received, the lower the collectivistic tendency. The level of professional school is the boundary line where the collectivistic tendency decreased considerably.

<Table 7> Summary of Analysis of Variance for Collectivistic Tendency and Level of Education Completed

Source of variation	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Variance estimate	F
Between	2	12.08	6.04	9.85**
Within	559	342.74	0.61	
Total	561	354.82		

** $P < 0.001$

After controlling for the age variable, which is thought to have an effect on collectivistic tendency, analysis of covariance was performed to test whether collectivistic tendency changes as a function of level of education completed. The result showed that the differences in collectivistic tendencies of the education groups were significant ($F(2, 559)=6.24$, $p < .002$). That is, even after removing the age effect, the group with higher level

of education completed had a lower collectivistic tendency.

4) Collectivistic tendency as a function of mode of marriage

The difference in collectivistic tendency of the two marriage-groups was tested for significance. Age variable was once again controlled because the older subjects' marriages were probably mostly arranged by their parents. The test result showed no significant difference in collectivistic tendency between the love-marriage group ($M=5.06$, $SD=.78$) and the arranged-marriage group ($M=5.23$, $SD=.82$) ($F(1, 523)=2.08$, $p=.15$).

5) Collectivistic tendency as a function of living/not-living with parents

The difference in collectivistic tendency between subjects living with their parents and subjects not-living with their parents was tested. analysis of covariance was performed to control for the age variable. The finding indicated that those living with their parents ($M=5.15$, $SD=.70$) and not-living with their parents ($M=5.10$, $SD=.79$) did not show a significant difference in collectivistic tendency.

Summing up these results, the higher age group had a stronger tendency of collectivism and the group with higher education had a weaker tendency of collectivism. And there was not any significant difference in collectivistic tendency by sex, type of marriage, and living/not-living with parents.

2. The Relationship between collectivistic tendency and satisfaction

To find out the relationship between collectivistic tendency and satisfaction of the whole sample of subjects, correlations between the variables were calculated. The correlation coefficient of family life satisfaction and collectivistic tendency was $r=.197$, significant at the level of $p=.0001$. The correlation coefficient of marriage satisfaction and collectivistic tendency was $r=.133$, and that of life satisfaction and collectivistic tendency was $r=.118$, both significant at the level of $p=.01$. However, correlations calculated for each sex was only significant in case of men. None of the three correlations was significant for women (see <table 8>). Though the correlations were not very high, these results showed that people with strong tendency of collectivism tend to have high satisfaction. This is especially the case for men.

IV. Discussion

The present study was conducted to find out what kind of relationship the Korean traditional collectivism has with sex, age, level of education, and type of marriage of subjects.

First of all, there was not a significant sex difference in collectivistic tendency as we have expected. However, there was a significant difference in collectivistic tendencies between age groups. That

<Table 8> Correlation Coefficients of Collectivistic Tendency and Satisfaction

	Collectivistic tendency		
	Total (N = 527)	Male (N = 273)	Female (N = 245)
Marriage satisfaction	.1331*	.2184**	.0962
Family satisfaction	.1937**	.2797**	.1447
Life satisfaction	.1181*	.2122**	.0238

* $p < 0.01$ ** $p < 0.001$

is, for both men and women, the older the group, the more collectivistic they were. But for men the collectivistic tendency was divided around the age of forty. For women it was divided around the age of fifty. But because our study used a cross-sectional method, we cannot say that collectivistic tendency increases with age. That is, it is not possible to know whether an ontologically programmed developing change will occur as a person gets older. All we know is that there is a difference in collectivistic tendency among the different age groups.

There was a significant difference in collectivistic tendency among education groups. That is, the higher the level of education received, the collectivistic tendency decreases. Even after controlling for age influencing the tendency of collectivism, the group with higher education had a weaker collectivistic tendency than that of lower education. And the education level of professional college or higher is the boundary that delineates the high and low of collectivistic tendency. This is very interesting from the perspective of how much effect education has on maintaining a society's traditional values. That is, under the present Korean education system the education up to high-school has an influence on students in the direction of maintaining the traditional collectivism, but education higher than high-school level affects the students in the opposite direction.

Different from what we have expected there was not a significant difference in collectivistic tendency between subjects married for love and those whose marriage was arranged. Because it was thought that the type of marriage is more likely to be arranged as the age of subjects increases, the age variable was controlled, but still the collectivistic tendency did not differ by the type of marriage. Therefore, it can be said that the type of marriage is decided by the individual's situation at the time of

marriage, not by the collectivistic tendency of the individual.

Subjects living with parents and those not-living with parents did not show any significant difference in their tendency of collectivism. That is, it can be said that the decision of living or not-living with parents has nothing to do with the collectivistic tendency of the subjects.

From examining the relationships among collectivistic tendency and satisfaction, the correlation of family life satisfaction and collectivism was significant. That is, the stronger the collectivistic tendency the more satisfaction one has of his/her family life. Similar results appeared in the collectivistic relationships with marital satisfaction and with life satisfaction. That is, the stronger the collectivistic tendency, the more satisfied one is of his/her marriage and life in general. However, the pattern differed for men and women. That is, for men the correlations between collectivistic tendency and marriage satisfaction, family life satisfaction, and life satisfaction were all significant, but for women none of the three correlations was significant. This means that how much the main stream values of the society and the values of the individual agree with each other affects the emotional satisfaction more in men than women. There should be follow-up studies to find out why such sex difference exists.

Since our study used the cross-sectional method, we were able to see the difference in collectivistic tendency of different age groups but there is a shortcoming of not being able to know the changes in collectivistic tendency with age. Therefore, to find out how much today's Korea has been changing, a longitudinal study should be conducted together.

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Section IV. Collectivism vs. Individualism

The following statements are related to general family orientation. Please indicate the level of your agreement with each statement on the 7 step agree-disagree continuum from SA (strongly agree) to SD (strongly disagree).

1. Individual values should develop from family values.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
2. Family values as a whole are more important than individual values.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
3. A primary function of the family is for the growth and satisfaction of the whole family as a unit rather than for the individual.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
4. A major purpose of having children is to family as a unit rather than for the individual.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
5. People should respect the traditional value of marriage.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
6. The major reason that people work hard in life is for their own good (and satisfaction) rather than for their families.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
7. People should always consider the impact of their behavior for the name of the family.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
8. Family member should function as a family rather than separate individuals.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
9. Family member should consider family interests above personal interests.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
10. Relations among in-laws should be long-lasting because in-laws are part of family.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
11. Even grown up, siblings should be as close and caring as when they were young.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
12. For the sake of children, parents should sacrifice their own interest.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
				N				
13. On the continuum of individualism (individuals as the primary concern) and collectivism (family as the primary concern), you are more toward :								
Individualism	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	collectivism
				N				

14. Overall, you are satisfied with your marriage.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
					N			
15. Overall, you are satisfied with your family life.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
					N			
16. Overall, you are satisfied with your ownlife.	SA	:	:	:	:	:	:	SD
					N			

집단주의와 나이, 교육, 결혼 및 주거 형태와의 관계

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집단주의적이던 한국문화가 급속히 개인주의적 문화로 변화되고 있다는 주장들이 있어 왔는데, 본 연구의 목적은 이러한 추세의 사실여부를 확인하고, 집단주의의 경향이 성별, 연령, 교육수준, 결혼만족도, 가정만족도, 생활만족도, 결혼형태(연애, 중매), 부모와의 동거여부등의 변인과 어떠한 관련이 있는지를 알아보는 것이다. 조사대상자는 자녀를 가진 31세이상, 65세 이하의 580명(남자: 308명, 여자: 272)이었다. 첫째 가설은 연령이 높을수록 집단주의의 경향이 강할 것이라는 것이었고, 둘째 가설은 교육수준이 높을수록 집단주의의 경향이 강할 것이라는 것이었다. 자료분석 결과, 집단주의는 연령과 정적인 상관이 있었고, 교육수준과는 부적인 상관이 있었다. 즉, 연령이 높을수록 집단주의의 경향이 높았고, 교육수준이 높을수록 집단주의의 경향은 낮았다. 이러한 결과는 한국문화가 개인주의적인 방향으로 변하고 있다는 주장을 지지해 주는 것으로 두 가설을 지지했다. 한편 예상과는 달리 연애결혼이 중매결혼보다 집단주의의 경향이 강할 것이라는 가설과 부모와 동거하는 경우가 별거하는 경우보다 집단주의의 경향이 강할 것이라는 가설은 부정되었다. 결혼형태와 부모와의 동거여부에 따라서는 집단주의에 유의미한 차이가 없었다. 집단주의의 경향과 결혼만족도, 가정만족도, 생활만족도사이에는 성별에 따라 다른 결과가 나타났는데, 남자의 경우 집단주의의 경향은 세 가지 만족도와 정적인 상관이 있었고 여자의 경우에는 유의미한 상관이 없었다.