한국의 배우자 선택과 결혼적응의 메커니즘: 인간 발달 생태학적 모형의 증대, 연애 결혼에의 적용

A Person-Process-Context Model of Mate Selection and Marital Adjustment in Arranged and Love-Based Korean Marriages

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I. Introduction

Few, if any, life events are as significant for many individuals as the selection of a spouse, a life partner. People marry everywhere, however, the basis upon which and the reason for which a partner is selected show wide variation due to
individual and cultural differences in life style and social variations in life patterns (Murdock, 1949). This implies that there may be cross-cultural, subcultural, and individual differences in the type of match between marital partners, even if the general tendency is to select partners with similar dispositions and backgrounds (Caspi & Herbner, 1990; Holland, 1966; Kandel, 1978; Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Newcomb, 1961).

In Korea, marriage was considered a family rather than an individual union. However, due to industrialization and the wave of liberalism affected by Western individualism, traditional arranged marriage in Korea has been modified. Arranged marriage is no longer "blind marriage" in which the parents monopolize the decision. In general, an individual’s preference is becoming a more important factor in mate selection. However, parents retain more power in mate selection than do their children in arranged marriages; an individual often only can choose a marital partner among partners suggested by their family. Love-based marriage has become popular among the younger generation of Koreans in recent years. Individuals often now initiate their mate selection and have free choice of their partner; however, their parents’ approval is still needed to marry. In many cases couples break up because of the disapproval of their parents. Although there are few completely arranged and few entirely love-based marriages (in the sense of traditional concepts), the relative importance of an individual’s and his or her parents’ preference is different in mate selection between primarily arranged and primarily love-based marriages.

Considering the importance of person-environment interaction (e.g., Buss, 1984; Caspi & Herbner, 1990), I propose that couples will show similarities in their individual dispositions. Further, it is expected that the degree of similarity between spouses might be a good indicator of marital adjustment. The relationship between dyadic similarity and marital satisfaction is controversial, especially as it concerns personality, however. One broadly-supported theory is that psychological similarity between spouses gives greater satisfaction (Epstein & Guttman, 1984; Jensen, 1978); another theory maintains that the complementarity of needs between spouses gives greater satisfaction (Winch et al., 1959). These two major theories of mate selection—homogamy and complementarity theory—are examined in this study.

Much of the research on marriage has focused on the correlates of marital satisfaction, including personal characteristics and resources of each partner, their demographic backgrounds, and personality factors (Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Glenn, 1990; Spanier & Lewis, 1980). However, few studies have examined the mechanisms of matching and marital adjustment. In order to address the deficiencies in the literature, this study focuses on the mechanisms of matching and marital adjustment in two types of marriage in contemporary Korean society: arranged and love-based.

Concerning the characteristics of two types of marriage, the relative importance of personal and structural attributes might differ between arranged and love-based marriage, even if homogamy is the basic principle. Few mate selection studies consider both structural and personal attributes. By examining the role of individual dispositions and social structural characteristics in marital adjustment, we can better estimate the effects of the person, the environment, and their interactions for each type of marriage with person, context, and process research model. This model might be useful to study marital relationship without overlooking