

결혼유형과 스포츠활동 참여유형에 따른 결혼건강과 결혼생활만족의 차이에 관한 분석

Investigation on Marital Health and Marital Life Satisfaction based on Types of Marriage and Sport Activity Participation

최철환

경희대학교 체육학부

Chulhwan Choi(chulhwan.choi@khu.ac.kr)

요약

많은 국제결혼가정들은 그들이 이전에 경험해보지 못한 상당한 수준의 스트레스를 새로운 문화에 적응하기 위해 경험한다. 본 연구는 결혼의 유형과 스포츠활동 참여유형이 결혼건강과 결혼생활만족에 미치는 영향을 연구했다. 329명의 참여자들은 결혼유형(국제결혼/국내결혼)과 스포츠활동 참여유형(배우자와 함께/따로)에 따라 총 4개의 그룹으로 나뉘어졌으며 일원다변량 분산분석을 실시하여 결혼건강과 결혼생활만족의 그룹 간 차이를 확인했다. 결과적으로 문화적 그리고 언어적 차이와는 상관없이, 배우자와 함께 스포츠 활동에 참여한 응답자들이 그렇지 못한 응답자들보다 4개의 요인(유대감, 의사소통, 가치공유, 결혼생활만족)에서 높은 결과를 보였다. 본 연구는 배우자와 함께 참여하는 스포츠활동이 결혼생활에 긍정적 영향을 준다는 것을 확인하였으며 그러한 결과는 다문화사회에서 사람들의 더 나은 결혼생활을 돕기 위한 통찰력 있는 자료를 제공할 수 있을 것이다.

■ 중심어 : | 스포츠참여 | 국제결혼 | 다문화사회 | 결혼건강 | 결혼생활만족 |

Abstract

Many international marriage immigrants experience a considerable amount of stress while adapting to a new culture they have never experienced before. This study examines the effects of marriage type and participation type in sport activity on marital health and marital life satisfaction. The 329 participants were divided into four groups based on marriage type and sport activity type. A multivariate analysis of variance was performed to explore differences in marital health and marital life satisfaction among groups. Results revealed that regardless of cultural and linguistic differences, respondents who enjoyed sport activities with their spouses had relatively higher mean scores across four factors (marital bond, marital communication, marital value-sharing, and marital life satisfaction) than couples who did not. This study found sport activity participation positively impacted marital life, and results would provide insightful data to help people achieve a happier married life in multicultural society.

■ keyword : | Sport Participation | International Marriage | Multicultural Society | Marital Health | Marital Life Satisfaction |

I. Introduction

Recently, the number of people opting for international marriages has increased consequent to the rapid transformation from a mono-ethnic to multi-cultural nation, similar to Western countries[1]. According to a population trends report[2], although the number of marriages decreased 2.6% from the previous year to 257,600, the number of international marriages increased 8.9% to approximately 22,700 during the same period.

However, many international marriage immigrants experience a considerable amount of stress while adapting to a new culture they have never experienced before[3]. Communication difficulties, especially stemming from different languages or ways of thinking between couples, make it difficult to live in a foreign country[4]. These difficulties, if not properly resolved, may lead to serious marital conflict. Conflicts arising in marital life from various causes can reduce the overall level of satisfaction with the marriage itself[5]. In particular, there is a negative effect on physical and mental health[6], and in severe cases, such conflicts may lead to divorce[7][8].

As mentioned earlier, marital life satisfaction is the most important factor in a couple's life. Mostly, interaction between couples significantly affects the level of marital life satisfaction[9]. However, since each couple lived in a different culture and background, there are considerable problems in the process of interaction[10]. In this environment, the fact that couples participate in sport activities together does not just mean they spend more time together but that they also strengthen their interaction to facilitate communication[11], which plays a

positive role in the marital bond, intimacy, and cohesion[12]. In this regard, it has been shown that couples who participate in sport activities together have a higher level of satisfaction with their marital lives than those who do not[13][14]. Among other things, international marriage immigrants with limited communication can strengthen the communication with their partners by participating in sport activities together to form stronger marital bonds and enhance the quality of life through value-sharing[15].

1. Marital Health

Since ancient times, married people have desired a harmonious family life. Lately, however, according to a study[2], the number of divorces has increased by 2.5% from the previous year. Divorce is becoming another social problem that can lead to family disintegration. Marital relationship is a topic often discussed when referring to divorce. "Marital health" is a technical term referring to a couple's positive or negative relationship. Different viewpoints on marital health in the academic community means consensus has not been reached on the topic. Referring to the opinions of other scholars, [16] defined a healthy marital relationship as one with smooth interaction between the couple, resulting in psychological security. In addition, healthy couples have been defined as those who can effectively solve given problems through communication and have a high degree of cohesion and a strong bond[17]. In other words, couples with a healthy relationship act favorably toward each other and enhance the quality of or satisfaction with their marital lives by creating an atmosphere in which they can

comfortably present their thoughts and opinions to their spouses[18].

2. Marital Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a subjective judgment of the level of overall satisfaction with one's life[19]. Specifically, marital life satisfaction refers to people's emotions regarding their marital lives[20], which may vary depending on the difference between expectations before marriage and actual outcomes thereof[21]. Many factors affect the level of marital life satisfaction. First, studies show that women with higher educational backgrounds have higher marital life satisfaction[22]. Furthermore, the marital life satisfaction of those who are not sexually active or not satisfied with their sexual lives is approximately 50-70% lower than those who are[23]. Furthermore, occupation, income, length of marriage, number of children, and religion significantly impact marital life satisfaction[24].

Previous studies showed that spouses who co-participate in sport activities are more satisfied with their marriages than those who do not[13][14]. Accordingly, [25] confirmed that sport activities involving physically energetic pursuits between couples benefitted their psychological well-being because of factors like relaxation of tension, depression, anxiety, and stress, as well as improved physical health. Overall, it was observed that a couple's mutual participation in sport activities directly contributed to increased marital life satisfaction. As the number of multi-cultural families continue to grow, there is also a notable increase in the diversity of conflicts arising from different social values, languages, cultures, and backgrounds[4]. The purpose of

this study is to empirically compare and analyze the differences between marital health and marital life satisfaction with spouses who regularly participate in sport activities. By examining the core values of marital bliss, the results may provide insightful data to help people achieve a happier married life.

II. Methodology

1. Data Collection

To explore the differences in marital health and marital life satisfaction in relation to the type of marriage(international or domestic) and type of sport activity(with or without spouse), married candidates aged over 20 years who regularly participated in recreational sport activities were selected from five Korean sports centers(three in Seoul and two in Gyeonggi Province) via purposive sampling. Participants were pre-informed of the study and filled in the survey prepared in English and Korean according to their language ability. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires over a three-month period between January and April 2019 and analyzed using a cross-sectional research design.

500 questionnaires were distributed and 329 questionnaires which were completed voluntarily could be included in the analysis after excluding incomplete 171 surveys. Independent variables—questions about current marriage type(international or domestic marriage) and type of participation in sport activities(with or without spouse)—were established. Participants were divided into four groups. Group 1 comprised domestic married couples who participated in sport activities

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Age	20s	8(7.1%)	10(10.5%)	12(18.5%)	7(12.3%)
	30s	22(19.6%)	22(23.2%)	13(20.0%)	13(22.8%)
	40s	28(25.0%)	24(25.3%)	17(26.2%)	14(24.6%)
	50s	31(27.7%)	26(27.4%)	13(20.0%)	15(26.3%)
	Over 60	23(20.5%)	13(13.7%)	10(15.4%)	8(14.0%)
Gender	Male	76(67.9%)	66(69.5%)	52(80.0%)	40(70.2%)
	Female	36(32.1%)	29(30.5%)	13(20.0%)	17(29.8%)
Marriage Duration (years)	Under 10	33(29.5%)	30(31.6%)	19 (29.2%)	17(29.8%)
	11 - 20	17(15.2%)	31(32.6%)	25(38.5%)	22(38.6%)
	21 - 30	46(41.1%)	21(22.1%)	12(18.5%)	11(19.3%)
	Over 31	16(14.3%)	13(13.7%)	9(13.8%)	7(12.3%)
Sport Activity	Gym Workout	14(12.5%)	13(13.7%)	15(23.1%)	16(28.1%)
	Walking	20(17.9%)	12(12.6%)	8(12.3%)	15(26.3%)
	Cycling	23(20.5%)	12(12.6%)	5(7.7%)	8(14.0%)
	Golf	15(13.4%)	13(13.7%)	10(15.4%)	7(12.3%)
	Hiking	12(10.7%)	14(14.7%)	8(12.3%)	8(14.0%)
	Swimming	13(11.6%)	15(15.8%)	8(12.3%)	3(5.3%)
	Badminton	5(4.5%)	6(6.3%)	5(7.7%)	-
	Table Tennis	5(4.5%)	6(6.3%)	4(6.2%)	-
	Tennis	3(2.7%)	4(4.2%)	2(3.1%)	-
	Etc.	2(1.8%)	-	-	-

together, and Group 2 of domestic marriage couples who participated in sport activities alone. Similarly, Group 3 was made up of international marriage couples who participated in sport activities together, and Group 4 of international marriage couples who participated in sport activities alone.

2. Instruments

To measure a couple's marital health, a modified scale from Kim[26] on marital mental health was employed. The scale comprised four sub-factors that revealed better psychometric properties than those in previous studies: marital bond($\alpha = .92$; five items; e.g., "Couple is in harmony"), marital communication($\alpha = .90$; six items; e.g., "Couple is honest with each other"), marital problem-solving($\alpha = .88$; five items; e.g., "Couple tries their best to solve problems together"), and marital value-sharing ($\alpha = .88$; four items; e.g., "Couple shares similar values and beliefs"). To measure marital life satisfaction, a single-factor scale from Sung's study[27] was modified and applied using the following five items: "Compared to others, I am

satisfied with my family life." "I am satisfied with married life at present." "I am satisfied with the mutual affection and trust between us." "When there is a disagreement between us, I am satisfied with how to resolve it." "I am satisfied with the way we communicate as a couple." All items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree."

3. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS 23.0 and the following methods: a) A descriptive statistics analysis provided respondents' demographic information. b) Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient estimation ensured data reliability. c) An exploratory factor analysis(EFA) verified data validity. d) Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to compare and explore differences in marital health and marital life satisfaction among the four groups.

III. Results

Table 2. Factor structure matrix for marital health

Factors / items	1	2	3	4
Marital Communication				
Our couple enjoys talking together	.811	.142	.039	.063
Our couple is honest with each other	.798	.106	.093	-.018
Our couple can talk to each other about our own problems	.785	.116	.045	.127
Our couple presents opinions together when making decisions	.781	.102	.108	.028
Our couple listens to each other carefully	.745	.089	.063	-.064
Our couple is free to express each other's feelings	.710	.139	.035	-.045
Marital Bond				
Our couple feels more friendly with each other than others	.067	.849	.001	-.018
Our couple is in harmony	.072	.835	-.007	.013
Our couple takes care of each other	.113	.829	.035	.015
Our couple understands each other's feelings	.228	.805	.061	.119
Our couple shows full interest in each other	.208	.680	.082	.095
Marital Value-Sharing				
Our couple shares similar values and beliefs	.075	.024	.886	-.080
Our couple respects each other's values	.080	.069	.866	-.074
Our couple has a mutual priority in life	.090	.066	.834	-.065
Our couple shares the same interests	.084	-.005	.814	.052
Marital Problem-Solving				
Our couple tries our best to solve problems together	.106	.028	-.014	.829
Our couple works together to solve difficult problems	-.019	.087	-.003	.773
When there are difficulties, I can ask my spouse for help	-.024	-.012	.039	.750
When there is a problem, our couple has equal responsibility	-.021	.074	-.016	.735
Our couple tries to solve problems in many ways	.031	.012	-.164	.641
Eigenvalues	4.890	3.168	2.446	2.367
Variance(%)	24.45	15.84	12.33	11.83

1. Scale Validity and Reliability

The EFA with a principle component analysis(PCA) revealed the following factor structure of the dependent variable(marital health): marital communication(six items), marital bond(five items), marital value-sharing(four items), and marital problem-solving(five items). The Kaiser Meyer-Olkin(KMO) measure ensured the adequacy of the sample(.828 greater than .70) as per the study by[28]. Bartlett's test of sphericity provided statistically significant results($\chi^2 = 3118.743$, $df = 190$, $p < .001$). Based on the statistical criteria(i.e., eigenvalue exceeding 1 and a factor structure coefficient exceeding .40), four factors were retained, accounting for 64.46% of the total variance. An additional EFA was not conducted for the marital life satisfaction factor in the single-factor design. Detailed information is provided in [Table 2]. In addition, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were as follows: marital bond($\alpha = .873$), marital communication($\alpha =$

.874), marital problem-solving($\alpha = .804$), marital value-sharing($\alpha = .880$), and marital life satisfaction($\alpha = .903$). For reliability, all alpha values were greater than .70, indicating great internal consistency[29].

2. Multivariate Analysis of Variance

The MANOVA indicated statistically significant differences[Table 3] in the dependent variables depending on the marriage type(international or domestic) and sport activity participation type(with or without spouse) (Wilks' lambda = .446, $F(15, 883.780) = 20.011$, $p = .00$, partial $\eta^2 = .236$). In addition, the univariate tests were statistically significant for marital bond, marital communication, and marital value-sharing under the marital health factor, and for marital life satisfaction. There was no significant difference for marital problem-solving in the marital health factor. Additionally, mean scores of dependent variables by groups are reported in [Table 4].

Table 3. Results of MANOVA by groups

Dependent variables	df	F	p	η^2
Marital Bond	3	52.448	.000*	.327
Marital Communication	3	43.651	.000*	.288
Marital Problem-Solving	3	2.008	.113	.018
Marital Value-Sharing	3	9.622	.000*	.082
Marital Life Satisfaction	3	14.621	.000*	.119

Table 4. Mean scores of dependent variables

	MB	MC	MPS	MVS	MLS
Group 1	3.733	3.947	3.175	3.712	3.225
Group 2	2.876	2.723	3.160	3.240	2.798
Group 3	3.840	3.305	3.043	3.842	3.779
Group 4	2.358	2.790	2.850	3.105	2.799

Note. MB = Marital Bond; MC = Marital Communication; MPS = Marital Problem-Solving; MVS = Marital Value-Sharing; MLS = Marital Life Satisfaction.

3. Post-hoc Analysis

To clarify statistical differences between more than three groups, follow-up post-hoc analyses were performed. In terms of the marital bond factor, domestic and international marriage couples who co-participated in sport activities (Groups 1 and 3) had relatively higher mean scores, followed by those in Groups 2 and 4. For the marital communication factor, respondents from Group 1 had the highest mean scores, followed by Groups 2 and 3, while those from Group 4—international marriage couples who participated solo in sport activities—had the lowest mean scores. Regarding marital value-sharing, Groups 1 and 3 had higher mean scores than Groups 2 and 4. Finally, for marital life satisfaction, Group 3 had the highest mean scores, followed by Groups 1, 2, and 4, respectively. Detailed post-hoc analyses are presented in [Table 5].

Table 5. Results of post-hoc analyses

		Marital Bond	Marital Communication	Marital Problem-Solving	Marital Value-Sharing	Marital Life Satisfaction
G1	G2	.000*	.000*	.999	.004*	.016*
	G3	.841	.000*	.776	.830	.003*
	G4	.000*	.000*	.110	.001*	.039*
G2	G1	.000*	.000*	.999	.004*	.016*
	G3	.000*	.000*	.844	.001*	.000*
	G4	.001*	.965	.156	.848	1.000

G3	G1	.841	.000*	.776	.830	.003*
	G2	.000*	.000*	.844	.001*	.000*
	G4	.000*	.005*	.622	.000*	.000*
G4	G1	.000*	.000*	.110	.001*	.039*
	G2	.001*	.965	.156	.848	1.000
	G3	.000*	.005*	.622	.000*	.000*

IV. Discussion

The following discussion is based on the abovementioned results. First, for the sub-factor of marital health, in terms of marital bond and marital value-sharing, apart from the type of marriage(domestic or international), respondents who participate in sport activities with their spouses(Groups 1 and 3) indicated feeling psychologically closer and sharing more similar values than respondents in the other two groups, who participate in sport activities alone. Studies have demonstrated that sport activities positively impact mental health[30] [31] and social health[32][33]. The fact that couples participate in the same sports shows that they both enjoy positive factors and increase their bond through value-sharing. In particular, respondents in an international marriage who participate in sport activities with their spouses(Group 3) scored highly. Since international marriages mean marrying a spouse whose culture or language differs completely[10], participating in sport activities together seems to narrow the gap between culture and language.

For marital communication, respondents who participate in sport activities with spouses (Groups 1 and 3) scored higher than those who do not(Groups 2 and 4). Because of the characteristic of the factor, Group 1, in which language barriers do not exist, scored statistically higher than Group 2. Nonetheless, it is significant that despite having an

international marriage, the communication scores were higher than those of respondents in domestic marriages who participate in sport activities alone(Group 2). Studies have revealed that co-participating in sport activities was not only about being together but also provided the couple with an opportunity for active interaction[11][15]. Sport activity participation went beyond verbal communication and emerged as a proven method to break barriers and move relations forward.

For marital life satisfaction, respondents in an international marriage who participated in sport activities with a spouse(Group 3) scored highest, which is deemed meaningful. One study reported that because of shared sport activities, international marriage immigrants experienced considerably lower stress while adapting to the new culture[3]. Furthermore, when cultural clashes were not adequately addressed, they reduced marital life satisfaction[5]. Furthermore, mutual participation in sport activities created shared values and brought couples closer through interaction, thus improving the quality of life of international marriage couples experiencing communication difficulties[15]. Thus, it can be inferred that a lifestyle with shared sport activities increases overall levels of marriage satisfaction. As mentioned, sport activity participation go beyond culture and language and can be an effective tool to improve marital life amidst the ever-increasing trend of international marriage.

V. Conclusion and Limitations

This study analyzed the differences in marital health and marital life satisfaction in relation to

the type of marriage and shared sport activities. The results confirmed that shared sport activities between spouses might positively affect marital life and ease cultural and language barriers.

However, every study has its limitations. In some cases, some foreign respondents chose to get married solely to participate in the study, confirming a staged relationship. In addition, because of language barriers, several candidates fluent in Korean but not in English misunderstood the questionnaire and had to be excluded from the study. Future research must provide questionnaires in various languages to overcome this hindrance.

While the concept of marriage was a pre-requisite for candidates participating in this study, many external factors that affect spousal satisfaction such as the duration of the marriage, nationality, and language could not be accounted for. As different cultures and languages exist worldwide, candidates' cultural background may be an important variable in the case of international marriage and must not be overlooked. The effects of such external variables could serve as limitations to this study, and thus, must be considered in the future.

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저 자 소 개

최 철 환(Chulhwan Choi)

정회원



- 2010년 5월 : 뉴욕주립대학(체육학 석사)
- 2016년 5월 : 루이빌대학(체육학 박사)
- 2018년 3월 ~ 현재 : 경희대학교 강사

〈관심분야〉 : 스포츠 참여, 스포츠 경영