

MIAI SUNG\* Korea National Open University

JOOSOO BYUN\*\* Seoul National University

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## Factors Associated with Marital Conflict for Baby Boomers in South Korea

*Using data from the 2010 National Survey of Korean Families (NSKF), we investigated factors associated with marital conflict for baby boomers in South Korea. Korean baby boomers are those born during the post-Korean War period from 1955 to 1963. OLS regression examined the marital conflict of these couples. Baby boomer couples reported that they experienced occasional marital conflict; subsequently individual and family level variables explained 15% of baby boomers' marital conflict. The key findings were that satisfaction in spousal communication was negatively associated with conflict for baby boomer couples. However, the existence of unmarried adult children was positively associated with baby boomers' marital conflict. Work and family balance was also negatively associated with marital conflict. We found that the more satisfied with communication with the spouse, the fewer unmarried adult children, and the more work and family balance the couple maintained, the less marital conflict these baby boomers experienced.*

The focus on baby boomers' later lives has recently emerged as an important social issue due to the

notable increase in the number of retired baby boomers in South Korea (Korea). Baby boomers (born between 1955 and 1963) in Korea, represent about 15% of the total population (Statistics Korea, 2012). This cohort started retiring in 2000s; however, the social system and cultural environment of Korea is not yet prepared to address the concerns of baby boomers' later lives. The only emphasis has come from private insurance companies that have attempted to capitalize on the financial anxiety of older couples in regards to retirement.

Traditionally the eldest son has cared for his older parents in Korea. Korean families have also placed greater importance on the parent-child relationship (especially the father-son relationship) than on the marital relationship. However, baby boomer couples often have to care for each other in their later lives because the younger generation has a changing perception of their parent's filial obligation in Korea (Cho, Kim, Noh, Sung, Lee, Lee, Chin, 2012). Caring has two different aspects: the motivation of caring for other people and the activity of caring for them. Quality care depends on the developing relationship between the caregiver and the person who is being cared for (Himmelweit, 1999). Subsequently, the relationship of baby boomers with spouses is important in their later lives. Compared to Western families, however, the marital relationship in Korean families has been more instrumental than emotional (Sung, 2011, 369). Therefore, research is needed to determine which factors are associated

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\*Associate Professor in the Dept. of Home Economics, College of Natural Science, Korea National Open University (eliza\_s@knou.ac.kr)

\*\*Corresponding Author, Doctoral Candidate in the Dept. of Child Development Family Studies, College of Human Ecology, Seoul National University (bijous10@snu.ac.kr)

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with marital conflict to help develop baby boomers' marital relationships so they can better prepare for their later lives.

This study investigated the factors associated with Korean baby boomers' marital conflicts. Marital conflict is widely considered a central aspect of marital relationships. In particular, marital conflict can be an effective variable to predict the attitudes in a couple's relationship because marital relationships in Korean or Asian cultures have traditionally been more instrumental than emotional. Addressing marital conflict is also important because it could lead to negative health consequences as well as a deterioration of physical and mental health (Williams & Umberson, 2004); in addition, it is a major risk factor for many forms of dysfunction and psychopathology in the family (Hahlweg & Richter, 2010). Reducing the marital conflict of baby boomers may be an important factor to help prepare couples for concerns related to their later lives; however, empirical research on this topic is limited.

In this context, we examined the level of marital conflict, individual-level and family-level characteristics, and factors that are associated with marital conflict to understand what promotes or hinders baby boomers' marital relationships. The results of this study will provide important insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to understand the marital relationships of baby boomers. These insights will also help improve family life education programs that can help strengthen the marital relationships of baby boomers.

#### *Baby Boomers in Korea*

Korean baby boomers are those born during the post-Korean War period from 1955 to 1963 according to the Korean Census Bureau (Statistics Korea, 2010). As a group, baby boomers have been considered the new generation compared to previous generations. About 80% of baby boomers live in urban areas and about 70% of them graduated from high school (Jung, 2012); this represents a significant change from previous generations who were mostly rural and relatively uneducated. However, many Korean baby boomers are the most squeezed emotionally and financially because they have to

support both parents and children. In addition, they are the first generation to live longer, even to the century mark, with little preparation for later life or role models in Korea. Therefore, they are in a state of planning for their own aging and economic burdens while still caring for their elderly parents as well as their children during their retirement years.

With the substantial increase in the number of baby boomer retirees in Korea, the volume of research has also increased. However, research on baby boomers has mainly focused on the characteristics of Korean baby boomers (Han, Choi, Eun, Lee, Ju, & Kim, 2010; Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, 2010), particularly their financial problems (Han, 2010; Kim, 2010). Since baby boomers are more likely to face economic problems due to early retirement and longer average life expectancy, researchers have been more interested in studying the financial difficulties baby boomers face during their later lives. Limited research has focused on the intimacy between spouses, even though it is a very important aspect of a couple's later life. According to research on later life, family relationships (especially spousal relationships) are important factors related to retirement adjustment or later life satisfaction (Jung, 2012; Kim & Song, 2010; Kim & Yoo, 2009). In addition, because of changing filial piety of their children's generation, baby boomers recognize that traditional expectations about their later life should be reconsidered and the focus should be based more on the couple's relationship (Cho *et al.*, 2012; Jung, 2012). However, Korean baby boomers, especially male baby boomers, have lived work-oriented lives according to traditional Confucian values. They have put their work role ahead of family relationships that was key component of the Korean industrialization and economic development in the 1970s and 1980s (Kim, 2011). With the recent changes, however, it is important to examine the marital relationship, especially factors associated with marital conflict.

#### *Factors Associated with Baby Boomers' Marital Conflict*

Marital conflict for baby boomers depends on the various factors that this cohort is likely to encounter

in their daily lives. In particular, baby boomers' later lives mainly converge into individual and family lives. Therefore, we examined both individual-level and family-level factors associated with marital conflict. The individual-level factors associated with baby boomers' marital conflict include the following: demographic characteristics; individual perceptions; attitudes related to marital life, such as gender, subjective social status, work and family balance; gender role attitudes; responsibility for elderly parents; and responsibility for children. In addition, women have occupied an inferior position in the family; therefore, gender and gender role attitudes are used as predictors of marital conflict because marriage includes gender-related issues. For example, Bernard (1972) indicated that men seem to obtain more mental health benefits from marriage than women. Subjective social status may also affect marital quality because this is related to the dimensions of economics, occupation, and educational experience (Conger, Conger, & Martin). Work and family balance is another main predictor of the quality of marital life; therefore, the perception of balance between work and family can affect marital life. Responsibility is also a predictor of marital conflict. Responsibility is the state of being responsible (wiktionary.org, 2013) for someone or something. Therefore, the perception of a high level of responsibility for elderly parents and children is likely to be associated with marital relationship burdens.

The results are not always consistent; however, researchers have found that people who have a higher level of traditional gender role attitudes (Kong & Oh, 2010), and have a lower level of subjective social status (Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010) are more likely to experience marital conflict in their everyday lives. Interestingly, the fact that Korean women were twice as likely as men to initiate divorce in 2006 ([http://article.joinsmsn.com/news/article/article.asp?total\\_id=1626660&ctg=12](http://article.joinsmsn.com/news/article/article.asp?total_id=1626660&ctg=12)) and this may indicate that females may experience more marital conflict than their spouses. Even though work is important in Korean families; however, maintaining a balance between work and family has recently become an important aspect of family life. Therefore, a higher level of work and family balance

is associated with greater marital satisfaction (Chin & Sung, 2012). These responsibilities may cause marital conflict because responsibility for elderly parents and children is often a heavy burden for Korean older couples, especially for baby boomers who have to prepare for retirement years.

Family-level factors associated with baby boomers' marital conflict include the condition of the marriage, the couple's interactions, and their relationships related to marital life, such as length of the marriage, having unmarried adult children, average time spent per day in conversation with the spouse, satisfaction with communication with the spouse, equality in the marital relationship, sharing of household chores, and sharing of care for family members. This study examines factors associated with marital conflict of baby boomers; subsequently, marriage-related variables are expected to be important predictors of marital conflict. The results are not always consistent; however, Korean studies have found that the longer a couple has been married, the less marital conflict is reported (Choi, Kang, & Shin, 1999). Another unique Korean factor is Korean parents' traditional responsibility for the marriage of adult children (Sung, 1999) and the existence of unmarried adult children was associated with negative effects on the marital relationship (Kim & Kim, 2005; Park & Koh, 2005). In addition, a higher level of marital conflict is related to a lower level of daily conversation time with the spouse and a lower level of satisfaction with communication with the spouse because communication is an important factor that increases satisfaction in the couple relationships (Burlinson & Denton, 1997). In addition, even though Korean wives have traditionally been responsible for household chores and caring for family members; their values are changing from a patriarchal orientation to a democratic or equal orientation according to the more significant changes in society at large (Sung, 2009). Fairness concerning sharing household chores and caring for family members is important in Korean families. In addition, equity in the relationship is an important factor to reduce marital conflict. In particular, less marital conflict is reported by couples who have confronted the sharing problems of household

chores and caring for family members in their everyday lives as well as by those who have provided more equity in the sharing household chores, caring for family members, and equality in the marriage relationship (Lim, 2011).

In summary, the primary purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that are associated with baby boomers' marital conflict in Korea. We first examined the level of marital conflict as well as the individual-level and family-level characteristics of baby boomers before we investigated associated factors. This study investigated two research questions (RQs).

RQ1: What is the level of marital conflict, individual-level, and family-level characteristics of baby boomers?

RQ2: What individual-level and family-level factors are associated with the level of marital conflict for baby boomers?

## METHOD

### *Secondary Data and Procedures*

To identify factors associated with marital conflict of Korean baby boomer couples, we drew on data from

the 2010 National Survey of Korean Families (NSKF), a rich and detailed nationally representative survey, funded by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in Korea. Target households from the NSKF were identified based on the Korea Population and Housing Census Report in 2005. From this procedure, 2,500 households and family members who were 15 years old or older were surveyed using the Computer-Aided Personal Interview (CAPI) method with personal interviews conducted from August 16th to December 1st, 2010. Trained interviewers visited each target household and collected survey data. The NSKF asked about the individual characteristics, perceptions and family attitudes, family formation (marriage and fertility), family relationships (couple and parent-child relationships), work and family balance (gender roles and childrearing), family life style (family rituals, leisure, and retirement), neighborhood experiences, and the need for family policies in Korea.

### *Participants*

The aim of the present study is to investigate factors associated with marital conflict of baby boomers, so we only selected data from married but not separated and employed baby boomers born between 1955

Table 1. *Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants*

Variables	N	%	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age	425		51.50	2.63	48	56
Employment Status	425	100.00				
Full-time worker	190	44.71				
Part-time worker	41	9.65				
Employer	20	4.71				
Owner-operator	109	25.65				
Unpaid family worker	26	6.12				
Other	39	9.18				
Income	425	100.00				
Less than 999,999	42	9.88				
1,000,000-1,999,999	116	27.29				
2,000,000-2,999,999	101	23.76				
3,000,000-3,999,999	105	24.71				
4,000,000-4,999,999	34	8.00				
More than 5,000,000	27	6.35				

and 1963 in Korea and screened out single, separated, and unemployed baby boomers. This screening procedure resulted in a subsample of 425 individuals. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. The average age of the baby boomers was 51.50 years old (range: 48-56) and 44.71% of participants were full-time workers. One-fourth (27.29%) of the participants earned from 1 million to 1.9 million Won (USD 1,000 to 1,900) per month.

### Measures

**Marital conflict** Baby boomers' marital conflict was the dependent variable in this study. Respondents were asked, "How often have you experienced conflict with your spouse due to the following nine reasons: relationships with your parents/siblings, relationships with your spouse's parents/siblings, your spouse's life style (drinking, late night work, and lack of communication), parenting issues (children's grades or life style), economic stress, children's education, sexual relations, your spouse's personality, and your spouse's value system." The responses were coded from 1 (*never experienced*) to 5 (*very often experienced*) so that higher scores indicated a greater marital conflict. The scales had high internal consistency in the current study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .86$ ).

**Individual characteristics** We used five variables as individual-level factors: (a) gender, (b) gender role attitudes, (c) subjective social status, (d) work and family balance, (e) responsibility for elderly parents, and (f) responsibility for children. The respondent's gender was coded 1 = male and 0 = female. Gender role attitudes were measured by the question, "Males should earn money for the family and females should take care of the housework at home." The responses were coded from 1 (*never agree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). Higher scores of gender role attitudes indicated a greater acceptance of traditional gender roles. Subjective social status was measured by the question, "What social status do you think you belong to?" The responses were coded 1 (*less than middle class*), or 2 (*middle class or higher*). To measure work and family balance, respondents were

asked, "Do you think that work and family obligations are balanced in your life?" The responses were coded from 1 (*never balanced*) to 5 (*very balanced*) so that higher scores of work and family balance indicated a greater work and family balance levels. The responsibility for elderly parents was measured by three items such as "Do you believe that adult children ought to take care of elderly parents?", "Do you believe that adult children ought to support for elderly parents financially?", and "Do you believe that adult daughters ought to take care of elderly parents with sons equally?" The scale was coded from 1 (*never agree*) to 5 (*totally agree*) so that higher scores of responsibility for elderly parents indicated a greater responsibility for elderly parents. The scales had high internal consistency in the current study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .71$ ). Responsibility for children was measured by three items such as "Do you believe that parents ought to take responsible for children's college education tuition?", "Do you believe that parents ought to take responsible for children's marriage preparation cost?", and "Do you believe that parents ought to take responsible for children's post-marriage life?" The scale was coded from 1 (*never agree*) to 5 (*totally agree*) so that higher scores of responsibility for children indicated a greater responsibility for children. The scales had moderate internal consistency in the current study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .71$ ).

**Family characteristics** We used seven variables as family-level factors: (a) length of marriage, (b) existence of unmarried adult children, (c) average time spent in conversation with the spouse per day, (d) satisfaction with communication with the spouse, (e) equality in the marital relationship, (f) sharing household chores, and (g) sharing family-member care. Length of marriage was computed based on the years of marriage. The existence of unmarried adult children was coded 1 = yes and 0 = no and the average time spent in conversation with the spouse per day was coded in a range from 1 (*never*), 2 (*less than 30 minutes*), 3 (*30 minutes to 1 hour*), 4 (*1 hour to 2 hours*) to 5 (*more than 2 hours*). To measure satisfaction with communication with the spouse, respondents were asked "Are you

satisfied with the communication with your spouse?" We coded from 1 (*very dissatisfied*) to 5 (*very satisfied*) so that higher scores indicated a greater communication satisfaction with the spouse. To measure the equality of the marital relationship, respondents were asked "Do you feel that the relationship with your spouse is equal?" Equality in the marital relationship was coded from 1 (*never equal*) to 5 (*very equal*) so that higher scores indicated a greater equality in the marital relationship. To measure the sharing of household chores, respondents were asked "Do you think that you and your spouse share household chores fairly?" Sharing household chores was assessed by 1 (fair), 2 (unfair to husband), or 3 (unfair to wife). To measure the sharing of family member care, respondents were asked, "Do you think that you and your spouse share the care for family members fairly?" The responses were coded by 1 (fair), 2 (unfair to husband), or 3 (unfair to wife).

#### *Data Analysis*

We used OLS regression to investigate the factors associated with baby boomers' marital conflict. The statistical analysis using OLS regression was done using STATA 12.1.

#### *Individual-level and Family-level Characteristics*

Table 2 presents the level of marital conflict and characteristics of individual-level and family-level variables included in the OLS regression analysis. The participants experienced marital conflict "occasionally" ( $M = 22.96$ ). In particular, they experienced a little more conflict related to the way of thinking by their spouse. As predicted from the Confucianism cultural norms, they reported less conflict related to sexual relations with the spouse.

The sample included male (69.18%) and female (30.82%) baby boomers. The subjective social status was divided into two groups. Over half (52.00%) of the participants reported being middle class or higher and the remaining participants (48.00%) considered themselves to be less than middle class. The average marriage length was 23.90 years. Most participants (90.35%) had unmarried adult children. Participants were close to "moderately agree" with

traditional gender role attitudes ( $M = 2.73$ ). They perceived that their lives were somewhat balanced between work and family ( $M = 3.09$ ). They were close to "quite agree" with children's responsibility for elderly parents ( $M = 10.27$ ). In addition, they were close to "quite agree" with parents' responsibility for children ( $M = 9.86$ ). The percentage of conversation time with the spouse per day was the highest in the range of 30 minutes to 1 hour per day (38.59%). The participants were moderately satisfied with communication with their spouse ( $M = 3.38$ ). They also perceived that their marital relationship was moderately equal ( $M = 3.16$ ). The percentage of sharing household chores was the highest for "unfair to wife" (66.67%). The percentage of sharing family member care was also the highest for "unfair to wife" (62.40%).

#### *Factors Associated with Marital Conflict for Baby Boomers*

Table 2 presents unstandardized and standardized coefficients from the OLS regression that predict baby boomers' marital conflict. We found that individual-level and family-level variables explained 15% of baby boomers' marital conflict. Their satisfaction with communication with the spouse was negatively associated with marital conflict for baby boomers ( $\beta = -.21, p < .01$ ). The existence of unmarried adult children was positively associated with baby boomers' marital conflict ( $\beta = .18, p < .01$ ). The work and family balance was negatively associated with marital conflict ( $\beta = -.12, p < .05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

### *Summary of Results*

The research questions of this study were "What is the level of marital conflict and individual- and family-level characteristics of baby boomers?" and "What factors are associated with the marital conflict of baby boomers?" Baby boomers are satisfied with communication with the spouse and perceive their marital relationships as equal; however, their marital lives are somewhat similar to the traditional Korean style. The values and sense of responsibility related

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Individual-level and Family-level Variables

Variables	N	%	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Dependent Variables</i>						
Marital conflict	373		22.96	5.08	9	34
Relationship with my parent and siblings			2.41	0.77	1	5
Relationship with parents-in-law and siblings			2.37	0.78	1	5
Personal habits of the spouse (drinking/nagging)			2.51	0.85	1	5
Children's education (academic scores and teaching)			2.57	0.78	1	5
Economic problems			2.64	0.84	1	5
Housework and Childcare			2.44	0.80	1	5
Having sex with spouse			2.38	0.77	1	5
Personality of spouse			2.67	0.81	1	5
Spouse's way of thinking			2.70	0.77	1	5
<i>Independent Variables</i>						
<i>Individuals characteristics</i>						
Gender	425	100.00			0	1
Female (=0)	131	30.82				
Male (=1)	294	69.18				
Subjective social status	425	100.00				
Less than middle class	204	48.00				
Middle class or higher	221	52.00				
Gender role attitudes	425		2.73	0.84	1	5
Work and family balance	425		3.09	0.68	1	5
Responsibility for elderly parents	425		10.27	1.85	5	15
Responsibility for children	425		9.86	1.85	4	15
<i>Family characteristics</i>						
Length of marriage	424		23.90	5.77	1	39
Existence of unmarried adult children	425	100.00				
No	41	9.65				
Yes	384	90.35				
Average time spent in conversation with the spouse per day	425	100.00	2.24	0.97	0	4
Never	6	1.41				
Less than 30 m	95	22.35				
30 m to 1 h	164	38.59				
1-2 h	112	26.35				
More than 2 h	48	11.29				
Satisfaction with communication with the spouse	425		3.38	0.69	1	5
Equality in the marital relationship	425		3.16	0.67	2	5
Sharing household chores	423	100.00				
Fair	124	29.31				
Unfair to husband	17	4.02				
Unfair to wife	282	66.67				
Sharing family member care	391	100.00				
Fair	218	34.02				
Unfair to husband	23	3.58				
Unfair to wife	363	62.40				

Table 3. OLS Regression Coefficients for Participants' Marital Conflicts

Marital Conflicts	B	$\beta$	Std. Err.	$p >  t $
Gender (female = 0, male = 1)	-0.39	-0.03	0.61	0.523
Gender role attitudes	-0.44	-0.07	0.34	0.194
Subjective social status	0.84	0.08	0.57	0.136
Responsibility for elderly parent	-0.22	-0.08	0.16	0.158
Responsibility for children	0.07	0.03	0.15	0.668
Work and family balance	-0.89	-0.12	0.39	0.022
Length of marriage	-0.02	-0.03	0.05	0.635
Existence of unmarried adult children (no=0, yes=1)	3.50	0.18	1.05	0.001
Average time spent in conversation with the spouse per day				
Less than 30m	0.89	0.08	2.35	0.704
30m to 1h	0.46	0.04	2.36	0.846
1-2h	0.39	0.03	2.38	0.871
More than 2h	-0.24	-0.01	2.51	0.923
Satisfaction with communication with the spouse	-1.52	-0.21	0.46	0.001
Equality of the marital relationship	-0.53	-0.07	0.45	0.237
Sharing household chores				
Unfair to husband	1.90	0.07	2.71	0.484
Unfair to wife	-0.39	-0.04	1.23	0.753
Sharing family member care				
Unfair to husband	-0.50	-0.02	2.91	0.862
Unfair to wife	0.47	0.05	1.21	0.695
Constant	31.67	.	3.66	0.000

Note.  $F(18, 326) = 3.06^{***}$ ,  $R^2 = 0.15$ , Adj  $R^2 = 0.10$ , B = Unstandardized coefficient,  $\beta$  = Standardized coefficient

to the family remain oriented to traditional values. Wives still have an inferior position compared to their husbands in the family. They also feel strong responsibility for elderly parents and children. This situation causes occasional marital conflicts. In addition, it is not easy to concentrate on their own marital relationships because most baby boomers have unmarried adult children and consider the marriage of unmarried adult children as their responsibility. Therefore, we found that it is not true in the marital relationship even though baby boomers are considered a "new" generation compared to previous generations.

Based on the results of this study, it is likely that only the fundamental factors in marital relationships including communication satisfaction with the spouse and work and family balance are associated with marital conflict. In other words, communi-

cation plays a central role in marriage (Burleson & Denton, 1997) since couples understand each other and express their feelings or thinking through communication. Effective communication is critical for building and maintaining strong couple relationships. Communication also enhances marital intimacy (Kim & Choi, 2007). Therefore, communication satisfaction with the spouse will likely to reduce marital conflict.

Work-family conflict (WFC) occurs when conflicting pressures between work and family become incompatible in that participation in one role becomes more difficult because of participation in the other role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The most important strategy to manage WFC is a strong work and family balance. In particular, the Korean government has made the family sphere subordinate to the work sphere in the pursuit of economic

growth with its work-centered social system and masculine work norms; subsequently, this has created a work-family dilemma and prevented a work-family balance from becoming a social focus (Shin, 2007). The work and family dilemma needs to be addressed at the private family level without social support in Korea and may represent a cause of conflict between couples. Therefore, a stronger work and family balance will likely to reduce marital conflict in a work-oriented society like Korea.

The key findings of this research is that the existence of unmarried adult children is associated with baby boomers' marital conflict and is reflected in the Korean situation. One of the major development tasks for middle-aged parents in Korea is helping their children transition into adulthood (Lee & Sung, 2012, 344). In particular, because the wedding ceremony includes a coming-of-age ceremony in Korea (Park & Hong, 2012, 124), marriage is an important transition from childhood to adulthood in Korean culture. Since Korean parents consider marriage of their children as the parents' responsibility (Sung, 1999), having unmarried adult children puts a burden on the parents. This kind of burden is likely to cause concern for the couples not in their own relationships but in their unmarried children's future marriage.

In summary, we found less marital conflict among baby boomers if the couple is more satisfied with their communication with the spouse, had fewer unmarried adult children, and there is an existence of a greater work and family balance.

#### *Limitations*

Several limitations of this study should be noted before considering the implications of these findings. The main limitation is analyzing the secondary data. The 2010 NSKF is a nationally representative survey; however, the data are limited in the identification and selection of variables associated with baby boomers' marital conflict. This study is also not free from the common limitation of a cross-sectional survey design in that it is unable to explain longitudinal factors that affect baby boomers' marital conflict and the associated factors. A longitudinal research design for future studies

should consider the growing life expectancy of baby boomers. Finally, our analysis did not include baby boomers who were separated from their spouses. Future research should be expanded to include separated baby boomers' marital conflict as well because it is likely that these cases experience different challenges related to marital relationships compared to couples who remain married.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

The results of this study provide several implications for family life education programs and topics. First, this study suggests that communication satisfaction with a spouse reduces marital conflict. The findings imply that family life education for baby boomers should emphasize the important role of communication in marital relationships as well as later life. In addition, family life education experts should focus on helping couples develop stronger and more effective communication skills.

This study reveals that excessive parental responsibility can cause marital conflict. Thus, children's marriage in Korea is one of the main sources of conflict resulting in marital problems for older couples (Oh & Choi, 2006). In particular, this parental responsibility is likely to lead to parents pressuring children to marry or interfere with unmarried children's lives that can create conflict between parents and their unmarried children in Korea. Therefore, family life education programs for baby boomers should emphasize the importance of a couple's relationship and how to deal with their adult children in later life. In addition, it is better to help baby boomers reconstruct the boundaries or meaning of parental responsibility for adult children, particularly unmarried children.

The findings highlight the importance of a work and family balance for baby boomers to help reduce marital conflict. The role of work has been emphasized since the Korean Industrialization period; subsequently, Korea is famous around the world for being a strongly work-oriented society. However, baby boomers' marital relationships can be maintained

through commitment (spending time or interaction with each other). This study suggests that a more family-friendly culture may produce the most effective outcomes for baby boomers' marital relationships.

In sum, the Korean government should reinforce family life education for baby boomers, especially pre-retirement baby boomers, to reduce marital conflict after retirement. In addition the government should create a more family-friendly environment in Korea. Also, baby boomers should learn to reflect on their relationships as couples and with their adult children throughout their later years. Finally, since the elderly are living longer lives, even to 100 years old, Korean society should consider couples' care for one another in their later lives as the "new normal" before the massive retirement of baby boomers.

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