

**Are couple communication ability and marital satisfaction
associated with parental self-efficacy? Focusing on Ko-
rean mothers of 2 to 5-year-old children**

Sanghoon Kim

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Faculty of Education and Psychology
University of Jyväskylä

ABSTRACT

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Mothers' parental self-efficacy (PSE) tends to be associated with children's behavioral and psychological development and may predict academic achievement. The purpose of the present study is to seek whether the quality of mothers' communicative ability and couple relationship may be linked to their parental self-efficacy.

This study aims to examine the relationships among Korean mothers' couple communication ability (CCA), marital satisfaction (MS) and parental self-efficacy (PSE). The current study also investigated whether CCA and MS predict PSE among Korean mothers. In addition, the study further explored the possible association between interaction time between partners in a couple setting and mothers' CCA, MS and PSE. The participants of this study were 111 mothers from Seoul, South Korea, with children aged 2 to 5-year-old. The mothers answered the self-evaluation questionnaires with respect to CCA, MS and PSE as well as weekly interaction hours with their husbands.

Results of this study demonstrated that mothers' CCA, MS and PSE were significantly related. Second, the mothers' CCA and MS can predict their PSE with CCA having a higher contribution on PSE than MS. Third, the mothers those who spend more than 1 hour for interacting with their husbands tend to have higher CCA and MS, but not PSE, than those who spend less than 1 hour. The results of the study indicating an important role of CCA to PSE can be utilized for parental education programs.

Keywords: Couple communication ability, parental self-efficacy, marital satisfaction, couple interaction hours, Korean mothers.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Parenting is a significant element for child development. However, it is not easy for parents to maintain a good quality of parenting, particularly at early age. Preschoolers tend to be highly active, as they want to test all the limits imposed on them, requiring parents to develop many new parenting skills (Coleman & Karraker, 2003). It can be a frustrating period for parents because it poses “additional challenges for parents while placing intensive demands on their parents for protection, nurturance, and socialization” (Lovejoy, Graczyk, O’Hare & Neuman, 2000, p. 567). Parental self-efficacy is one factor, which represents parents’ ability in parenting as it refers to the parents’ expectation on the extent to which he or she can perform parenting tasks. (Coleman & Karraker, 1998, p. 49). At the same time, married couple’s communication and marital satisfaction are often studied as the factors, which have a relationship each other.

Despite there have been many studies about the relationship between marital satisfaction and parenting (Malinen, Kinnunen, Tolvanen, Rönkä, Wierda-Boer & Gerris, 2010), as well as the relationship between couple communication and marital satisfaction (Burlison & Denton, 1997; Carroll, Hill, Yorgason, Larson & SandBerg, 2013), there seems to be a dearth of studies that focus on couple communication ability of mothers in relation with their parental self-efficacy. The present study aims to examine the relationship among the couple communication ability, marital satisfaction and parental self-efficacy of Korean mothers whose child’s age is from two to five. Considering that S. Korea has the highest working hours than any other OECD countries (Jeong, 2012), the study will involve the amount of time which couples spend to talk each other about the issues related to their family in order to highlight if it is associated with three variables. Attempts to assess associations between couple communication ability and parental self-efficacy lack in S. Korea (Han & Lee, 2005; Park & Ko, 2005). The results of this study can be utilized in developing couple intervention programs focused on communication skill improvement.

2 COUPLE COMMUNICATION ABILITY (CCA)

A substantial body of literature has linked couple communication quality and facets of marital life such as relationship satisfaction (Feeney, 1994), sexual satisfaction (Litzinger & Gordon, 2005) and likelihood of divorce (Markman, Rhoades, Stanley, Ragan & Whitton, 2010). On top of this, Gherghinescu and Glaveanu (2015) argued that many couples are struggling with managing difficult situations in their marriage life because of their poor communication. It can be safe to say that disagreement between couples is most frequent among unhappy married individuals, although even “happy” couples are not completely exempt (Kirchler, Rodler, Holzl & Meier, 2013). This study may indicate that the quality of couple communication is one of the elements, which gives overall influence on the most couples. In terms of parents, building the positive communication between couples with young children can be a cornerstone for their parenting (Kolak & Volling, 2007), because they have to “navigate the myriad of parenting tasks” (p. 467).

Couple communication seems to be linked to couple’s educational level and other socio-demographic profiles. Couples having high educational level tend to use more ‘rational negotiation’ which is represented by efficient listening, honest communication, authentic agreement, positive marital reciprocal influence (Gherghinescu et al., 2015; Sohr-Preston, Scaramella, Martin, Neppl, Ontai & Conger, 2013). Socioeconomic status also seems to be a factor. For instance, families from poor socio-economic status have a lower levels of relationship satisfaction, higher divorce rates, and report fewer positive interactions (Williamson, Altman, Hsueh & Bradbury, 2016). The results of these studies imply that participants’ demographical information must be controlled in the current study.

When it comes to the factors, which have some effects on couple communication, cultural components like hierarchy occurring by age and gender also may affect how couples are conducting their daily communication. Kwon and Lee

(2008) found that mothers' perception of social rank and external entrapment, which defined as self-perception of that they want to run away from the current situation but cannot, affect their emotional expression. If mothers are aware of social pressure on their communication practices, they could not express what they have in their mind to their husbands. However, verbalized arguing is the most notable way of couple's conflicts (Carrere & Gottman, 1999) which indicates that without having a proper skill to manage arguments with partner they could face losing biggest part of their relationship. As a result, the family study involving couple's communication needs to look at couple's comprehensive communication ability instead of their communication practices observed in order to take tacit influential factors into account.

2.1 Different aspects in communication: Communicative motivation, skill, and behavior.

Because the notion 'couple communication' is sometimes confused in some studies, it is important to ensure what dimensions the communication has in itself. Burleson et al. (1997) pointed out that researchers need to be aware of three different dimensions of communication, which are communicative motivation, skills, and behaviors, respectively. They explained "motivation" as each couple's intentions and goals for what they want. This aspect of communication can be differentiated from communication skill because it works like a steering wheel of the skill. If both couples are skilled and positively motivated to each other, the authors said the couple would be expected to have positive association between their communication skills and couple outcomes, such as marital satisfaction. However, couples who "are highly skilled and ill motivated" (p. 888) would end up effectively exhibiting their negativity to each other based on the decent communication skill owing to their variety of expectations they have in marriage. Thus, the current study needs to include mothers' communicative motivation in the measure for couple communication ability which influences in which way a parent exerts their communication skills.

Communication skill refers to how couples are capable to recognize the communal goals in communicative interactions. As authors pointed out, the skill needs to be distinguished from communication behavior which is observable. In other words, communication skill can be likened to an engine and wheels of a car, while communication motivation to a steering wheel. Communication behavior can be compared with driving outcomes like a safe and fast drive or an accident. It could mean that communication motivation and skill are hardly put apart from each other so that the measure of the study should be able to involve both well, and then only it could assess 'communication ability'. However, there has been a lack of attention to assess couple communication ability, particularly in the Korean context, due to that the chief interest of the field has been on observable communication behavior (Kang, 2015).

Most of the studies focusing on the relationship between couple communication and other family outcomes normally adopted a concept "communication patterns", and it can either facilitate or impede couple's relationship. Facilitative communication can be classified as adaptive *-mutual constructive*, and those that impede construe the maladaptive *demand-withdraw*, *mutual avoidance* and *withholding* (Chi, Epstein, Fang, Lam & Li, 2013). The nature of communication patterns has an effect on parents' mental well-being (Gabriel, Beach & Bodenmann, 2010) and child development outcomes (Ramchandani, Stein, Evans, O'Connor & ALSPAC Study Team, 2005). However, as Kang also pointed out (2015), the measure for communication patterns cannot assess couple's ability, but only can assess in what type the couple is currently having a communication.

The study conducted by Yoo, Bartle-Haring, Day and Gangamma (2014) shed light on that spouse's appraisal of partner's communication is associated with their increased sexual satisfaction, emotional intimacy for each spouse, and relational satisfaction in turn. Although the study is done with respect to communication patterns, it may be introducing that how partner reacts on one's communication have an impact on their relational outcomes. It may further imply that the attitude towards each other in communication, which represented by communicative motivation, can change by other factors surrounding the couple

such as financial status, resting time a day, or even their relational quality. This analysis can be naturally led to the discussion about couple communication as a consequence or a cause of couple outcomes.

2.2 Couple communication as a cause or a consequence of couple outcomes

Whether the quality of couple communication is a cause or a consequence of couple outcomes, such as marital distress or child development, has been debated in family studies. Among them, the studies based on behavioural theory have found that poor communication can predict poor couple outcomes. It is an extended approach from social exchange theory, which aims to “explain the development and maintenance, and the decay of exchange relationships in terms of the balance” between the rewards (e.g. pleasures, satisfactions) and the costs (e.g. the factors inhibit a performance of a sequence of behaviors) in marital relationship (Nakonezny & Denton, 2008, p, 402).

Adaptive or facilitative couple communication patterns have been found to be associated with marital satisfaction of both partners. Halberstadt, Cassidy, Stifter, Parke and Fox (1995) found that wives’ positive expressivity was significantly related to their marital satisfaction, while husbands’ negative expressivity was significantly related to their marital satisfaction. The other study (Carroll et al., 2013) found that constructive couple communication has a strong mediation effect between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction. In addition, one study conducted in S. Korea showed the similar result that couple communication pattern is highly associated with marital satisfactions of both (Park et al., 2005). These studies can suggest that improving communication ability of couples may be a potent point of the education programs for parents.

However, some other studies have demonstrated that couple communication is rather a consequence than the cause. Lavner, Karney and Bradbury (2016) argue that the communication’s effect size of prediction on marital satisfaction is limited. The authors assess newlywed couples’ positivity and negativity by an

observation-based test four times at 9-month intervals to identify cause and effect with self-report about marital satisfaction. With this concurrent and longitudinal study, they concluded that satisfaction is rather a significant predictor of communication, than the other way around. The finding advocates what Ajzen and Fishbein suggested that “couple’s global evaluations of their relationship should predict how partners behave towards one another” (p. 681).

Furthermore, it is prudent to take the first group of findings with a grain of salt especially since there are factors other than communication patterns that could exert an influence on their couple outcomes (Lavner et al., 2016). These factors might be family’s socio-economic background, parents’ educational levels, or the amount of time to interact with partners as well as the influence of family-of-origin. There is another possibility that macro level context such as national welfare state for supporting parents can take one of the most crucial roles when it comes to couple’s ability to cope with difficulties in the relational issues (Ungar, 2016).

A part from marital satisfaction, it is said to be possible that ‘personality’ can also influence communication patterns and ability (Galvin, Braithwaite & Bylund, 2015). There seems to be a plethora research which demonstrate the significance of family-of-origin experiences in relation to attachment (Dinero, Conger, Shaver, Widaman & Larsen-Rife, 2008), positive engagement (Whitton, Waldinger, Schulz, Allen & Crowell, 2008) and parental aggression (Hare, Miga & Allen, 2009). They appear to be influential in one’s future romantic relationship quality and aggression level. Some parents desire to create a new family life different from the one they experienced as a child in the family-of-origin, while realizing that they themselves reproduce similar patterns of relational interactions (Galvin et al., 2015).

Overall, it seems obvious that couple communication is highly associated with other couple, and family outcomes. It appears that the tentative answer of the questions if couple communication is a consequence or a cause of couple outcomes is ‘reciprocal’. As Lavner and colleague stated, “improving communication may be a valuable first step”, but “it is unlikely to be a sufficient ingredient

for lasting change in relationship satisfaction” (2016, p. 692). Besides, it is the study based on communication patterns, not communication ability, it might have had different findings from adopting communication ability as a main variable of the study. Because communication ability includes a wider range of individual and relational features than communication patterns (Burleson et al., 1997).

One thing to note in couple communication discourse in terms of marital relationship is that most research in this field concur with the premise that marital confrontation, arguing, dialectical tension is not necessarily bad. Since, relational affairs at home can either help or hinder conflicts and serve as a way to resolve conflicts or pursue these conflicts (Galvin et al., 2015). They argued that, “even though all relationships have problems, successful ones involve partners who learn how to negotiate conflicts” (p. 224). It can indicate that the measure for couple communication of the current study needs to include whether a parent has own ability to cope with marital conflicts in daily life in order to explore relationship with his/her future parenting-related outcomes, marital satisfaction and parental self-efficacy.

3 PARENTAL SELF-EFFICACY (PSE)

Parental self-efficacy (PSE) is based on Bandura’s self-efficacy theory, which can be viewed as judgments of one’s parenting ability. Specific to parenting, to feel efficacious parents must possess: (a) knowledge of appropriate child caring, (b) confidence in their own capacities to carry out the tasks of raising children, (c) and, the trust that their children will properly respond to their parenting and other surroundings, such as partner and social environment, will be supportive (Coleman et al., 1998). The primary purpose of research in parental self-efficacy has been to determine the key elements for parenting practices, which is consequently related to child development and parental adjustment to the role as a parent. It may be considered as a possible factor, which decides what parenting

skills a parent would select in a specific situation as well as the consistency of the parenting practices (Coleman, Trent, Bryan, King, Rogers & Nazir, 2002).

3.1 Importance of PSE

PSE may “mediate the effects of a number of parent and child variables” (Coleman et al., 2003, p. 128) such as, infant negative temperament (Verhage, Oosterman & Carlo Schuengel, 2013), adolescent school refusal (Carless, Melvin, Tonge & Newman, 2015) and child’s social competence and academic achievement (Junttila, Vauras & Laakkonen, 2007). Considering PSE as a strong prop for parents with young children, the effort to find the factors which have an influence to forming, improving or undermining one’s PSE would be one of the paths for better child development.

When it comes to the relationships between PSE and couple-level factors, Kwan, Kwok and Ling (2015) found that PSE is significant positive predictor of marital satisfaction for both Chinese fathers and mothers. In the other study conducted in Finland (Korja et al., 2015), mothers’ PSE in relation to emotional support to children were positively associated with family coordination which refers to how well father, mother and their toddler are interacting. PSE is also significantly related to adaptive parenting skills, such as parental responsiveness (Gondoli & Silverberg, 1997) and is found to act as a mediator of various environmental variables, such as socioeconomic status, infant temperaments, social marital support, and maternal depression and maternal behavioral competence (Teti & Gelfand, 1991).

Mothers’ PSE can be viewed as a defensive mechanism which helps them sustain parenting quality with little, or no support from partners in parenting, particularly in a distressed relationship (Lavenda & Kestler-Peleg, 2017). In other words, PSE can contribute to reducing parental stress in the absence of spousal support. Cassé, Oosterman and Carlo Schuengel (2015) also found that in a dissatisfied relationship, mothers whose parental self-efficacy is high may still have resources to keep pursuing good parenting. As a result, the higher parenting

quality protected by PSE affect children's cognitive development at early age (Lugo-Gil & Tamis-LeMonda, 2008).

3.2 The linkage of PSE and couple relationships

Whether a partner is able to positively affect other's PSE has been a part of the research interest in the field of family study. One of the most common factors is couple relationship quality which sometimes represented by marital satisfaction or family functioning. Sevigny and Loutzenhiser (2010) found that one's relational functioning with his/her partner can predict PSE for both mothers and fathers. Going deeper beyond couple relationship, Merrifield and Gamble (2013) resulted in that couple's relationship maintenance which defined as "a construct encompassing a number of strategies employed by romantic partners to maintain their relationship" (p. 512) is significant predictor of their PSE. A close look at the maintenance behaviors in the scale they adopted showed that maintenance strategies involves many features of couples' communicative motivation and skill. It might indicate the likelihood of positive effects of partners in terms of forming or improving one's PSE through couple communication.

For a long period of time for bringing up, partner can give performance feedback as they show different parenting strategies in person or through verbal discussions, as a role model (Rutter, 2006). Opinions and appraisals about partner's parenting values and practices could sometimes be direct or indirect but both can be meaningful according to occasions. For instance, for couples who are expecting parents, it is important to have an agreement on parenting issues in order to remain better mental health and relationship satisfaction (Don, Biehle & Mickelson, 2013). Considering that parents are not only each other's role model in parenting practices, but also adjusting and compromising each other's parenting standard and values which has a significant association with marriage life in general (Chi et al., 2013), interventions that target their communication skills could lead to far reaching improvements to one's PSE.

3.3 Measurements of PSE

Conceptualizations of PSE have oscillated between task-specific and domain-specific views of PSE. Bandura believed that self-efficacy is not global, fixed or permanent but is instead situation- and task-dependent (Coleman et al., 1998). In a task-specific measure of PSE, items usually aim to assess parents' perceptions of competence across several specific parenting situations and tasks. Domain self-efficacy, on the other hand, focuses more on a specific domain in parenting and is broader than task-specific self-efficacy (see for e.g., Woodruff & Cashman, 1993). It refers to the beliefs about one's ability in a particular aspect of life and "it can be the result of combining efficacy information about related types of tasks" (p. 431). However, the range of domains can vary depending on the purpose of the study, such as discipline, achievement, recreation, nurturance, playing, teaching etc.

The predominant approach to assessing PSE has been to use domain-general PSE measures (Coleman et al., 2003), or general PSE, which is limited to the broad parenting area. It is a broader concept than previous two definitions of PSE, task-specific and domain-specific, but much more narrowed than general self-efficacy. In domain-general approach, PSE is based on a "global competence expectations that are not linked to particular parenting tasks" (p. 130).

Although task-specific measure and domain-specific measure are divided in different names, individual items in domain-specific PSE measure are task-specific. For this reason, task-specific approach and domain-specific approach sometimes are classified into the same category (Jones & Prinz, 2005) and hence can complement each other.

4 THE KOREAN CONTEXT

4.1 Couple communication in the context of S. Korea

S. Korea has undergone rapid development and advancement in recent years. The GDP of S. Korea has grown 150 times in the last half century (World Bank, n.d.). There have been several studies, which advocate the opinion that the dramatic development in Korean economy is based on Confucius values to some extent that encourage people to dedicate to the society rather than personal life (Lee, 2008; Gook, 1997). Thus, S. Korea has a strong man “bread-winner” culture in which husbands usually play a dominant role in earning money. On the other hand, household chores, including caring and educating children, have been left for mothers who also had to “perform the expected duties to parents-in-laws in an extended family structure” (Chun, Khang, Kim & Cho, 2008, p. 995). In this setting, serious communications about parenting values and practices between couples may not be “natural”.

However, changes in societal structure has brought a variety of corresponding changes in family lives. In a marital relationship, at first, an increasing number of women are going for work and so it has created cracks in the traditional relationship model (Na & Cha, 2010). The more likelihood of women working outside the family, the more likelihood men are asked to help in the family by taking up household chores. As a result, expectations from men in the family have changed (Kang, 2007). Secondly, young parents are required to adjust to a different type of relationship with their child than what they were used to when they were children. Traditional roles of parents expect fathers to be authority figures and mothers to be affectionate; now fathers are expected to be more engaged in child rearing in person (Han & Kim, 2007).

Since social needs are being cast on parents, roles as both a partner and a parent are becoming increasingly difficult. Young parents are more likely to be frustrated because of the drastic change on the values of child and partner (Kim & Jun, 2012). Han et al. (2007) pointed out that marital conflict in Korea begins when mothers perceive that they are in charge of parenting more than their husbands and fathers, in turn, believe that they are sandwiched between surviving

in work and the new force from family (Yang & Kim, 2016), which is vastly different than in the previous generation. Furthermore, marital conflict, and even conflict between parent and child, can be understood in very different ways in each culture. For instance, families in East Asia would probably stress on 'saving face' to preserve harmony, not having external arguments in a casual situation (Kim, Shin & Cai, 1998). In contrast in Mexico, the frequent parental arguments can have positive impacts on children in terms of the sense of closeness to their mothers and less probability to have depression (Dumka, Roosa & Jackson, 1997).

In societies where 'saving face' is important, people might experience difficulties in expressing one's thoughts, beliefs, emotions and expectations to their partner. Being able to express one's emotions and opinions to partners is necessary to maintain the quality of marriage life. For example, wives who can express more gratefulness tend to have high quality of marital relationship (Jeong & Kim, 2016). In addition, Kwon et al. (2008) pointed that wives who live in the circumstance which force them feel social rank and external entrapment, which is defined as the situation one cannot escape from despite he/she wants, have more difficulties to express themselves in words. Such atmosphere is consequently associated with marital dissatisfaction. In light of the study which found that both wives' and husbands' active communication in S. Korea is related to their sexual satisfaction (Kim, Han & Han, 2011), the studies above could indicate that taking account of possible obstacles for couple communication is important.

4.2 PSE in the context of S. Korea

Based on the definition for PSE by Coleman et al. (1998), appropriate knowledge for caring of and teaching child is significant for parents to feel efficacious. While, this knowledge may not change drastically with time, changes in parenting trends due to societal advancements, such as the introduction of smart phones to children, can cause confusion among parents. With changing times, fathers' involvement in parenting has also changed. Fathers' participation in child rearing can unburden mothers' parenting stress and, as a result, can increase mothers'

PSE (Kim & Lee, 2005; Kwon, 2009). Additionally, fathers' participation in child rearing is positively associated with children's emotional comprehension and regulation (Park & Nahm, 2015).

Long working hours can also be a factor of fathers' willingness to participate in child rearing and thus consequently impact mothers' PSE. Korea has consistently ranked high in working hours among OECD countries (OECD, 2018). Hwang and Hwang (2014) pointed out that the less working hours a father has, the higher PSE he has. On top of the effects on parent-child interaction, long working hours can affect marital relationship. Yoo (2010) found that in dual-earner families with a preschool child, wives tend to do more household labor almost seven times longer than their husbands. Giving consideration to the finding from Yoo's study that wives' satisfaction with household labor division is positively related to their marital satisfaction, longer working hours culture might be a negative factor of mothers' low marital satisfaction.

Kwon, Chung, Park and Yee (2013) identified the factors, namely mothers' age, job status, temperament and the number of children, which are associated with Korean mothers' PSE. In addition, marital relational factors such as spousal effective communication, are positively associated with maternal PSE. It aligns with previous studies both conducted in and out of S. Korea which argue that relationship quality between couples are perhaps the most important structure to support parenting. (Jang & Kim, 2002; Belsky, 1984).

More attention has been paid to examining the association between couple communication and marital satisfaction than between couple communication and PSE, particularly in S. Korea. Investigations of couple communication studies in S. Korea are commonly centered on communication patterns (Kim et al., 2011; Park et al., 2005; Lee & Lee, 2000), which are affected by couples' current emotional and relational states. Couple communication patterns that are constructive have been found to be a significant predictor of marital satisfaction (see for e.g., Lee et al, 2000; Park & Ko, 2005). The few studies that have examined couple's communication and PSE have found that mothers' PSE is related to their perception of communication ability with their partners (e.g., Lee, 2014)

As noted earlier, 'saving face' culture might inhibit mothers from authentic expression in public situations. So, parental programs based on couple communication needs to help couples recognize their own abilities and improve it for better couple relationship as well as parenting (Kang, 2015).

5 AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

PSE is an important element for child development (Anzman-Frasca, Stifter, Paul & Birch, 2013; Verhage et al., 2013). However, as one's PSE can be affected by many individual and relational factors (Grady & Karraker, 2017; Cassé et al., 2016), this study aims to examine the association between parental individual factors such as couple communication ability, marital satisfaction and PSE of mothers, as well as a relational factor which is interaction time with partners. Moreover, this study also aims to identify if a predictive relationship exists between these relational factors and PSE. Considering that the average working hours in Korea is relatively long, it would leave lesser time for couples to interact on a daily basis (Jeong, 2012).

The present study particularly focuses on mothers whose child is from ages 2 to 5 years because this can be considered a frustrating time for parents (Pierce, Boivin, Frenette, Forget-Dubois, Dionne & Tremblay, 2010; Coleman et al., 2003) and can result in lower PSE (Junttila, Aromaa, Rautava, Piha & Råihä, 2015). Furthermore, the current study focuses on mothers, because in S. Korea mothers are still considered to be primary caregivers and are perceived to be crucial to child development (e.g., Lee, Kim & Lim, 2016).

The followings are the research questions posed by the current study:

- (a) Are couples' communication ability, marital satisfaction and PSE perceived by Korean mothers of 2-year-old to 5-year-old children related? If so, does marital satisfaction and couple communication ability predict PSE?

- (b) Is there a linkage between amount of time interacting with their partners and couple communication ability, marital satisfaction and PSE?

6 METHOD

6.1 Participants

Through convenience sampling, a sample of ($N=107$) married women living in S. Korea were recruited through a regional website aimed for sharing parenting and general living information. The web community mostly consisted of the residents of four districts of Seoul. Recruiting was randomly done by advertising on a digital bulletin board. Since it has a number of members, nearly 120,000, and it is only opened for mothers, it is assumed to be an appropriate place to recruit participants of the study. Out of 111 responses, 4 entries were duplicated and hence, data for 107 participants were used for analysis.

All respondents were mothers whose child is, at least one of them, at the age between two and five. Since people in Korea follow a unique age system, where at birth the child is seen as age 1, and the beginning of every subsequent year the child's age increases by one year. For example, a child born in June 6th, 2012 would turn 2-year-old on January 1st, 2013. So, in this study the criteria of children from ages 3 to 7 years was converted to 2 to 5-year-old in international age. Other characteristics of the sample are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the sample

Variables	<i>N</i> , (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	107	37.47	4.181
Educational level			
- Middle School	1(.9%)		
- High School	16(15%)		
- University	84(78.5%)		
- Masters	6(5.6%)		
Duration of Marriage			
- 0-5 years	9(8.4%)		
- 5-10 Years			

- More than 10 years	79(73.8%) 19(17.8%)
Family Income	
- Less than 4 Million KRW	47(43.9%)
- 4-5 Million KRW	39(36.4%)
- More than 5 Million KRW	21(19.6%)
Living conditions	
- Parents/Parents-in-law	5(4.7%)
- Nuclear Family	102(95.3%)
Number of children	
- 1 child	34(31.8%)
- 2 children	59(55.1%)
- 3 or more children	14(13%)
Working hours	
- Less than 4 hrs a day	53(49.5%)
- 4-6 hrs a day	16(15%)
- 6-8 hrs a day	21(19.6%)
- More than 8 hrs a day	17(15.9%)

In terms of sample's education level, the average rate of entering universities of women from 2000 to 2004 is 73.8% (Statistics Korea, 2007). Because it is the expected period of going into tertiary education for the majority of the sample, the sample does not fall outside much of general population in S. Korea. With respect to family income, the overall average of family income in S. Korea is approximately 4.4 million Korean Won (KRW), and the median category of income distribution standard is 3.7 million KRW (KOSIS, 2018). The sample's income seems representative of that of the population.

6.2 Measures

6.2.1 Couple Communication Ability (CCA)

Marital Communication Ability Scale (Kang, 2015) was used as a measure of mothers' couple communication ability with their husbands. The measure in large consists of three sub-factors of couple communication; self-expression (12

items), accepting the other (11 items), and mutual understanding (10 items). For example, respondents were asked rate how competently they can express their emotion and opinion in the conversation with spouse, such as “I clearly say what I hate to my partner”. Each of items has Likert 5 points scales (1 = Almost never... 5 = Very likely). According to her study, the scale had a global reliability ($\alpha=.958$) and sub-factors’ reliability (.958 ~ .910). Cronbach’s alpha for the overall scale and each subscale were obtained and they were found to be reliable (self-expression $\alpha = .93$, accepting others $\alpha = .92$, mutual understanding $\alpha = .88$, overall scale $\alpha = .76$).

6.2.2 Marital Satisfaction (MS)

To assess marital satisfaction, one item “*how happy do you perceive your marriage life?*” taken from short form of Korea Dyadic Adjustment Scale, edited and tested by Cho and his colleagues (Cho, Choi, Oh and Kwon, 2011). The other 6 items were out of the scope of the present study because they assess more about marital intimacy, than satisfaction.

6.2.3 Parental Self-Efficacy (PSE)

Among other instruments which have been adapted considering the Korean culture, the questionnaires edited by Cho and Lee (2007) was used for the reason that the measure was revised particularly aiming for parents whose children are under 7 at which they go to schools. The measure is comprised of four different sub-factors; communication (8 items), teaching (8 items), general parenting self-efficacy (5 items), and control (5 items) with 26 items in total. Designing a set of questionnaires followed the structure of five categories that Allen suggested upon the same 5 Likert scale (1 = Almost never... 5 = Very likely). According to their study, global reliability of the instrument is .92. Cronbach’s alphas for the overall scale and each sub-scale were obtained and they were found to be reliable (communication $\alpha = .87$, teaching $\alpha = .84$, general $\alpha = .80$, control $\alpha = .68$, overall scale $\alpha = .84$).

6.3 Ethical consideration

Considering that it is a sensitive topic of family life, data collection process was based on the APA guidelines for research ethics. The purpose of the study which will be used to understand relationship between PSE and any other variables was clearly informed. In addition, they were also informed that they could withdraw anytime from the survey if they feel uncomfortable with giving answers. In terms of limits of confidentiality, they were informed that they might be contacted over a phone later if additional data is required which actually did not happen. For incentive, they were informed that five of all the participants would receive coffee coupon which is worth around 4 euros each. Potential risks were not handled since the survey did not collect personal identifying information like name or address.

6.4 Data analysis

All the collected data in this study were analyzed with SPSS Statistics 24. To assess normality of the distribution, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted and was found to be normal. This is confirmed by the skewness and kurtosis values. MS was not found to be normally distributed, however, it may be considered to resemble a normal distribution as indicated by the skewness and kurtosis values (see Table 2).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of the observed variables

Variables	N	M	SD	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	Skewness	Kurtosis
Couple Communication Ability (CCA)	107	3.90	.52	.200	-.366	.285
Self-expression	107	3.90	.69			
Accepting others	107	4.00	.59			
Mutual understanding	107	3.81	.60			

Marital satisfaction (MS)	107	3.05	1.31	.000	-.114	-.356
Parental self-efficacy (PSE)	107	3.59	.51	.200	-.030	-.005
Communication	107	3.84	.55			
Teaching	107	3.60	.57			
General	107	3.46	.58			
Control	107	3.76	.61			

Pearson product-moment correlations were employed to evaluate the associations between three main variables of the study, followed by linear regression to identify the overall contribution of possible predictor variables on PSE. It was conducted by using z-score of each measure because those of CCA and PSE have 5-likert scale despite that of MS has 6-likert scale. One-way ANOVA was conducted to assess score differences in three variables with couple interaction hours of weekdays and weekends respectively. The sample was divided into 4 different groups (G1 to G4) according to the average hours of couple interaction.

7 RESULTS

7.1 Descriptives

The mean score of couple communication ability is 3.90 which is thought to be a bit higher than the average score of couple communication collected in other Korean studies (e.g. Lee, 2013). In Kang's study (2015), mean scores of each subscale of the measure used in the present study ranged from 3.6 to 3.8. It indicates that CCA of the sample in the present study is slightly higher. There are no significant differences between the mean scores of the subscales.

MS in this study can be said relatively lower than other studies. In one Korean research which longitudinally studied about marital satisfaction of more than 1,700 mothers (Yoon & Choi, 2016) showed that it ranges between 3.81 and 3.97 upon the 1 to 5 Likert scale. Because the item used in the current study was based on 6 Likert scale, the mean value of MS still remains at the lower level.

In Lee's study (2014) which investigated mothers' PSE with a preschooler, mean value was 3.56 evaluating it as more than moderate level. The current study showed a very close score (3.59) and it can be safe to say that PSE of the sample is also more than moderate level. All four subscales are evenly and similarly distributed.

7.2 Relationships between CCA, MS and PSE

This study aimed at analyzing the interrelations between couple communication ability (CCA), marital satisfaction (MS) and parental self-efficacy (PSE) along with time spent for couple interaction. Furthermore, the study investigated the possible predictive role of CCA.

For the first research question which aims to find the associations between the variables, Pearson's product-moment correlation was conducted. Findings revealed that CCA, MS and PSE were significantly correlated with each other (Table 3); CCA had a significant and positive correlation with MS ($r(105) = .33, p < .01$) and with PSE ($r(105) = .47, p < 0.00$); MS also had a significantly positive correlation with PSE ($r(105) = .26, p < .01$). In other words, CCA, MS and PSE were related each other.

Table 3 Correlations between Couple Communication ability, PSE and Marital Satisfaction

S.No	Variable	1	2	3
1	Couple Communication Ability (CCA)	-		
2	Marital Satisfaction (MS)	.326**	-	
3	Parental Self-Efficacy (PSE)	.474**	.264**	-

** $p < .01$

A linear regression analysis was conducted to analyze predictors of PSE. Controlling for marital satisfaction, the regression model yielded that couple communication significantly predicted mothers' PSE ($F(2,104) = 16.25, p < .01, R^2 = .223$), with the 22.3% variability of mothers' PSE accounted for by CCA. As

shown in Table 4, CCA had a significantly higher beta weight ($\beta = 0.434$, $p < .01$) than MS, implying that CCA predicted more than MS did on PSE.

Table 4 Standardized regression coefficients predicting PSE

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	Adjusted R ²	F
				.223	16.250**
Couple Communication Ability (CCA)	.434	.091	.434**		
Marital Satisfaction (MS)	.122	.091	.122		

** $p < .01$

7.3 Relationships between couple interaction hours and CCA, MS and PSE

The second aim of the study was to analyze if the time spent for couple interaction is related to three variables. One-way ANOVA was conducted to assess differences based on hours of couple interaction during weekdays (Table 5) and weekends (Table 6) on CCA, MS and PSE. The participants are classified into 4 groups on the basis of the amount of time couples spent together a day: Group 1 (G1) those who spent less than 30 minutes, Group 2 (G2) those who spent between 30 minutes and 1 hour, group 3 (G3) those who spent between 1 hour and 2 hours, group 4 (G4) those who spent more than 2 hours. As it is shown in Table 5, there were significant differences based on interaction hours with partners on weekdays between the groups on CCA ($F(3,103) = 3.47$, $p < .05$) and on MS ($F(3,103) = 4.89$, $p < .01$). However, there were no significant group differences in PSE. This means that there is a significant association between interaction hours with partners on weekdays and CCA and MS, but not with PSE.

Post-Hoc analysis using Bonferroni pairwise comparisons revealed that significant difference existed between G1 and G3 (Mean difference = -0.92, $p < .05$) for CCA. With regards to MS, group differences were found between G1 and G3 (Mean difference = -0.85, $p < .05$), and G1 and G4 (Mean difference = -1.05, $p < .05$). In other words, those who spent less than 30m (G1) interacting with their partners on weekdays were significantly lower on CCA than those who spent 1 to 2 hours (G3) interacting with their partners. Furthermore, those who spent less

than 30m interacting with their partners on weekdays had a lower MS than those who spent 1 to 2 hours (G3) and those who spent more than 2 hours (G4) interacting with their partners.

Table 5 Differences between groups based on interaction hours in weekdays on CCA, MS and PSE

Variable	0-30 minutes (G 1)			30 mins – 1 hr (G2)			1-2 hrs (G3)			More than 2 hrs (G4)			Df	f
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
CCA	33	-.38 ^a	1.05	47	.04	.96	16	.54 ^b	.89	11	.18	.81	3,103	3.471*
MS	33	-.45 ^a	.94	47	.05	.90	16	.39 ^b	.84	11	.59 ^b	.96	3,103	4.892**
PSE	33	-.16	1.23	47	.06	.92	16	.19	.94	11	-.08	.63	3,103	.532

^a&^b Post-Hoc comparisons using Bonferroni pairwise comparisons: groups with significant differences have different superscript letters

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

As indicated in Table 6, there were significant differences between groups based on interaction hours on weekends on CCA ($F(3,103) = 8.04, p < .01$) and on MS ($F(3,103) = 12.55, p < .01$). However, there were no significant group differences in PSE. This means that there is a significant association between interaction hours with partners on weekends and CCA and MS, but not with PSE.

Post-Hoc analysis using Bonferroni pairwise comparisons revealed that significant differences existed between the groups for CCA and MS, but not for PSE. As shown in Table 6, there were significant differences in the outcome variables between the groups. With regard to CCA, the differences were usually found between G1 and G2, and G3. In the same manner for MS, significant group differences were usually found between G1 and G2, and G3. In other words, those who spent less than 30m (G1) interacting with their partners on weekends were significantly lower on CCA than those who spent 1 to 2 hours (G3) and more than 2 hours (G4) interacting with their partners. And, those who spent 30m to 1 hour (G2) interacting with their partners on weekends were significantly lower on CCA than those who spent 1 to 2 hours (G3) and more than 2 hours (G4) interacting with their partners.

Furthermore, those who interacted less than 30m (G1) with their partners on weekends were significantly lower on MS than those who interacted 1 to 2 hours (G3) and more than 2 hours (G4) with their partners. Those who spent 30m

to 1 hour (G2) interacting with their partners on weekends were significantly lower on MS than those who spent more than 2 hours (G4) interacting with their partners.

Table 6 Differences between groups based on interaction hours in weekends on CCA, MS and PSE

Variable	0-30 minutes (G 1)			30 mins - 1 hr (G2)			1-2 hrs (G3)			More than 2 hrs (G4)			Df	f
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
CCA	21	-.63 ^a	1.12	21	-.43 ^a	.77	23	.35 ^b	.90	42	.34 ^b	.87	3,103	8.036 ^{**}
MS	21	-.84 ^a	.92	21	-.22 ^{a,c}	.72	23	-.04 ^{b,c}	1.00	42	.55 ^b	.83	3,103	12.549 ^{**}
PSE	21	-.34	1.14	21	-.20	1.10	23	.29	1.00	42	.11	.84	3,103	1.929

^a&^b Post-Hoc comparisons using Bonferroni corrections: groups with significant differences

have different superscript letters

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

8 DISCUSSION

The current findings indicate statistically significant linkages between couple communication ability, marital satisfaction and parental self-efficacy (PSE) of Korean mothers with preschoolers. The findings firstly revealed that mothers' couple communication ability, their reports of marital satisfaction and PSE are significantly related to each other, with couple communication ability and marital satisfaction predicting their PSE. This result is noteworthy because most of the previous studies with couple communication, marital relationship and parental self-efficacy have hardly spotlighted on the relationship between couple communication ability and parental self-efficacy (Lavner et al., 2016; Yoo et al., 2014; Merrifield et al., 2013; Burlison et al., 1997). In addition, another finding showed group differences, based on interaction hours with partners, on couple communication ability and marital satisfaction, but not PSE.

8.1 The relationship between couple communication ability, marital satisfaction and PSE

As anticipated, the current study found that couple communication ability and marital satisfaction together were a statistically significant predictor of PSE, which can be supported by the studies that have found that couple's communication predicts PSE. For example, mothers' perceived quality of couple's communication (Kwon et al., 2013), verbal persuasion (Cassé et al., 2015), and partner's support (Lee, 2014) were found to be factors which affect mothers' PSE. Marital satisfaction was, as well, found to affect PSE in a study (Sevigny et al., 2010) as a part of relational functioning. It is significant that the current study specifically focused on mothers' ability in couple communication because no published studies were found that incorporated ability in couple communication in prediction model of PSE for mothers.

According to Bandura's framework, one's self-efficacy may be based on other's opinions on one's ability. With the framework, many researchers have devoted to finding linkages between PSE and other relational factors such as couple relationship functioning or relationship maintenance (Sevigny et al., 2010; Merrifield et al., 2013). In concert with previous research, couple communication, marital satisfaction and PSE of Korean mothers are significantly and positively related each other (Kwon et al., 2013; Lee, 2014; Chung, Kang & Kim, 2015). It is noteworthy because the findings in the current study imply that couple communication ability can be added as one of the factors which affect one's PSE along with those above.

Furthermore, this study also demonstrated that mothers' reports of marital satisfaction did not contribute as much as their reports of couple communication ability to parental self-efficacy. Although previous studies supported a significant relationship between marital satisfaction and parental self-efficacy with marital satisfaction as a predictive factor of parental self-efficacy (Lee & Lee, 2017; Kwan et al., 2015; Sevigny et al., 2010), there has not been many studies which focused on couple communication as a predictor of parental self-efficacy. One

study in Korea conducted by Kwon et al. (2013) found that couple communication quality can explain mothers' parental self-efficacy which echoes with the present study. Therefore, the current study contributed to exploring which factor could predict parental self-efficacy more among couple communication ability and marital satisfaction, despite they are all falling into 'social context' which hypothesized to have an important influence on parenting by Belsky (Sevigny et al., 2010).

The finding that couple communication ability can predict PSE could be explained by the reason that couples whose communication abilities are high can negotiate better about values and standards, finding both common ground and discrepancies in parenting than the couples with lower communication abilities. This negotiating process can help couples in general to find the issues which can be possibly conflictual at any time while they bring up child without severe crisis. According to Galvin et al. (2015), conflicts between couples are not necessarily negative, it can rather be constructive only if they recognize how to deal with those issues. Communication is a main passage when they handle the issues (Sen-écal, Murard & Hess, 2003) so that communication ability of each partner can contribute to build a sense of team spirit, as a single identity in terms of parenting. Considering that many studies pointed out whether a partner supports or undermines other's parenting may have a crucial link with PSE (Feinberg, 2003; Merri-field et al., 2013), couple's communication ability might have some associations with these supportive or undermining response.

8.2 Couple interaction hours and couple communication ability

The findings showed that there were some associations between interaction hours of partners and mothers' couple communication ability and marital satisfaction. During both weekdays and weekends, in general, the mothers those who spent more than 1 hour interacting with their partners tend to have higher couple communication ability than those who spent less than 1 hour. As with couple

communication ability, the mothers those who interacted more than 1 hour have generally higher marital satisfaction than those who interacted less than 1 hour in both weekdays and weekends. It seems to be safe to say that there is a tendency to have higher couple communication ability and marital satisfaction when they have couple interaction more than 1 hour.

Based on the findings, there could be two possible explanations. First, the more time mothers spent interacting with their partners, the more chances they could have to communicate. Hence, those mothers would be able to practice how to negotiate with their partners more, in turn, they could end up having higher communication ability. Second, although it seems the other side of the coin, longer, or proper hours of interaction with partners would rather be the outcome of the higher communication ability and better relationship quality. They might be better at grasping the context of the conversation being able to decide how much time they really need for communication in daily lives.

In respect to the first possibility, having a certain amount of time together for couples is necessary to achieve higher marital satisfaction (Dyck & Daly, 2006). Even if couples have good relationship and communication skills at the beginning, it would be difficult to maintain for a long time if they simply do not have time to talk about the issues from family lives. People, particularly in S. Korea, regard others' opinions significant and it really affects one's confidence and behaviors (Kim & Cha, 2003). It might happen that Korean mothers who are regarded to have more responsibility not in only parenting, but also in managing family affairs in general (Han et al., 2007) would probably be more influenced by partners' positive or negative feedbacks on these issues. In addition, since communication is a skill which they need to tune into each other (Domingue & Mollen, 2009), couples could be tuned out if they have not had enough time to practice this skill together. In other words, couples in a conversation might be more stressful when they have been having less hours for interaction every day basis, because they could probably have lost more in sense of noticing the partner's implicit contexts. For example, if a wife is lately interested in gender discrimina-

tion issue, a husband, without adequate interaction time, would be likely to misunderstand why she is upset talking about domestic chore distribution than before. As a result, those couples with less time would consequently be less confident in their communication skills and satisfaction in marriage lives.

Furthermore, a cultural factor specific to S. Korea could boost mothers' evaluation on their marital communication ability or marital satisfaction, for those whose couple interaction hours are comparatively longer. The research said Korean people tend to engage in image-preserving than those in Western societies (Lee & Park, 2010). People in S. Korea still show a strong characteristic which they attribute their happiness in comparison with their neighbors. According to a survey conducted by the Korean government (Korea Population, Health and Welfare Association, 2015), only 27.5% of couples with preschoolers communicate with partners for more than 1 hour on a daily basis. This figure is similar with findings of the present study which couples with more than 1 hour interaction time comprise approximately 25% on weekdays. In other words, those couples are having quite more time for interaction than others and it might help them perceive themselves as "superior" to others when it comes to managing "good conversation". At the end, they might end up believing that they have good skills in communication. As a result, they are likely to be appreciated by other mothers around as whose communication ability is relatively higher, and this perception might contribute to having positive evaluation about their own couple communication ability.

In respect to the second possibility, mothers' higher couple communication ability might lead to having adequate amount of interaction hours for each couple based on their family situations. In other words, the extent to which couples interact depends on their communication ability, taking account of such as couple characteristics, or working conditions. For example, a study found that introverts' communications are more likely to be oriented to tasks while extroverts' communication tend to be more cheerful (Huang, 1999) which can infer that each communication style require different amount of time to meet the goal.

Furthermore, longer interaction hours between couples does not necessarily guarantee better results. As shown in the current study, couple communication ability of mothers those who have marital interaction more than 2 hours a day on weekdays does not significantly differ from those who have less than 1 hour. They might be exhausted when communication exceeds certain hours. In this occasion, they might feel perceive themselves as not competent at communication if the conversation ended without coming to a conclusion showing irritation from the talk. In other words, mothers whose communication ability is high might be able to figure out how much time would be adequate for couple interaction considering each partner's fatigue, time allowed at the moment, daily house chores etc.

In both weekdays and weekends, PSE was found not to be significantly associated with couple interaction hours. Since PSE is a subjective perception, each parent might require different level of support, feedback and agreements in order to maintain the same level of PSE. Unfortunately, there seems to be an absence of studies focusing on the relationship between couples' interaction hours and PSE. However, one study cited that Korean mothers are relatively less satisfied with much more support from female relatives, especially mothers, than Scottish because of the different expectations on level of support (Suzuki, Holloway, Yamamoto & Mindnich, 2009). In addition, the study mentioned individual difference about PSE that "the actual supportive behaviors that lead to women's satisfaction or self-efficacy may vary across individuals and cultures" (p. 1522). It could indicate that people might have grown up with different expectations by which each mother could be either comfortable or not with the same amount of interaction with partners.

8.3 Limitations

When evaluating the findings of this study, it is important to note its limitations. First of all, because it is a cross-sectional study, it is hard to say that causation between CCA and PSE has been found. In order to take a precise picture of how

really couple communication ability has a predictive effect on PSE, future longitudinal studies are called for.

Secondly, although the sample is close to the average of whole population in S. Korea in some figures, it is hard to say that data can represent the overall population. Furthermore, there is likely to be self-selection bias because participating into the study is all up to the participants. For example, the data might have excluded the mothers who go to bed early or the mothers who rather do not use smartphone much. The data collected in this study was not compared with other sources so that it is one informant. Because of the financial reward offered to the participants, it might have happened that some people tend to eagerly participate than other whose characteristic is different. However, like Sharp, Pelletier and Lévesque resulted in their study (2006), rewards might improve the representativeness of the sample.

Thirdly, since parenting is considered of as a collaborative effort involving both parents, reports from fathers would have yielded more information on the possible associations between marital communication ability, marital satisfaction and PSE. Supporting this, Sevigny et al. (2010) explained that predictors of PSE are different for fathers and mothers. In addition, with the data from the fathers' side the study could have been able to distinguish if mothers' communication ability is still playing its role for PSE with significantly lower level of fathers' communication ability. It could have been also possible to get an understanding whether each partner's communication ability is related or not.

Fourthly, other demographic information pertaining to the marital relationship needs to be taken account in order to more comprehensively understand how mothers' marital communication ability, marital satisfaction and PSE are linked. Some studies found that marital satisfaction is associated with duration of marriage, family size, wife's and husband's age, number of children (Twenge, Campbell, & Foster, 2003; Wendorf, Lucas, Imamoğlu, Weisfeld & Weisfeld, 2011). Given the cultural nuances of the family circle in Korean contexts, relationships with parents-in-law may also be considered. This may also be an issue for

mothers since the traditional value pushes mothers obey and support their parents-in-law (Lee & Choi, 2013). Plus, along with increasing number of dual-earner family in S. Korea, the parents with young children do not have many options but their parents because social support for child care is not enough (Lee et al., 2013). Few studies have confirmed this association between the effect of parents-in-law and marital satisfaction (Kim, Seong, Paeng, Choi & Choi, 2011), but there have been a seemingly lack of research investigating the effect of parents-in-law and marital communication ability and PSE in S. Korea.

9 IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the current study showed that focusing on couple communication ability could be utilized in parental education programs. First of all, the study indicates an important role of couple communication on PSE. It implies that when the program targets improving couples' communication ability through different practices they could learn about what is important to enhance the quality of diverse family outcomes. On top of this, since communication has quite many dimensions like motivation and skill, such a program would help couples realize what strength and weakness in communication they have now and why certain communicative habits like undermining they have.

Further, the study showed that time spent interacting with partners is important. It would suggest that education programs for young adults focused on communication skills and parenting practices have some possibility to guide them prepare better skills earlier in anticipation of better PSE at a later time. A strong advantage of parenthood education program if it focuses on communication ability is that it can be implemented beforehand. Despite it is a study about medical students (Humphris, 2002), the study shows that early development of communication skills is stable over time. This communication-ability-based parenthood program could be developed at university education level, or even an upper-secondary school level because it is maybe more effective to conduct such an education

when students are in a group. Moreover, early adulthood is a period when they usually start intimate relationships for the first time (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010). Thus, it would probably be more motivated in parenthood education. The future program can place emphasis on how to improve specific skills for tuning into each partner's parenting values and practices and supporting them.

For those who are expecting a baby or who already have, this can be the most motivational moment about parenting. Very practical issues that may arise in the near future can be discussed as useful materials to practice couple communication. Baby Trail¹ is a one such project that aims to improve practical parenting knowledge. Through such a simulation, couples can prepare their communal strategies on how they would react to each parenting issue, by conversing about their different values and practices rooted in their personal history and experiences. In other words, through this kind of educational programs, parents in the early stage can naturally have more chances to develop their couple communication skills, expecting higher PSE as well.

¹ project funded by Science Information Association; Baby Trail game will be released soon

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