

Adversities Experienced by Grandchildren in Korean Grandparent-Grandchildren Families and their Family Resilience

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Abstract

This study was conducted to make a policy proposal for Korean grandparent-grandchildren families, analyzing what adversities adolescent grandchildren suffer when living in a grandparent-grandchild family, the types of Korean families and how family resilience appears as family power. In order to conduct this study, 20 consenting adolescents were selected for an interview from grandparent-grandchildren families recommended by the U City Healthy Family Support Center. This study suggests the following conclusions. First, we discussed divorce, death, financial bankruptcy related stress, economic difficulties in the present family, accidents involving family members of a grandparent-grandchild family, grandparents' serious disease, death, family conflicts and family comparisons with friends. Second, in the domain of family resilience, desire to maintain the family appeared as a Korean value. In addition, efforts to bond as an emotional family and grandchildren's attitudes of gratitude to grandparents are also expressed. However, family conversation appears weak due to the generation gap between adolescents and grandparents or complications from family stress. Third, the resilience in the family organization appeared weak since there are relatively insufficient socio-economic resources to support the family. This study makes several suggestions for family policies and shows the necessity to develop policies that reflect the needs of grandchildren and grandparents.

Keywords

Korean grandparent-grandchildren families, marital dissolution, adversities, adolescent grandchildren, family resilience

Introduction

In Korean families, with social changes such as modern industrialization and urbanization, the diversity of family types has expanded along with increases in nuclear families, families moving to cities, changes in occupational structure, increases in dual-career couples' families and improved access to education for women (Ministry of Gender Equality & Family, 2015). This diversification in family form is documented in the socioeconomic statistics of Korea. Especially, the ratio of people who form a grandparent-grandchild family has recently increased because of divorce or remarriage, biological parents' abandonment, bereavement, economic difficulties and accidents involving parents. The Statistical Data of Korea documents a steep increase in the number of grandparent-grandchildren families; from 35,194 families in 1995, 45,225 families in 2000, 58,101 in 2005 and 68,135 families in

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2010. There has been an increase of over 10,000 families in each statistical research.

It has been about 10 years since a study on grandparent-grandchildren families was conducted on changes in Korean families. The increased interest in grandparent-grandchildren families may be related to the quantitative increase in the number of grandparent-grandchildren families caused by marital dissolution. The latest research trend is analyzed from the aspect of grandparents and the position of grandchildren. Studies on the position of grandparents have traditionally investigated grandparents' difficult family lives, parenting stress, lives, and compensation for care and policy support (Kang, 2012; Kim, 2015; Kim, 2012; Kim & Yun, 2015; Kim, 2007; Hwang, 2011). The research topics of past studies reviewed geriatric diseases and health problems of grandparents nurturing grandchildren as related to: aging, child-rearing stress, absolute economic burden, the burden for care and conflict that they could not solve expectations on children's needs for growth and ecological support for their lives and family environments experienced as elderly parents and deal with social welfare policy or problems to solve in the family welfare dimension and policy proposals.

Studies on grandchildren are concerned with grandparent-grandchildren families, adolescents' experience of life or family relationships, adaptation to society, school or regional community, behavior problems, adversities, self-esteem, learning and mentoring for supporting their adaptation, and the development of a school adaptation program (Kang, 2014; Gu, 2013; Kim, 2013; Ryu, 2007; Park, 2008; Park, 2012; Bae & Jung, 2009; Song & Lee, 2011; Yang, 2011; Lee & Kim, 2014; Lee, 2015; Lee & Choi, 2012; Lee, 2010; Ju, Lee, & Kweon, 2009; Jung, 2014). Despite the small study number, there are reliable research results on family functions or relationships, interaction with grandparents and relationships with school teachers (Lee, 2006; Bae & Jung, 2009; Lee, 2012).

According to a survey on condition by the Ministry of Gender Equality & Family (2010), grandchildren nurtured by grandparents were 13.3 years of age on average; 97.3% were aged 7 to 18; and 80.8% were nurtured by paternal grandparents. The reasons for the formation of a grandparent-grandchild family were: biological divorce or remarriage (53.2%), family abandonment (14.7%), death

or diseases of parents (11.4%), economic reasons (unemployment, bankruptcy and parents' finding employment) (15.3%). Therefore, grandparents have been often required to take care of grandchildren due to biological parents' problems. About 50.8% of grandchildren remained in contact with their natural father and 34.5% remained in contact with their natural mother. The natural father often has parental rights or custody in Korea after a divorce; therefore, there is a higher ratio of grandchildren from their father's side.

The biggest difficulty in grandparent-grandchildren families is economic difficulty with the grandparents' nurturing of grandchildren (Kim, 2013; Kim, 2006). The majority of the reasons for the formation of a grandparent-grandchild family (divorce, parents' unemployment and economic hardship) reflect the difficult family circumstances of grandparents in addition to the vicious circle of poverty through family generations. Economic difficulties are accompanied by a downturn of family relationships, frustrated desire, absence of conversation due to limited contact, for of family resources and disconnected extended family relationships. Such family characteristics also affect depression and family resilience; therefore, economically disadvantageous situations create lower goalsetting by grandchildren. The amount of parenting stress transferred from grandparents to grandchildren results in increased rates of depression and weak family resilience (Kim, 2012).

Adolescent grandchildren who require strong family support necessary for growth and development complain of difficulties due to grandparents' limited parental roles, health problems and family environment deficiencies (Kang, 2014). Adolescents in grandparent-grandchildren families more frequently have part-time jobs, visit facilities harmful to minors more frequently, and smoke than adolescents in single parent families. These adolescents often suffer serious psychological problems, run away from home and have problems with authority.

Despite these adversities, where and how does the power of grandparent-grandchildren families manifest? Some students in grandparent-grandchildren families do have problem behavior; however, they graduate into adulthood despite difficulties, stay with grandparents, and maintain family relationships since they have been exposed to positive family aspects (Healthy Family Support Center in Ulsan Metropolitan City, 2012).

Such positive family power can be viewed from the perspective

of family resilience. Recent studies on strength theory reveal that humans have a desire for self-growth and power of existence; therefore, that family power is involved in the lives of family members based on individual or family resilience (Jung & Yu, 2013; Kang, 2014; Kim, 2012; Lee, 2012; Walsh, 2002). It can be suggested that they can successfully overcome adversities if they have family resilience and even if they have already experienced family dissolution before they evolved into a grandparent-grandchild family; this includes grandparents' raising and support, socio-economic resources, family belief system or conversation.

This study provides the basis for policy suggestions that concerning the possibility of the improvement of the support system for grandchildren's growth and family bonds by examining adversities experienced by grandchildren who spend their adolescent period as members of a grandparent-grandchild family and investigates family resilience that forms and establishes positive family power. The following research questions have been established: First, what adversities do grandchildren experience? Second, what family resilience do grandchildren experience? The direct interviews and dialogues reveal the need for policies for grandchildren in grandparent-grandchildren families that can be proposed from emotional, cognitive and relational aspects.

Theoretical Background

Adversities

Adversities are obstacles or defects against growth and the accomplishment of environmental factors as well as an individual's inner qualities, which everyone faces in life. Introduction of flexibility or resilience is the ability to encapsulate a process of positive adaptation despite adversity (Lee, 2007). Economic poverty is the most typical of adversities faced in grandparent-grandchildren families. Parenting stress complaints by grandparents is also high; however, the demand for economic support is the most common demand (Kim & So, 2011). In particular, the present generation of seniors in Korea are a demographic that has not formed economic assets/savings due to their early dedication to raising a large number of children as skilled workers for an industrial society. Most grandparents maintain a difficult family life because they take in (adopt) grandchildren when they are in their

60s to 70s despite deteriorating health and fixed incomes. A survey by the Ministry of Gender Equality & Family (2010) indicated that the average income of grandparent-grandchildren families was about 590,000 won a month, which is a level that is equivalent to recipients of the National Basic Livelihood Guarantee.

Divorce or remarriage by biological parents is the first reason for the formation of a grandparent-grandchild family; therefore, the change of the residential environment in moving to their grandparents' house becomes a great shock for children in addition to the psychological pain of parental separation due to marital dissolution. Young children raised by grandparents have few formative memories, but they come to recognize the situation of the absence of parents in school life and through comparisons with friends' families. This then manifests into a phenomenon of longing and having fantasy for parents; consequently, they make an effort to check the existence of parents or connect with them when they become teenagers. In addition, the taboo of divorce or parental abandonment increases incidences of depression in teenagers (Kim, 2012). In particular, the deteriorating health or death of grandparents increases anxiety about personal care. Children become caregivers for grandparents with chronic diseases such as dementia, hypertension, diabetic complications and arthritis. The disconnection of occasional contacts from their natural father or natural mother increases depression in addition to psychological suffering. Situations such as problems in school life, conflicts with friends, and abandonment provide additional hardship since there is no support system for children and adolescents in that stage of development (Kang, 2014; Kim & So, 2011; Kim, 2007; Hwang, 2011). However, there is a need to study adversities along with family resilience for flexibility and positive support since these adversities represent new challenges to bring about the action of power to overcome these challenges (Walsh, 2002).

Family Resilience

Resilience is a concept of elasticity or flexibility, the ability to recover from obstacles or difficulties, which represents the recovery of lost power and return from stressful situations. Family resilience with family as a unit, means recuperative power of family function, elasticity or flexibility. Hawley & DeHaan (1996) emphasizes a powerful family force that can respond to the adversities they

experience along with the ability to overcome adverse conditions situations, endure stress and overcome adversities. This force is considered the ability to overcome adversity and heal. A family resilience approach should investigate the potential with which family members overcome crisis and stress from destructive and tough challenges in life, endure challenges, navigate life development, mature and develop self-power or self-potential. This perspective is interested in the internal potential and a cooperative effort process to challenge and overcome crisis and adversity (Walsh, 1998).

Walsh (2002) divided family resilience into the domains of family belief system, family organizational system and family conversation based on clinical research in social welfare practice to factually present how subordinate characteristics act as a flexible and positive power in families. First, the family belief system explores how a family acknowledges adversities, positively interprets the crisis, accepts it as a challenge, and establishes a unified and positive family perspective to overcome them. In addition, it becomes a power to endure adversities through family support and trust. Religion, spirituality and transcendental belief in family lessen the pains of life and bring about peace. Studies on Korea's family belief system showed it to be a powerful function to maintain family and overcome a family crisis (Kang, 2014; Jung & Yu, 2013; Lee, 2012). Second, the system of family organization explores how family members' connectivity, flexibility and socio-economic resources act in the process of enduring family crisis and adversities. Only when family is maintained can we fully examine the rules, ability to cope with family members' growth and development, family members boundaries, the network of regional community, social services, relationships with neighbors, relatives, counseling or school as socio-economic resources. Despite social welfare services that can examine the process of the regional community and family system network, many characteristics of an alienated family appear in grandparent-grandchild families. Most of these situations involve a disconnection from the family system or an absolute need for social welfare services due to a lack of information (Kang, 2014; Kim, 2012). Third, family conversation appears important as seen through family members sense of belonging, emotional bond, power to overcome loneliness through open and clear conversation among family members. This is a

process to accurately conceptualize and accept what the other party desires; in addition, they should speak clearly and share emotions on the crisis to create family bonds and a sense of psychological belonging. The biggest obstacles of grandparent-grandchild families are emotional environment of a masquerade (Kim, 2013), a tacit understanding not to express longing for a biological parent, generational misunderstandings in conversation, authoritative grandparents, empty disconnected family conversation, a family image with weak family resilience and lack of an optimistic vision for the future (Kang, 2014; Kim, 2012).

Research Methods

Recruitment and Interview

This study was conducted with adolescent grandchildren belonging to a grandparent-grandchild family, part of the large amount of families as case management subjects at U City Healthy Family Support Center (U Center). The U Center provides educational support and an emotional outlet for adolescent grandchildren. The adolescent children are case management subjects from grandparent-grandchildren families who have been recommended by the community center of the primary local authority (local government). The grandchildren received information from the center and twenty participants spontaneously participated in one-on-one interviews. The interviews were conducted by experts with at least a graduate degree who were majoring in Family Science. Respondents answered semi-structured questions, and the expressions of detailed difficulties or needs were recorded. The interview were conducted in convenient times and places such as the center, their home or a café. The period for the interviews was from October 2014. Interview privacy included written consent for the interview and the protection of private information.

Participants

Table 1 shows the socio-demographics of participants. Participants were 6th grade students in elementary school to 3rd grade students in middle school. A total of 15 students (75%) were raised by paternal grandparents and 14 students (70%) lived with siblings, and the period of living with grandparents was 6 to

Table 1. Socio-demographics of participants (No. of participants = 20)

ID	Sex	Grade	Number of siblings	Family members living together	Period of living together	Reason for living together	Religion	Economic situation	Recipient of Basic Livelihood Allowance
1	Male	2nd grader of middle school	2	Maternal grandmother, brother	9 years	Divorce	Buddhist	Mid-to-low	Yes
2	Male	2nd grader of middle school	2	Paternal grandmother, brother	15	Divorce	Buddhist	Mid-to-low	Yes
3	Male	3rd grader of middle school	Only child	Paternal grandmother, uncle	10	Divorce	Christian	Mid-to-low	Yes
4	Male	6th grader of elementary school	2	Paternal grandparents	6	Divorce	Christian	Mid-to-low	No
5	Male	6th grader of elementary school	2	Paternal grandmother, brother	10	Divorce	Buddhist	Low	No
6	Female	3rd grader of middle school	2	Paternal grandparents, aunt, sister	10	Economic reason	Buddhist	Low	No
7	Female	2nd grader of middle school	2	Paternal grandmother, sister	12	Divorce	Buddhist	Mid-to-low	Yes
8	Female	3rd grader of middle school	2	Paternal grandparents, brother	9	Divorce	None	Low	Yes
9	Female	2nd grader of middle school	2	Paternal grandparents, brother	10	Divorce	Christian	Mid-to-low	Yes
10	Female	6th grader of elementary school	2	Paternal grandfather, brother	10	Divorce	Christian	Mid-to-low	No
11	Male	1st grader of middle school	Only child	Paternal grandparents	8	Death of parents	None	Mid-to-low	Yes
12	Male	2nd grader of middle school	Only child	Paternal grandparents	8	Death of parents	None	Mid-to-low	No
13	Male	6th grader of elementary school	Only child	Maternal grandmother	6	Divorce	Buddhist	Low	Yes
14	Male	6th grader of elementary school	Only child	Maternal grandparents	8	Divorce	None	Mid-to-low	No
15	Male	2nd grader of middle school	2	Paternal grandparents, brother	10	Divorce	None	Mid-to-low	No
16	Female	6th grader of elementary school	2	Maternal grandparents	7	Divorce	None	Mid-to-low	No
17	Female	1st grader of middle school	1	Maternal grandmother	7	Parents running away from home	None	Low	Yes
18	Female	2nd grader of middle school	2	Paternal grandparents, sister	10	Bankruptcy of parents	Buddhist	Low	Yes
19	Female	2nd grader of middle school	2	Paternal grandparents, sister	8	Bankruptcy of parents	Buddhist	Low	Yes
20	Female	6th grader of elementary school	Only child	Paternal grandparents	6	Divorce	Christian	Mid-to-low	No

15 years, which was a relatively long term. The reasons for the formation of a grandparent-grandchild family included divorce (14), parents' economic reason (3), parents' death (2), and running away from home (a child of an unmarried mother) (1). A total of 10 persons were recipients of the National Basic Livelihood Guarantees. Personal beliefs indicated that 12 persons (60%) had religion and 8 did not. Families were case management subjects with their subjective economy situation evaluated as mid-to-low or low.

Data analysis

For data analysis, this study restructured questions about adolescent adversities, referring to Lee, Hye-ni's questions (2007) and data from the sub-domains of Walsh (1998)'s. We analyzed three domains of family resilience collected through semi-structured questions. Students in families recommended by the community center could approach the system of social support, so the credibility of the research subjects was relatively high with the opportunity for honest and open conversations that could produce reliable data. Interview details were transcribed and common narratives bound; in addition, major adversities were categorized through the process of parenthesis and labeling. For family resilience, the concrete sub-factors of family belief system, family organization and family conversation by Walsh's classification were parenthesized and labeled according to topic.

Results

Adversities experienced by grandchildren

Most of the 20 grandchildren complain of economic difficulties in their present family life and their adolescent period. The major difficulties involved with moving in with their grandparents involved difficulties in adaptation due to marital dissolution such as divorce, economic collapse, running away from home, death of a parent, family difficulties because of grandparents' health deterioration, serious illness, accidents in the family, discord/conflicts with family members, and the problem of adaptation to school life were major difficulties. This can be examined concretely as follows.

Poor economic life

Korean grandparent-grandchildren families are characterized by limited sources of income and difficulties in social security for the aged. The economic activities of grandparents were as day employees or irregular work; in addition, the grandparents that did do this work stated it was demeaning. They mentioned problems in obtaining support for their studies since they do not get any economic support or, at best, irregular economic support. In particular, teenagers cannot buy things they want or participate in hobbies.

"We are not well off, so I can't buy clothes even if I want to." "I am sad and can't buy anything." "Even if the teacher asks my parent to come to school, my grandmother can't go." "We are bad off and barely get enough to eat." "We don't have money to spare, so I can't do extra things. My dad sends money from time to time, it doesn't help." "There would not be any inconvenience if we have some money." "I want to help my grandmother." "I bought stockings, which were cheaper than my friends'. I was a little ashamed." "I can't do anything. I don't have money for a cell phone." "My grandmother went to pick up boxes. I am so distressed." "My mom sends money sometimes, but it is inadequate for my studies." (Grandchildren ID 1- 8, 12, 15, 17, 18 and 19)

Psychological problems due to marital dissolution

A survey of the Ministry of Gender Equality & Family (2010) indicated that 53.2% of respondents indicated that the reason for the formation of a grandparent-grandchild family was "divorce or remarriage". In this study, 75% formed a grandparent-grandchild family because of divorce, followed by economic problems, death of parents or parental abandonment. Psychological adversities for young children from divorce are. Intermittent contact with their father after they were brought to their paternal grandparents house due to divorce; however, most had no contact with their mother. Most did not express any intimate emotions with parents due to the length of separation. There were few emotional expressions and most indicated feelings of a sense of forlorn, despair or longing. The emotions from abandonment by parents were well-established and developed into emotional dependence on grandmother or relatives. While it was the economic problem, they have psychological solidarity by traveling, visitations or eating out; however, their parents exist as ones they miss. If their parents died,

they are completely dependent on grandparents.

"My mom left me in my grandmother's house and left. She doesn't have any contact with me." "My mom and dad died when I was little. It was a traffic accident. I like my grandmother." "They went bankrupt, running a shop. Mom and dad live and work separately. When I want to see them, I call them." "They abandoned us. We don't know their whereabouts." "They got divorced when I was young. My mom got remarried and has had no contact with me. My dad lives away. He can do Kakao Talk, but avoids talking to me." "They got divorced when I was in the second grade. My mom contacted me till I was a 3rd grade in elementary school, but now, I don't know where she is. My dad comes from time to time and gives money to me." "I lived with my mom till I was in the first grade and then came to my grandmother's house. I see my dad about once a month; I'm okay with that because my friends understand me." "I saw them last when I was seven. Recently, I can contact with them and see them sometimes." "They divorced all of a sudden, so I lived at either my grandfather's house or my dad's house. I don't have any contact with my mom." "I am distressed when I go to my friend's house." "I don't know who mom and dad are like. My grandmother and aunt are good to me." "I can't help." "I am very sad when I visit my friend's place, sometimes, I cry at home." (Grandchildren 1 and 20))

Family conflicts and the absence of conversation

Adversities perceived by the adolescent grandchildren the include family system and family member conflicts. There is also no conversation and a sense of isolation. There are noticeable conflicts between generations, problems with relatives and grandparents who have been their support system, refusal or resistance against child-rearing styles, conversational breakdowns between family members, contact interruption with biological parents, conflicts in relationships with siblings and difficulties in required development tasks during adolescence.

"We are in adolescence. We are so different." "I just spend time doing Kakao Talk with friends." "It's fine with me, at least I can eat and live. My grandmother and grandfather are not interested in who I am." "My grandfather tries to talk to me, but I'm not interested." "I was beaten up by my grandmother." "I don't try to talk since I don't want to talk much. I just live." "My aunt fought with my grandmother. The aunt doesn't come to visit anymore." "I tried to receive advance pocket money, but I couldn't and was beaten. I cry alone when I am alone, and I just live by myself." "I play computer games a lot without my

grandmother's permission." "My dad sometimes gave me pocket money and calls me, but I can't contact him anymore." "I don't trust my elder sister. I left my pocket money bankbook with my aunt." (Grandchildren 1- 7, 10- 13, 15 and 17)

Unexpected accidents and maladjustment

Unexpected accidents include grandparents' diseases or death, verbal violence in school, emergencies because of grandparents' diseases, parents parental involvement in fraud and suicide attempts due to depression. In particular, they are bullied in school, which causes significant pain. In addition, most suffer since their grandparents are old. Due to these accidents, they complain of pain and request outside help.

"I should cook often. Both grandparents are sick." "I am bullied, so I don't want to go to school." "I want my mom to help me. I am really depressed." "When I enter home, I have to hear my grandmother's sorrowful sounds" "My grandmother is a diabetic. She suddenly fell, and an ambulance came. I was so surprised." "My grandfather passed away. Too sad." "Friends bullied me that I don't have a mom. I was a victim of school violence. There is a kid harassing me." "I wanted to live with my mom and dad. So, I attempted suicide." "My grandmother has dementia. She went to pick up boxes outside. However, she didn't return home, so I had to report it to the police. Later, she came back." "My parents were caught for fraud. They might get divorced because of that. It was really difficult." "My grandmother had cataract surgery." "My grandmother is very sick. Therefore, I work." (Grandchildren 1-9 and 12-14)

Family resilience perceived by grandchildren

Family resilience discussed by Walsh (1998) are divided into family belief system, family organizational system and conversation pattern. The results of the teenaged grandchildren's perceptions can be analyzed as:

Family belief system

The factors that formulate the family belief system center around the meaning of adversities, positive perspectives on adversities and family values. They can be described as:

First, make meaning of adversities is how to interpret and accept a family crisis situation. In particular, this can be found through living in a grandparent-grandchild family and attitude towards divorce.

"My mom and dad quarrel every day, and I am comfortable living with my grandmother." "Even if my mom comes back, I won't be happy. I feel a lack belonging, but it is not necessary." "Aunt tells me to live dignified, not assuming that you are poor, and I will." "Since we are poor, I learn frugality." "I will live well. For they raise me well." "I will go to a vocational high school and be a good grandchild."

"Without my mom and dad, my grandmother and grandfather do good for me, so I have to do good for them." "I am helping my grandmother." (Grandchildren 1- 4, 6, and 11-13)

Second, positive perspective on adversities. Even if there is a crisis or failure, they recognize the chances of opportunity in challenge and growth in order to live with courage and hope. Actually, a person with strong resilience creates positive energy through optimism and transformation of pain into positive emotion, even if they become disabled due to an accident (Woo, 2014). However, those that indicated a longing for parents or wish that they could live with them could not overcome adversity and fell into a sense of emotional emptiness in a grandparent-grandchild family. Those who had a positive perspective maintained conversational ties with family members and saw hope as a means to cope with expectations.

"I love being in school, forgetting everything that around me." "My grandmother is good to me and cooks tasty food." "At least I don't starve." "My family seems harmonious." "We cheer for each other even though the result is bad." "I will go to college." "I wanted to see my mom often before. Now, I just wish. I solve everything by myself." "I have difficulty in everything." "It seems that I can't overcome my difficulties." "I wish that I could live with my parents." (Grandchildren2, 3, 5 -10, 15, 18)

Third, transcendental spirituality acts as a reliable mechanism to overcome family adversities. This can be analyzed through family values, religion, development from adversities, life heroes and role models. Here, family values are passed down through socialization and through life that allow people build values and a life in purpose. The robustness of the grandchildren's family belief system can be revealed in the chances for learning opportunities, development from adversities, model of life through the family, and the presence of a hero. Family beliefs are passed down through family rules or through religion that provides a sense of security.

Various belief systems are formed from adversities and role models are provided through family and relatives. However, some do not have a role model or have a hero of an imaginary life.

"I feel peaceful when I go to a nearby Buddhist temple with my grandmother." "Having a religion means having a goal." "I pray every day." "I am happy since I have religion." "I go to church. It is fun since I go with my friends." "I pray, and good things happens." (Grandchildren1, 3-6 and 20)

"I must not lie and be well-mannered." "Not playing videogames is what my family wants." "I say fighting with a friend is bad and don't fight." "Staying well with my grandmother and grandfather... I have to be a good grandchild." "No one scold me off. I am a little mature." (Grandchildren, 3 - 7, 17 and 18)

"When my grandfather passed away, relatives told me good things." "I help with housework much when my grandmother is sick." "I don't live with my mom. I spend a lot of alone. It seems that I can overcome a crisis myself." "Perhaps, I won't get deceived." "I would like to support others when they have a hard time." "I want to play a good role for my family." (Grandchildren 2, 5, 6, -7, 9 and 19)

"My aunt. She doesn't spend money for useless things and checks everything minutely." "My elder aunt's husband. He gives me money often..." "My cousin sister. She does good in school, is pretty, has a nice character. She is my idol." "My grandmother. She works hard in difficulties and raises us." "None at home, none outside, either." "None. My dad was one, but negative now." "My mom. She has a nice personality and is tall." "My maternal grandfather loves me really much. Even during personal hardships..." (Grandchildren 2, 4-6, 8-10 and 14)

Family organizational system

The family organizational system should be proactive when there is a crisis or adversity. Family flexibility, connectedness and socio-economic resources are core elements that are important as a family process.

First, flexibility of family organization represents changes in the stability of family rules, promises or roles and adaptations; in particular, appropriate roles and family rules should be reconstructed for the developmental needs of adolescents and adaptation to family environment. The details of the flexibility of family organization are summarized as follows. There are family rules to follow from the grandparents. Some respect family rules while adapting themselves. Sometimes, there are no family rules,

or there are conflicts, due to differences between the generations. At times, the family organization can also become very regulatory or stiff. Other times, there is a problem of too much family flexibility, so balanced rules and the stability of roles are required.

“They are really strict on me since my dad and mom are not around.” “Family rules? There aren’t any.” “I must come home early. I have to, since I am still young.” “I go to the Internet Cafe, but my grandmother and grandfather don’t know that. My elder sister knows.” “My grandmother asks me to turn off the light, and I have to.” “I have to get permission when I go to my friend’s house.” “When my grandfather asks me to do something, we quarrel.” “I read the Bible and do as I learned in church.” (Grandchildren 2, 4-6, 8, 17, 18 and 20)

“My mom and dad quarreled every day, but my grandmother and grandfather don’t fight, and I text message them.” “My grandmother has dementia, so can’t use the washroom by herself. I clean it up every day.” “When my grandmother asks me to do something, I help her.” “We do housework together.” (Grandchildren 1, 3, 7 and 18)

Second, family connectedness refers to mutual cooperation between family members even in painful moments, which can be discussed through the balance of unity and separation between family members, the boundaries between family members, sharing, or leadership in the family. Family connectedness appears through in-depth interviews, and there is some form of emotional connectedness between family members. In particular, the boundaries between family members appears in the concept of space and role division that the form of the support system. Leadership in the family appears in authoritative and suppressive forms since the grandfather represents the head of the household, but some follow my grandmother’s style.

“When I played in a game, my dad, grandmother and mom all cheered for me.” “My grandfather helped me when I had difficulties.” “I see the sister from the center and follow her well. I like that.” “I consult my grandfather or elder aunt.” “My grandfather helped me when I was victimized by school violence.” “My family are worried when I have a problem.” “My younger brother said as if he would protect me when I would be bullied by kids.” (Grandchildren 2, 3, 6, 7, 10)

“I enjoy playing when I play and I study hard when I study.” “My grandfather likes to interfere.” “I want to be free, from severe interference.” “They impose sanctions on me because of my age, but

they won’t after I grow up.” “I don’t use a cell phone at home. I have to leave it to their hand.” (Grandchildren 2, 4- 6 and 14)

“My grandfather decides everything.” “My grandmother does everything. She cooks side dishes in her own way...” “My uncle is a beneficiary of the National Basic Livelihood subsidy, and I care for my grandmother.” “Everything is done as my grandfather wants.” “My grandmother and dad make the final decisions.” “I don’t have an elder sister, so I am the center.” (Grandchildren 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 17)

Third, socio-economic resources. They refer to physical services, psychological support and counseling through the regional community network and extended family relatives, some get support from relatives during holidays, incidents or accidents, and they exchange daily life with relatives or occasionally exchange with nearby relatives. They get support for learning from the center and have a regional community network because some of the families belong to the local Social Support System of the Dong Office.

“When my grandmother had an operation, all my dad’s wear relatives came.” “They hardly had any contact in ordinary times.” “There were not many people that could the help.” “The Welfare Center of the Dong Office helps.” “I see them on New Year’s Day or during vacation, sometimes instructors help.” “My relatives live far away, so we only see each other during family occasions.” “My elder and younger uncles help me. They come and visit me each weekend.” “They remember my birthday.” “Neighbors and policemen also helped.” “There are almost no people who visit our house.” (Grandchildren 2-9, 18 and 19)

Process of conversation

Family member conversation processes are very important for family functionalization. In particular, it is necessary to discuss clear, open and mutually cooperative problem-solving during the family conversation process.

First, the clarification of family conversation process. The more direct, clear and concrete, the higher the intimacy established through family member sharing. Usually, between grandparents and adolescent grandchildren, conversation is because of generation gaps. These conversation gaps can lead to family secrets due to infrequent conversation with biological parents. However,

they have concrete conversations concerning ordinary life and family rules. It is notable that, in terms of family conversation, they are usually in a family environment with limited conversation.

"I don't talk about my mom. I feel like I must not..." "We don't understand each other. We have different languages." "I am in my adolescence. My grandmother is in her own age." "I don't contact my father any more. He seems to avoid KaKao Talk with me." "I talk about games with my little brother, and talk about daily life with my grandmother." "I don't talk in ordinary times." "Family members never gathered." "Even if I talk to my grandmother, she doesn't understand." "I don't want to talk to my uncle, either." "I only say necessary things, like school materials." "I talk with my friends." "I talk to church friends." "What should I talk about?" "At my own discretion, whatever, simply." (Grandchildren 2-12, 17 and 20)

Second, as a form of open sharing of emotions, to examine their conversation, it is noted that there are not any conversations or situations in a family environment in which they cannot make conversation. This means sharing positive emotions such as thanks, love, fun and humor in the family as well as negative emotions such as feelings of overwork, sorrow and loneliness. Many hide or do not express negative emotions that it may cause anxiety to grandparents.

"I don't express emotions to my family." "We have a generation gap" "I don't feel attached to my grandfather. I talk to my little sister" "I act charming for my grandmother." "I express love for my grandmother." "Family members don't express their feelings to each other." "I can't pour my heart out to my family." "I can't hide and it is on my face." "I talk to my aunt." "I cry alone." "I am in my adolescence, I act up." "I have an older grandmother and grandfather as my family, so I have to speak to them first." (Grandchildren 1-3, 5-9 and 17-20)

Third, mutually cooperative problem-solving is a method pursued through conversation. Despite the nature of adolescent grandchildren, there are significant developmental situations and desires to resolve, due to the unilateral or overbearing attitudes of grandparents; therefore, grandchildren complain of emotional suffering or have to follow instructions blindly. If not, mutually cooperative problem-solving is uncommon. Grandchildren have to endure discomfort. This, too, appears because of a generation gap

and economic limitations.

"When we feel bad with each other, we suppress feelings, but my elder sister doesn't come home." "Adults decide." "I broke a dish by mistake, and I was beaten. I thought about running away from home." "I often quarrel with my little sister." "If I don't do as my grandfather asked, I was deprived of my cell phone, and the Internet was cut off." "I was upset by my grandfather, so I told the counselor and cried." "I quarrel with my grandmother because we have different perspectives." "I can be easily reconciled with my elder sister." "I can't help." "My grandmother is sick, so..." "We are too different from each other, so..." "I wish I could become an adult, quickly." "When can I see my parents? I need someone on my side." (Grandchildren 1-9 and 13-16))

Discussions and Conclusions

This study suggests policies that could support adolescent grandchildren in grandparent-grandchildren families from positive and strong perspectives through an exploration of individual adversities and family resilience experiences. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 adolescents who spontaneously wanted an interview from the subjects of case management grandparent-grandchildren families as recommended by the U City Healthy Family Support Center. This study makes the following conclusions, implications and suggestions for further discussion.

First, the adversities extracted from this study were poor economic life, psychological problems caused by family movement, parental abandonment, divorce, family conflicts, the absence of conversation, unexpected accidents and maladjustment. In particular, adolescent teenagers complained of economic difficulties because their needs according to their development tasks were unfulfilled. Parental separation and absence of contact may also lead to frustration and despair that a time of development when they should enjoy emotional intimacy with parents and this may result in child depression in grandparent-grandchildren families (Kim, 2012); therefore, multifaceted support strategies are required. Child parent intimacy during adolescence creates a positive school life and a positive intimacy with peer groups to them (Chung, Yoo, & Lee, 2015); however, these children do not have any emotional communion with their biological parents and do not form any deep emotional intimacy with their grandparents. It is therefore necessary for teachers, community networks or

various members of the communities to provide further assistance as suggested by Edwards and Taub (2009). Adversities represent an unexpected environment rather than something the grandchildren in grandparent-grandchildren families can overcome that belongs to a domain in which active support should be made through the establishment of a social support system and the revision of laws. Grandparent-grandchildren families are becoming increasingly prevalent due to increased divorce and problems in the domestic economy cause family dissolution (Ministry of Gender Equality & Family, 2010). Therefore, support policies should be created: to mitigate economic adversity that are intrinsic in the grandparent-grandchildren families, prevent of marital dissolution, subsidize child-rearing expenses, professional counseling for family conflicts, education on problem-solving skills, extended healthcare support for the elderly and support for regular family counseling should be implemented vis-à-vis local governments. In particular, children in grandparent-grandchildren families from the father's side are deprived of important functions of family, emotional bonding and intimacy that creates a sense of isolation (longing) by the disconnection from their mother. This resignation state finally manifests as depression or delinquent behavior (Kim, 2012). Some children are supported by the Single-parent Family Support Act, but a an additional "Grandparent-Grandchild Family Support Act" should be enacted with various policies such as family counseling for the problem family units and family functionalization, education care for grandparents, increased support for grandparents' health and care and grandchildren's education and growth.

Second, concerning family resilience that the adolescent grandchildren perceive, as mentioned in the results of the actual condition surveys conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality & Family (2010) or the Ulsan Metropolitan City (2012), the grandparent-grandchildren families showed positivity as alternative families according to the absence of parents. This tendency is also found in grandparent-grandchildren families in the U.S. Grandparents can be a positive alternative when biological parents cannot nurture their children since they provide love and a stable environment when parents are sick or as a better alternative to adoptive families (Poehlmann, 2003; Hayslip & Kaminski, 2005). This is found in family resilience, and in particular, the family belief system recognizes the family value as a family unit unlike

other sub-factors. They maintained their family as a life model, through religious belief or commitment to firm family rules in the system of a family or relatives. Research on family resilience and the family belief system has been shown to be a powerful factor (Jung & Yu, 2013). Therefore, it is noted that it is necessary to provide a family value and life model for familial character in any family. However, familial power for the family organizational system lacks in terms of family connectedness, flexibility, and family socio-economic resources. Families should have flexibility according to the situation and change rules of child-rearing; however, adolescents lack such an ability. Especially, the lack of the establishment of socio-economic resources appears in grandparent-grandchildren families, and they should solve problems such as the absence of linkage with relatives and biological parents despite the lack of a regional community network to improve family resilience. It is salient to directly explore the needs of the grandparents who raise grandchildren (Harnett, Sharon Dawe & Mellisa Russell, 2014) and develop resources to mitigate the daily difficulties grandparents face as well as provide necessary resources to relieve stress and improve relationships. It is urgently necessary to connect various institutions that include social service system, school, elderly welfare facilities, health and medical institutions, health-care facilities and adolescent counseling support that improves cooperation within the family organization. In addition, the fulfillment of institutional obligations should become powerful so that grandchildren can have an emotional bond and connectedness by improving divorced parents' implementation of child support payments and visitation rights.

The family conversation process is an important mechanism that vitalizes family function and increases family resilience (Walsh, 1998). In this study, the weakest areas were the absence of the clarification of conversation, emotional openness and sharing, and conversation for mutually cooperative problem-solving. A situation in which no true conversation exists for adolescent grandchildren to discuss and get support is unacceptable, it is important to provide support for development tasks and understand the reality of the grandparent-grandchildren families.

'Divorce' mentioned as an adversities remains the domain of an unmentionable taboo. It was found that their conversation was blocked through the differences in emotional pain and value

evaluation. They have concrete conversations about small talk and daily life, but discussions on divorce are taboo and there is a confusion in the conversation. It is necessary to heal the past wounds that remain as unresolved feelings and obstacles through family counseling and resolve emotions. For this purpose, the government support is required so that a family counseling institution, Healthy Family Support Center, or the adolescent counseling support center can conduct training on conversation skills and emotional healing.

Third, the following policy suggestions are made in this study. There is a need to construct a system that can mitigate difficulties in grandparent-grandchildren families from various angles through the establishment of social policies and interdisciplinary reviews on family policies that support the finding of solutions to children welfare problems such as divorce, the burden of elderly grandparents in parenting grandchildren, the elderly-adolescent generational gap, and emotional care for children's growth and development. Such a practice, it is required to combine scattered policies related to grandparent-grandchildren families with a support system by enacting a "Grandparent-Grandchild Family Support Act."

This study investigated the reality of adversities experienced by adolescents in grandparent-grandchildren families and diagnosed family resilience as means to maintain the family through a case study; however, it is necessary to conduct further quantitative research for the establishment of policy and generalization. The central government should design and conduct regular actual condition surveys on grandparent-grandchildren families in addition to local governments design in-depth research and sampling on family units to provide direct services that consider the needs and status of grandparents. Grandparent-grandchildren families are often the result of divorce, education for healthy marital relationships and education for family life should emphasize the importance of emotional care and be conducted as part of long-term family policies.

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