

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NORMS ON KOREAN WIVES' INTENTION TO TALK
WITH THEIR HUSBANDS ABOUT THE EQUAL DIVISION OF HOUSEWORK

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ABSTRACT

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The perception in South Korea that housework is the primary duty of a wife, even when she is equally engaged in social activities as her husband, creates a conflict for female employees' work-life balance. Nowadays, Korean males see the equal division of housework more positively than in the past. However, a large gap still exists between the attitude and the actual behavior of the equal amount of housework. The present paper assumes that interpersonal communication can be the channel to reduce this gap. The theory of planned behavior and social norms approach are the theoretical frameworks that guide the study. The purpose of the study is to examine how social norms are influencing Korean wives' intention to talk to their husbands about the equal division of housework.

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INTRODUCTION

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) and the social norms approach (SNA) have been useful tools to predict an individual's behavioral intention and behavioral changes. In particular, subjective norms from TPB and descriptive and injunctive norms from SNA have been adapted to several studies to explain the mechanism of an individual's behavior. While some researchers did not differentiate subjective norms and injunctive norms (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005), other research found that each norm is a distinctive concept and has a differential impact on behavioral intention (Park & Smith, 2007; Park, Klein, Smith, & Martell, 2009). The present study aims to test the previous findings of the TPB and SNA in a different and new context, the division of housework in South Korea (Korea). Korean males spend the least time in doing chores among countries from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2014). The prevalent perception in Korea that housework is a duty of female family members, even when they are engaged in the same work and social activities as men, causes conflict to female in their work-life balance.

Although more Koreans have a more positive attitude toward the equal division of housework than in the past, very few people actually put this into action (The Korean National Statistical Office, 2014a). Interpersonal communication between husbands and wives is one channel that could be used to resolve this issue. The purpose of the study is to examine how different social norms are influencing on Korean wives' intention to talk to their husbands about the equal division of housework. The present paper is largely based on Park and Smith's research (2007) which tested the separate influence of subjective norms, descriptive norms, and injunctive norms in organ donation. This paper begins with background information about gendered division of household labor in Korea and how social norms can impact Korean

wives' intention to initiate conversation with their husbands about the equal division of household labor. Two theoretical frameworks, the TPB and SNA, guide hypotheses and research questions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Korean Women's Domestic Duties

Korean women have the lowest glass ceiling in jobs among OECD countries. This indicates that women have the lowest employment rate, and fewer women are senior managers or board members. The gender wage gap is largest in Korea compared to other OECD countries (The Economist, 2016). This might be explained by the 'gendered' market design in Korea. The organizational culture in Korea is known for working late and heavy drinking, which forms informal relationships between peers, supervisors, and business associates (Kim, 2009; Lee, Park, Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2006). The design of this market assumes that employees have wives or other female family members who can relieve them from domestic duties, such as housework or childcare, so that they do not necessarily have to go home early. Thus, female employees are often regarded as incapable of coping with domestic duties and careers (Kim, 2009). While male employees engage in informal bonding with each other late at night, female employees are often considered as out-group members and have fewer chances to get promoted.

Responsibility of household labor is not only a burden for working women. The unequal amount of housework is deleterious to women regardless of their employment status. Whereas the division of household labor is usually not related to married men's personal well-being or marital satisfaction, the unequal amount of household labor could reduce marital satisfaction and increase depression for married women (Cotroneo, 2000). There is no relationship between wives' employment status and the degree of Korean husbands' contribution to housework. Recent national census data (The Korean National Statistical Office, 2014b) revealed that wives engaged in significantly more housework when a husband and a wife were equally engaged in economic activities, when only a husband was employed but wife was not, and even when only wife was

working but a husband stayed at a domestic sphere. For example, Korean husbands in dual-earner couples spent only five less minutes per a day doing housework than working husbands whose wives are not employed (The Korean National Statistical Office, 2014b).

The reason why women take care of the majority of domestic responsibility regardless of their employment status is due to Confucian values that are deeply rooted in Korean culture. Confucianism originates from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius and has affected to Korean culture to a great extent since the last kingdom of Korea (Seo, Leather, & Coyne, 2012). Confucianism emphasizes traditional roles of a dominating husband and a well-complying wife to maintain balance and harmony in society (Choi, 1994; Croucher & Miles, 2009; Han, 2012). While Confucian manhood is characterized with active and honorable images such as moral leadership, social strictness, personal dignity, and family responsibility, Confucian womanhood is represented as self-sacrificing women who accept husband-father dictation, refrain from debate, do not shame their families with carelessness, and whose work is to serve in roles such as as daughter-in-law, wife, and mother (Han & Ling, 1998). Thus, the Korean culture, based on Confucianism, has formulated the perception that housework is a first priority for Korean women and the least priority for Korean men even when married couples are equally employed.

The problem is that the cultural and social pressure on Korean wives to do a vast majority of the housework deters women's entry into the labor force and equal treatment of male and female employees in the work place, as shown by the fact that South Korea has the lowest glass ceiling in jobs among OECD countries (The Economist, 2016). Furthermore, this gendered perception that housework is a duty for women solidifies patriarchy in Korean family in which a husband is a primary decision maker while a wife's major role is limited to providing emotional

nurturance to a husband and children (Han, 2012). Consistent with this argument, recent research suggests that gender equality has to be established first to achieve the ideal division of housework in Korea since the perception of non-traditional gender roles is positively associated with the equal division of housework in dual income couples (Jung & Cho, 2015).

Some may expect that these traditional values might be changed by now due to the country's urbanization and a shift in generations. Although this might be true in terms of attitudes toward the equal division of household labor, a gap still exists between the attitude and the actual behaviors. According to a recent poll conducted by the Korean National Statistical Office, almost half of the male population endorse equal division of housework. However, only 16% of them actually report doing so (The Korean National Statistical Office, 2014a). This paper assumes that interpersonal communication between a husband and a wife is one channel to reduce the gap between the attitude and the actual equal division of housework. As the data shows, the positive attitude of men toward doing more chores is not sufficient to change the traditional gender roles. A husband and a wife need to realize that both of them want equality, articulate their commitment to each other, and make an active effort together to achieve the equal division of housework (Askari, Liss, Erchull, Staebell, & Axelson, 2010). As the very first step of communication between a couple, a Korean wife's intention to talk with her husband about the equal division of household labor is important.

Social Norms and Korean Wives' Intention to Initiate Communication

Not every wife may negatively evaluate their contribution to chores even though they do much more housework than their husbands (Askari, Liss, Erchull, Staebell, & Axelson, 2010; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Perales, Baxter, & Tai, 2015). Some researchers argue that women's desire for the equality in housework is usually thwarted by their lower social status and

the threat of divorce, which will yield a lower standard of living. Thus, women are induced to define an objectively unequal situation as just (Hochschild, 1989; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994). Although not every married woman perceives the needs to talk to husband about sharing housework, the role of social norms is expected to play a significant role in predicting Korean women's intention to talk with their husbands about the equal division of household labor. This is because people tend to make decisions based on their perceptions of what others think or do (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). Perceptions of normative behaviors are associated with an individual's behavior and yield intervention effects (Martens et al., 2006). Intervention effects of social norms have been tested in various contexts. For example, it has been shown that social norms are conducive to reduce college student's heavy drinking by correcting prevalent misperceptions (Perkins, Haines, & Rice, 2005), and peer norms are significantly related to students' drug use and sexual behavior (Martens et al, 2006). As shown in several studies, people consider what others in similar social positions would do or think in given situations when making decisions about their own behaviors (Kilmartin et al., 2008). In other words, people are influenced by their perception of other people's thought and actions. Although most past research was conducted in the context of health-risk behaviors, it is conceivable to expect that perceived social norms will impact Korean wives' decisions to initiate conversation with their husband about the equal division of housework. If married women who do not perceive a given amount of housework unfair find out that a majority of other similar women discuss how to achieve an equal division of housework with their husband, they will become aware that they are not engaged in normative behaviors, and they might intend to have a conversation with husbands as others do. Conversely, although some wives think their current division of housework is unfair, they might not be likely to initiate the conversation with their husbands when they

perceive others who are important to them would not think it is appropriate to negotiate the division of housework. Also, due to the collectivistic culture in Korea where others' opinions are particularly influential to an individual's decision, Korean wives are expected to be more sensitive to others' opinions compared to women from other nations with individualistic culture (Hofstede, 1993; Seo, Leather, & Coyne, 2012). Thus, normative information about others' communicational behavior pertaining to the equal division of housework would lead Korean wives to intend to initiate conversation with their husbands, even when they are not aware of the need to re-divide the division of household labor. Park and Smith's (2007) research examined different types of social norms and found that each norm brings a separate impact to a behavioral intention to varying degrees. To investigate how these findings can be applied to Korean housewives' behavioral intentions, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and social norms approach (SNA) provide theoretical frameworks to guide the present study.

The Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is largely based on the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The TPB explains what leads to people's behaviors using four constructs; attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). Behavioral intention is strongly associated with the actual behavior and is predicted by other three constructs. Attitudes toward a specific behavior reflect an individual's evaluation of the behavior. Subjective norms indicate the perception of what other people who are important to an individual think he or she should do in a given situation. Perceived behavioral control (PBC) refers to an individual's perceived difficulty of performing a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB has provided a theoretical framework to understand behavioral intention and behaviors of people from non-Western cultures (Park &

Lee, 2009). The difference between the TRA and the TPB is the inclusion of PBC. PBC is an important construct in the present study. Some Korean wives may feel a lack of self-efficacy to talk to their husbands about housework because of cultural values, or they might have a lack of skill and knowledge of how to start the conversation about the division of labor to their husbands. For this reason, PBC is included in the present study in order for the TPB to be used instead of the TRA. However, TPB only accounts for one type of social norm. Another theoretical framework is needed to uncover how other social norms influence Korean housewives' intention to discuss the amount of household labor with their husbands.

Social Norms Approach

The social norms approach (SNA) was first proposed by Perkins and Berkowitz (1986) to analyze students' alcohol consumption pattern. According to the SNA, relevant norms can be categorized into two types: descriptive norms and injunctive norms (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). Descriptive norms refer to the perception of prevalence of the act among people who are important to individuals. Injunctive norms refer to an individual's belief regarding the approval of the act by people who are important to the individual (Park & Smith, 2007; Yun & Silk, 2011).

People in different cultures might react differently to norms. It is possible that Korean cultural orientation strengthens or weakens the impact of each norm (Paek, Lee, & Hove, 2014). Injunctive norms are expected to be a strong predictor of Korean wives' behavioral intention. Previous research found that injunctive norms may lead people to think that they are being pushed in a certain direction by the norms (Jacobson, Mortensen, & Cialdini, 2011; Melnyk, Van Herpen, Fischer, & Van Trijp, 2011; De Wit, De Ridder, Stok, & De Vet, 2014). People might perceive the injunctive norm approval as an attempt to limit their freedom of thinking and acting

(Silvia, 2006; De Wit, De Ridder, Stok, & De Vet, 2014). Due to this reason, some might expect that injunctive norms can have a negative impact on wives' behavioral intention to talk with their husbands. This is plausible when one lives in an individualistic culture where an individual's autonomy is a key value (Hofstede, 1991; Kagitcibasi, 2005). However, cultural orientation in Korea may strengthen the effect of perceived injunctive norms. Korean culture is characterized as collectivism where interdependence and social harmony are highly appreciated (Hofstede, 2001; Paek, Lee, & Hove, 2014). Others' approval is perceived more significant in collectivistic culture than in individualistic culture. Collectivistic orientation emphasizes harmonization within a society, which promotes social acceptance and social approval (Tafarodi & Walters, 1999). Injunctive norms have normative pressures (Yun & Silk, 2011) and are likely to be associated with a collectivistic orientation. Therefore, it is predicted that injunctive norms positively impact a Korean wife's intention to talk about the division of labor more than other norms.

Hypotheses and Research Question

Previous studies found distinctive contributions of subjective norms, descriptive norms, and injunctive norms in the contexts of organ donation and college students' drinking habits (Park & Smith, 2007; Park, Klein, Smith, & Martell, 2009). The current study proposes that these different types of norms exist in the context of Korean wives' intention to talk with their husbands about the equal division of labor: a reference group's expectation of a wife (subjective norms) can be differentiated from perceptions of a group's approval of the act (injunctive norms) and prevalence of the act among members in a reference group (descriptive norms) (Park & Smith, 2007). Reference groups are crucial to deliver social norms to individuals because people are affected by others' behaviors who are in a same social position when making a behavioral decision (Kilmartin et al, 2008). For married women female friends who are also married can be a reference group to decide whether to talk with their husbands about the equal division of labor or not. It is expected that although some of norms may be directly relevant to Korean wives' behavioral intention, others may also moderate the effect of attitudes and PBC on their behavioral intentions. Also, findings here will answer the question of whether the amount of time husbands spent in doing housework is influenced by wives' employment status to a great extent. Even when only a wife is employed and a husband is unemployed, a wife still spends one more hour on domestic chores than a husband (The National Korean Statistical Office, 2014b). It is questionable whether married women's employment status is influential to their behavioral intentions or not. Thus, the following hypotheses and research questions are posed:

H1: Subjective norms, descriptive norms, and injunctive norms will represent three separate dimensions of norms.

H2: TPB components and norms will be directly related to behavioral intentions.

H3: Norms will moderate the effects of the TPB components of attitude and PBC on behavioral intentions.

H4: Injunctive norms will be the stronger predictor of Korean women's behavioral intention than subjective norms and descriptive norms.

RQ1: Will employment status of couples affect Korean wives' behavioral intentions to talk with their husbands about the equal division of housework?

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Two hundred and sixteen Korean wives were recruited to participate in the study. They were selected from a nationally representative panel of survey respondents administered by Focus Company Co., LTD., Seoul, Korea. Nine participants reported more than twelve hours on average time of daily housework. They were dropped because of an excessive number of hours. As a result, two hundred and nine wives' responses are reported with a mean age of 34.33 years (SD=3.26). These participants' employment status proportionally matched with the recent census in Korea (dual income couples = 42.9% (N=91), only wife employed = 6% (N=12), only husband employed = 50.1% (N=106)) (The Korean National Statistical Office, 2014b). Participants filled out questionnaire via online surveys and received approximately one US dollar after the survey. Summary of the demographic information of participants is reported in Table 1.

Table 1.
Demographic Information

		Age (Wife)	Age (Husband)	Number of Children	Marriage Duration (years)	Wife's Housework (minutes/ day)	Husband's Housework (minutes/ day)
N	Valid	209	209	209	209	209	209
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		34.33	36.83	1.26	6.28	197.29	63.30
Median		35.00	37.00	1.00	6.00	171.43	38.57
Mode		35.00	35.00	1.00	1.00	77.14	.00
Std. Deviation		3.26	4.24	.97	3.93	147.46	94.66
Range		14.00	25.00	7.00	19.00	634.29	634.29
Minimum		26.00	25.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00
Maximum		40.00	50.00	7.00	20.00	634.29	634.29

		Education (Wife)	Education (Husband)	Place	Couple's Working Status	Perceived Fairness of Current Division
N	Valid	209	209	209	209	209
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		-	-	-	-	4.17
Median		-	-	-	-	4.00

Table 1 (cont'd).

Mode	5	5	1	2	4
Std. Deviation	-	-	-	-	1.72
Range	3	3	1	2	6
Minimum	3	3	1	1	1
Maximum	6	6	2	3	7

*Education: 3=high school graduate, 4=community college diploma, 5=bachelor degree, 6=graduate school degree

*Place: 1=urban, 2=rural area

*Couple's working status: 1=dual income couple, 2=only husband is working, 3=only wife is working

*perceived fairness of current division: 1=not fair to me at all, 7=very fair to me

Measures

As recommended by Ajzen, who first proposed the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), seven-point Likert scales were used to measure TPB components (subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, attitude toward the behavior, behavioral intention), as well as attitude toward the equal division of housework, descriptive norms and injunctive norms. Questionnaire items were adapted from Park and Smith's study (2007) and edited accordingly to this context (Appendix B). The original English questionnaires were translated into Korean first by the author who is fluent in both English and Korean. Then, another person, who is also fluent in both languages and not involved with the current study carefully compared two questionnaires to make sure that there was no gap between the Korean version and the original English version.

Responses within each subscale were analyzed and resulted in measures of attitude toward the equal division of housework ($\alpha=0.86$, $M=5.49$, $SD=1.41$), attitude toward the behavior of speaking to husband about the equal division of housework ($\alpha=0.95$, $M=5.43$, $SD=1.39$), behavioral intention ($\alpha=0.92$, $M=4.99$, $SD=1.25$), PBC ($\alpha=0.91$, $M=5.12$, $SD=1.27$), subjective norms ($\alpha=0.86$, $M=5.05$, $SD=1.15$), descriptive norms ($\alpha=0.88$, $M=5.09$, $SD=1.13$), and injunctive norms ($\alpha=0.89$, $M=5.41$, $SD=1.04$). Descriptive analysis and Zero-order correlations are reported in Table 2 and Table 3 respectively.

Table 2.
Descriptive Analysis

		AE	AB	BI	PBC	SN	DN	IN	Perceived DN (%)	Perceived IN (%)
N	Valid	209	209	209	209	209	209	209	209	209
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		5.49	5.43	4.99	5.12	5.05	5.09	5.41	55.11	74.01
Median		5.50	5.75	5.00	5.25	5.00	5.00	5.33	50.00	80.00
Mode		7.00	7.00	5.00	5.50	5.00	4.67	5.00	50.00	100.00
Std. Deviation		1.41	1.39	1.25	1.27	1.15	1.13	1.04	26.81	25.86
Range		6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	98.00	100.00
Minimum		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	.00
Maximum		7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	100.00	100.00

Note. AE=Attitude toward Equal division of housework, AB= Attitude toward behavior of speaking to husband about equal division of housework, BI=Behavioral intention, PBC=Perceived Behavioral Control, SN=Subjective norms, DN=Descriptive norms

Table 3.
Pearson Correlations Matrix

	AE	AB	PBC	SN	DN	IN	BI
AE	1						
AB	.64**	1					
PBC	.26**	.50**	1				
SN	.20**	.34**	.61**	1			
DN	.17*	.25**	.52**	.77**	1		
IN	.34**	.46**	.57**	.75**	.72**	1	
BI	.25**	.47**	.61**	.67**	.58**	.67**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note. AE=Attitude toward Equal division of housework, AB= Attitude toward behavior of speaking to husband about equal division of housework, BI=Behavioral intention, PBC=Perceived Behavioral Control, SN=Subjective norms, DN=Descriptive norms

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 predicted that subjective norm, descriptive norm, and injunctive norm represent separate dimensions of norms. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted via MPLUS. In addition to three different norms, measurements of attitude toward the equal division of housework, attitude toward the behavior of speaking to husbands about the equal division of housework, and PBC were included. The seven-factor model was a much better fit (Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .92, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)=.06, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .09), than a one-factor model (CFI = .54, SRMR= .15, RMSEA = .20). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the TPB components, descriptive, and subjective norms would be directly related to behavioral intentions. Regression analysis revealed that TPB components of subjective norms, attitude toward the behavior, and PBC, descriptive norms, and injunctive norms significantly predicted behavioral intention, $F(5, 203)=53.48$, $p < .01$. R^2 for the analysis was .57 and the adjusted R^2 was .56. Attitude toward behavior ($B=.15$, $p<.05$), PBC ($B=.20$, $p<.01$), subjective norms ($B=.28$, $p<.01$), and injunctive norms ($B=.23$, $p<.01$) significantly predicted wives' behavioral intention of talking to husband about the equal division of housework. However, descriptive norms were not a significant predictor of behavioral intention ($B=.06$, $p>.05$). Thus, hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 predicted that norms will moderate the effects of the TPB components of attitude and PBC on behavioral intentions. To reveal how the norms impact the relationship

between the TPB components and wives' behavioral intentions of speaking to their husbands about the equal division of housework, regression analysis was conducted. Using a two-step regression analysis, the TPB components of attitude toward the behavior of speaking to the husbands and PBC were included in the first block. Subjective norms, descriptive norms, and injunctive norms were entered to the second block in order to examine the variance in the behavioral intentions explained by different types of norms. When the TPB components of attitude toward behavior and PBC were entered to the first block of the regression analysis, attitudes toward behavior ($B = .21, p < .01$) and PBC ($B = .50, p < .01$) were statistically significant. When the three different types of norms were entered to the second block, they together explained an additional 16% of the variance in behavioral intention. Although descriptive norms were not a statistically significant predictor of behavioral intention ($B = .06, p > .05$), subjective norms ($B = .28, p < .01$) and injunctive norms ($B = .23, p < .01$) were significantly related to behavioral intentions to talk with husbands about the equal division of housework. As shown in Table 4, when three types of norms were entered to the second block, the regression coefficients of attitudes toward behavior and PBC were readjusted, taking into account the three norm variables entered to the second block. Both attitudes toward behavior and PBC remained significant even after including the three norms. Although descriptive norms alone are not a significant predictor of behavioral intentions, the three norms together moderated the relationship between TPB components of attitudes and PBC, and behavioral intentions. Thus, hypothesis 3 was supported.

Table 4.
Two-Step Regression Analysis for Moderation of Norms

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	5.67	1.25		4.53	.00
	AB	.19	.06	.21	3.46	.00
	PBC	.49	.06	.50	8.09	.00
		F(2,206)=70.84		Adjusted R ² =.40		
2	(Constant)	-.50	1.32		-.38	.70
	AB	.14	.05	.15	2.69	.01
	PBC	.20	.06	.20	3.13	.00
	SN	.40	.12	.28	3.31	.00
	DN	.09	.11	.06	.79	.43
	IN	.37	.13	.23	2.92	.00
		F(5,203)=53.48		Adjusted R ² =.56		

a. Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intention

Note. AE=Attitude toward Equal division of housework, AB= Attitude toward behavior of speaking to husband about equal division of housework, BI=Behavioral intention, PBC=Perceived Behavioral Control, SN=Subjective norms, DN=Descriptive norms

As shown in Table 4, when three types of norms were entered to the second block, the regression coefficients of attitudes toward behavior and PBC were readjusted, taking into account the three norm variables entered to the second block. Both attitudes toward behavior and PBC remained significant even after including the three norms. Although descriptive norms alone are not a significant predictor of behavioral intentions, the three norms together moderated the relationship between TPB components of attitudes and PBC, and behavioral intentions. Thus, hypothesis 3 was supported.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 predicted injunctive norms will be the strongest predictor of Korean wives' behavioral intention over subjective norms and descriptive norms. Regression analysis was conducted to reveal which is the strongest predictor among three different norms, F(5,

203)=71.67, $p < .01$. R^2 and the adjusted R^2 for the analysis were .51. The analysis confirmed that subjective and injunctive norms are equally significant predictor of behavioral intention ($B=.37$, $p<.01$). Consistent with the result of hypothesis 2, descriptive norms did not significantly predict behavioral intention ($B=.03$, $p>.05$). Since injunctive norms were not stronger predictor than subjective norms, hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Research Question

Research question was posed to determine how employment status of couples affects Korean wives' behavioral intentions to talk with their husbands about the equal division of housework. In this study, participants' employment status proportionally matched with the recent census in Korea as 42.9% of wives from dual income couples ($N=91$), 50.1% of them whose husbands were employed but they were not ($N=106$) and 6% of wives who were employed but their husbands were not ($N=12$) (The Korean National Statistical Office, 2014b). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) did not indicate significant differences in behavioral intentions across three types of employment status of couples ($F=1.08$, $df=2/206$, $\eta^2=.00$, $p>.05$). Mean scores of behavioral intention were similar across three different conditions of when wives and husbands were equally employed ($M=5.00$, $SD=1.16$), when wives were not employed but husbands were working ($M=5.04$, $SD=1.24$), and when husbands were not employed but wives were working ($M=4.48$, $SD=1.86$). Each mean of behavioral intention was not significantly different from the total mean across three groups ($M=4.99$, $SD=1.25$). ANOVA indicated that Korean wives' behavioral intention of speaking to their husbands about the equal division of housework were not affected by employment status of couples.

DISCUSSION

Although Korean wives spent more time on doing housework than do their husbands regardless of employment status (Table 5), their perceived fairness toward the current division of housework was at the midpoint ($M=4.17$, $SD=1.72$) of a seven-point Likert scale.

Table 5.

The Average Minutes of Housework Per a Day by Employment Status of Couples

	Wife's Housework (minutes per a day)	Husband's Housework (minutes per a day)
Dual Income Couple (N=91)	148.27 (SD=106.10)	66.78 (SD=92.54)
When only husband is hired (N=106)	250.39 (SD=163.52)	59.81 (SD=97.97)
When only wife is hired (N=12)	100.00 (SD=80.32)	67.74 (SD=86.62)
Total (N=209)	197.29 (SD=147.46)	63.30 (SD=94.66)

As Koreans hold a favorable attitude toward the equal division of housework but are not actually doing so (The Korean National Statistical Office, 2014a), Korean wives did not perceive the unfair division as unfair although they have favorable attitude toward the equal division of housework ($M=5.49$, $SD=1.41$). The present study found that proximal peer norms can influence Korean wives' intention to talk about the division of housework with their husbands to solve this issue. This study confirmed the previous findings (Park & Smith, 2007; Park, Klein, Smith, & Martell, 2009) that subjective norms, descriptive norms, and injunctive norms represent separate dimensions and each dimension has a unique role to influence individual's behavioral intentions. Although subjective and injunctive norms directly predicted behavioral intention, descriptive norms were not a statistically significant predictor of Korean wives' intention to talk with their husbands about the equal division of housework. Korean wives perceived that their close female friends who are also married approve of talking with husbands about the equal division of

housework. However, they did not perceive that many of their friends actually had conversation with their husbands. In addition, in spite of moderation effects of three norms, descriptive norms alone did not moderate the relationship between the TPB components of attitudes and PBC and behavioral intention. The present study also finds that employment status of couples did not influence on wives' intention to talk with their husbands about the equal division of housework.

The non-significant effect of descriptive norms might be explained by the fact that participants did not strongly perceive descriptive norms toward interpersonal communication with husbands about the equal division of housework. In the online survey, participants were asked to report their perceived descriptive norms (What percentage of your female married friends have talked to their husbands about the equal division of housework?) and perceived injunctive norms (What percentage of your female married friends approve of wives' talking to husbands about the equal division of housework?). The mean of perceived descriptive norms was 55.11% (SD=26.81) while the mean of perceived injunctive norms was 74.01% (SD=25.86). Korean wives thought that roughly above half of wives' proximal peers were actually engaged in the behavior whereas almost 3/4 of proximal peers approve of the behavior. This result suggests that an individual's perception of social norms is closely related to the impact of those norms. The result might be interpreted as descriptive norms do not influence on wives' behavioral intention to initiate the conversation with husbands about the equal division of housework. However, it may be one possibility to interpret the result as the reason why descriptive norms did not predict behavioral intention in the present study is because descriptive norms were not firmly established among proximal peers of Korean wives.

Another interesting finding of the present study is that employment status of couples did not influence on wives' intention to talk with their husbands about the equal division of

housework. It is conceivable to assume that wives are more likely to negotiate the equal division of housework when they are employed but their husbands are not. Unlike this expectation, the analysis for research question revealed that none of the variance in behavioral intention was explained by different types of employment status (dual income couple, when only husband is employed, when only wife is employed). This seemingly surprising result is consistent with the recent census results in Korea. According to the national poll conducted by the Korean National Statistical Office (2014), the wife always spent more time on housework than husband across three types of employment status of couples (The Korean National Statistical Office, 2014b). A similar result was reported in the present study as shown in Table 5. The wives spent more time on housework regardless of employment status of couples. Consistent with this result, Korean wives' intention to initiate conversation with husbands about the equal division of housework was similar across the employment status of couples since the employment status did not impact the division of housework.

Implications

This study is meaningful for three reasons. First, this is the first study in the communication field to look into the division of household labor in Korea. The topic has not attracted much attention so far even though it is directly related to daily lives and social issues. This study could bring attention to how interpersonal communication impacts traditional gender roles in Korea, which is relatively understudied. Second, the validity of the existing finding was tested in the present study. Replicating Park and Smith's study (2007) reveals previous findings can be applied in the new context of the division of housework in Korea. Particularly, the present study limited the scope of a referent group to a proximal peer group (Lewis & Thombs, 2005; Park, Klein, Smith, & Martell, 2009) whereas previous studies focused on distal or global norms

(Park & Smith, 2007; Park, Smith, & Martell, 2009). The different level of norms induced the meaningful finding that norms established among proximal peers matter before Korean wives make a decision as whether to initiate a conversation regarding the division of housework with their husbands. Last, this paper also provides a practical implication to achieve the equal division of household labor in Korea. The paper shows that interpersonal communication between a husband and a wife can contribute to reduce the gap between attitude and the actual behavior so that the equal division of household labor can be achieved. A wife's intention to talk about the equal division of housework is important to initiate the conversation about housework. But it may be hard to initiate the conversation when a wife does not evaluate the division of housework as unjust, which is commonly happening to housewives (Coltrane, 2000; Johnson, Galambos, & Anderson, 2016). The present paper emphasizes the importance of proximal peer norms in predicting Korean wives' intention to talk about the equal division of housework. This leads to the conclusion that there are more chances to achieve the equal and equitable division of household labor when many people are talking about the topic. This is a useful piece of information in order to design a campaign related to the division of household labor in Korea in the future.

Limitations

The sample recruited for the study is nationally representative. Although the working status of couple is proportionally matched with national census, the number of wives who have jobs but their spouses do not was very small (N= 12) compared to other working statuses (dual income couple (N=91), only husband is working (N=106)). This is partly because it was hard to recruit wives who were employed but their husbands were not as they are only 6% of the Korean population (The Korean National Statistical Office, 2014b). If available, future study could be

conducted which recruits samples that are evenly divided across the three different working statuses of couples.

The present study assumes that Korean wives' behavior of speaking to husbands about the equal division of housework is a deliberative decision. As the TRA (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) imply, people fully consider and assess information when they deliberatively make decisions (Rhodes, Ewoldsen, Shen, Monahan, & Eno, 2014). However, it is also possible enough that Korean wives spontaneously decide to talk with their spouses about the equal division of housework. Unlike deliberative decision making, spontaneous decisions proceed from the consideration of readily accessible information from memory (Fazio, 1990; Gerrard et al., 2008; Olson & Fazio, 2009; Rhodes, Ewoldsen, Shen, Monahan, & Eno, 2014). Although it is reasonable to expect that Korean wives will thoroughly consider information before they decide to talk about the division of housework with their husbands given the traditional gender norms in the culture, some of them might automatically decide to speak to their husbands about the issue without cognitive process of carefully weighing information. Future studies can look into how different social norms and attitudes can play roles in Korean wives' spontaneous decision making of speaking to their husbands about the equal division of housework by measuring accessibility of three different norms and accessibility of attitude toward the behavior of speaking about the equal division of household labor.

Conclusion

These results provide important evidence that proximal peer norms are particularly salient when Korean housewives make the decision to talk with their husbands about the equal division of housework. Both proximal peers' subjective and injunctive norms influenced behavioral intention of talking to a husband about the equal division of housework as well as

attitudes and PBC of the behavior. The findings suggest that interventions designed for the equal division of housework have to focus on norms that are shared among wives' proximal peers.

According to the results, it would be more effective to inform Korean wives about other married female friends' approval or expectations toward having a conversation with a husband about the division of household labor, rather than to simply figure out how many of their friends have ever engaged in the similar conversation.

APPENDIX

Measures for Talking with a Husband about the Division of Housework

Demographic information

What is your age?

What is your husband's age?

What is your highest level of education?

What is your husbands' highest level of education?

What is your working status?

What is your husband's working status? employed

How many children do you have?

In which area do you reside? 1. Urban 2. Rural

How many years have you been married?

Attitude toward the equal division of housework

The equal division of household labor is good–bad, wise–unwise, favorable–unfavorable, beneficial–not beneficial.

Perceived fairness in housework

How do you feel about the fairness of housework in your relationship? (very unfair to me–very fair to me)

Actual division of housework

On average, how much time do you spend on doing housework per a day?

On average, how much time does your husband spend on doing housework per a day?

Behavioral Intention

I intend to talk with my husband about the equal division of housework in the near future.

I mean to talk with my husband about the equal division of housework in the near future.

I have it in my mind to talk with my husband about the equal division of housework in the near future.

I will talk with my husband about the equal division of housework in the near future.

Direct measure of attitudes toward behavior

Talking with my husband about the equal division of housework is good–bad, wise–unwise, favorable–unfavorable, beneficial–not beneficial.

Perceived behavioral control

It is easy to talk with my husband about the equal division of housework.

I am confident about talking with my husband about the equal division of housework.

I can talk with my husband about the equal division of housework.

I know how to talk with my husband about the equal division of housework.

Subjective norms

My female friends who are married expect me to talk with my husband about the equal division of housework

My married female friends whose opinion I value expect me to talk with my husband about the equal division of housework.

My married female friends who are important to me expect me to talk with my husbands about the equal division of housework.

Descriptive norms

My female friends who are married have talked with their husbands about the division of housework.

Most of my female friends who are married have talked with their husbands about the equal division of housework.

Most of my female friends who are married have had discussions about the division of housework with their husbands.

What percentage of your female married friends have talked to their husbands about the equal division of housework? (0-100%)

Injunctive norms

Most of my female friends who are married would approve of my talking with my husband about the equal division of housework.

Most of my female friends who are married would endorse my talking with my husband about the equal division of housework.

Most of my female friends who are married would support that I express to my husband my opinions about the equal division of housework.

What percentage of your female married friends approve of wives talking to husbands about the equal division of housework? (0-100%)

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