

## Analysis of Research on Christian Infant Parents

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the study** : The purpose of this study was to analyze research on Christian infant parents in terms of research period, research content, and research method, and seek directions for research projects related to Christian infant parents.

**Research content and methods** : For this study, domestic master's and doctoral dissertation published from 1995 to 2023 by the national assembly library and the research information sharing service (RISS) were collected under the categories 'Christianity', 'infant', 'infancy', and 'parent'. A total of 40 studies were extracted by searching with these keywords and excluding redundant studies. In addition, the frequency and percentage were calculated by classifying and analyzing the results into three criteria: research period, research content, and research method.

**Conclusions and Recommendations** : Research on Christian infant parents increased significantly between 2016 and 2020, with 10 studies (25%) conducted during this period, indicating a more active engagement in this area compared to other times. Master's theses accounted for 39 studies (97.5%), while doctoral dissertation comprised 1 study (2.5%), suggesting a predominance of research at the master's level. Regarding the content of the research on Christian infant parents, practice studies accounted for 34 studies (85%), while basic research accounted for 6 studies (15%). Field-related studies such as the development of parental education programs and materials for infants continued to be carried out steadily, but there was a lack of theoretical, philosophical, perceptual, and factual investigation research on Christian infant parents. Methodologically, literature reviews were prevalent, with 27 studies (67.5%), followed by quantitative studies with 10 studies (25%), and qualitative studies with 3 studies (7.5%). Various types of research, including quantitative, qualitative, and literature reviews, were conducted between 2016 and 2020. Based on the research findings, in-depth qualitative studies conducted through observation and interviews, as well as mixed-method studies complementing single studies, should be conducted for a long-term perspective on research involving Christian infant and child parents.

### Key Words

Christian, Infant, Infancy, Parents, Christian parents

## 기독교 영아기 부모 관련 연구 분석

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### 논문 요약

**연구 목적 :** 기독교 영아기 부모 관련 연구를 연구시기, 연구내용, 연구방법으로 분석하여 기독교 영아기 부모 관련 연구과제 방향을 모색하고자 하였다.

**연구 내용 및 방법 :** 본 연구를 위해 1995년부터 2023년까지 출간된 국회도서관과 학술연구정보서비스(RISS)에서 국내 석·박사학위논문들 ‘기독교’, ‘영아’, ‘영아기’, ‘부모’를 주제로 검색하여 중복된 연구목록을 정리하여 총 40편을 추출하였다. 또한, 연구시기, 연구내용, 연구방법의 3가지 준거로 분류하고 분석하여 빈도와 백분율을 산출하였다.

**결론 및 제언 :** 기독교 영아기 부모 관련 연구는 2016-2020년 10편(25%)의 연구가 이루어져 다른 시기보다 기독교 영아기 부모 관련 연구가 활발하게 이루어졌다. 석사학위논문은 39편(97.5%), 박사학위논문은 1편(2.5%)으로 석사학위논문 중심으로 연구가 이루어졌다. 연구 내용에 따른 기독교 영아기 부모 관련 연구에서 실천연구는 34편(85%), 기초연구는 6편(15%)로 나타났다. 기독교 영아기 부모 관련 연구에서 부모교육 프로그램 개발, 영아용 공과교재 개발 등의 현장 관련 연구는 지속적으로 이루어졌으나, 기독교 영아기 부모 관련 이론, 철학, 인식 및 실태 조사 연구가 부족하였다. 연구 방법에 따른 기독교 영아기 부모 관련 연구에서 문헌연구 27편(67.5%), 양적연구 10편(25%), 질적연구 3편(7.5%)으로 문헌연구 중심으로 연구가 이루어졌다. 2016-2020년에 양적 연구, 질적연구, 문헌연구가 다양하게 이루어졌다. 연구결과를 토대로 장기적 관점으로 기독교 유아기와 아동기 부모 연구, 관찰 및 면담으로 이루어진 심층적 질적연구, 단일연구를 보완할 수 있는 혼합연구 방법의 기독교 영아기 부모 관련 연구가 이루어져야 한다.

### 〈 주제어 〉

기독교, 영아, 영아기, 부모, 기독교 부모

## I. Introduction

Research conducted by Shin(2017), Shin(2016), and Lee(2021) suggests the on-going need for Christian education to be facilitated through continuous collaboration between churches and parents. The home becomes a central place for faith education, where children experience and learn about God through shared life experiences with their parents (Shin, 2017). As primary caregivers, parents bear responsibility for the spiritual education of their children, necessitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills to fulfill this responsibility (Bae, 2006). Within Christian households, parents play a crucial role in fostering the relationship between God and their children and establishing their children's faith.

Infancy is a period in which approximately 60% of human brain cells are formed, and in addition to physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development, it is also a period in which an important foundation for religious life is formed in the spiritual aspect (Kim, 2008). In particular, the role of religious parents is more important than any other period during infancy because children imitate and resemble their parents' religious beliefs. Parents' religious modeling and the religious atmosphere at home play a very important role in the infant's religious development (Yoon, 2014).

An infant is a person created in the image of God and has the spiritual ability to know God. Infants react to the overall atmosphere of the home and the actions and attitudes of their parents (caregivers). Because infants spend a lot of time with their parents, it is very important for parents to provide Christian education to their children. Therefore, Christian education in early childhood should aim to help infants grow safely and healthily in the Lord in accordance with the developmental characteristics of infants based on the Bible (Kim, 2021).

Recent trends in Christian-related research analysis have included studies such as 'Trends in Church School Nursery Education (Kim, 2022)', 'Analysis of Trends in Christian School Education (Jang, 2022)', and 'Exploration of Trends in Lifelong Education in Churches (Park & Jung, 2022)'. However, when considering the linkage between churches and households, there appears to be a lack of analysis regarding research trends related to Christian parents, suggesting the

need for further research in this area. Ongoing studies related to Christian parents include the development of parental education programs by Kim(2016), Yoon(2014), Jang(2004), and Hong(1995). Furthermore, with an emphasis on play-centered education for infant in educational settings, research is being conducted on designing Christian play methods for infant by Kim(2016) and developing play-centered faith education programs for infant by Hong(2014). While various studies on Christian infant parents are underway, there is a need for analytical research that can propose future research tasks and directions in this field.

For this study, studies related to Christian infant parents were analyzed based on the analysis standards of Kim (2021). The purpose of this study was to analyze research on Christian infant parents conducted from 1995 to 2023 in terms of research period, research content, and research method, and seek directions for research projects related to Christian infant parents. The research questions set for this purpose are as follows.

1. What are the characteristics of Christian infant parents related research by research period?
2. What are the characteristics of each research content of Christian infant parents related research?
3. What are the characteristics of each research method in Christian infant parents related research?

## **II. Theoretical background**

### **1. The Role of Christian Parents**

Christian parents are believers who have been saved by believing in Jesus Christ, and are biblical parents as described in the Bible (Jo, 2014). Parents of families who seek to raise their children based on a Christian worldview, that is, accept Jesus Christ as their master as the highest value (Kim, 2022). Christian parents play a role in supporting their children to develop them into individuals with faith consistent with God's purpose and will. Christian parents are parents

who strive to educate their children in faith with the relational purpose of passing on faith for the glory of God, expanding the kingdom of God, and fostering mutual love and understanding (Song, 2017).

Parents are the ones closest to their children, spend a long time with them, and have the greatest influence on them. Therefore, for children in infancy, parents play the role of caregivers who satisfy and provide for the infant's needs. In the infant stage, the role of the guardian is necessary to provide a safe environment that can test the infant's autonomy and enhance the child's ability to learn. In early childhood, when self-concept is needed, parents should play the role of caregivers who help their children interact within the social system and provide learning experiences (Seol, 2004). Parents, as the closest figures to their children, should fulfill the role of training and educating their children in faith using all available means. Lastly, parents should also act as counselors, observing their children closely with a loving heart, experiencing all problems together, and seeking solutions openly for any issues their children may face. In other words, parents should also play the role of counselors, capable of addressing and resolving their children's mental, physical, and spiritual issues (Song, 2017). Christian parents are required to undertake various roles such as caregivers, nurturers, educators, and counselors for the spiritual education of their children.

## **2. Becoming a parent in infancy**

Parenthood is a more comprehensive concept rather than looking only at biological aspects, and it begins from the time of forming a self-image as a parent (Jeong, Ryu & Han, 2015). Parenthood, which in the past focused on giving birth to children, is gradually being recognized as one of the roles of adulthood in the entire human life development process, requiring a variety of psychological, economic, and social roles to raise children. In family development research, becoming a parent has been expanded from the pre-conception childbirth planning stage to childbirth and childrearing after childbirth. Therefore, parenthood begins from the moment a couple anticipates and plans for pregnancy, and performs parental roles such as raising and educating the child so

that he/she grows up healthy and properly throughout the child's entire life, as well as the expectations placed on members of society by the individual's culture. It is to establish new parental roles and values (Sim, 2020).

Since humans instinctively have an altruistic growth motivation to want to be needed by someone, express their affection and interest, and feel the desire to care for others (Jeong & Yoo, 2001), parenthood is a way to develop one's own skills acquired in adulthood. We are interested in raising and leading the next generation by demonstrating productivity based on intimacy (Shim, 2020). Parenthood in modern society means creating a foundation for children to live independently as adults (Kang, Kim & Jeong, 2017). In this process, parents positively experience happiness and personal satisfaction through the birth and growth of their children, while also experiencing various physical, mental, and economic difficulties. Therefore, parenthood can be seen as a process in which parents grow together through the various experiences and challenges that come with becoming a parent (Kim & Han, 2018).

In general, infancy refers to the period from birth to age 2, and is the most important period for physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Infancy is the time when children first recognize themselves, understand the world, and form social relationships (Park, 2018). During infancy, the world that an infant can experience is based solely on what the parents show, so interactions and relationships with parents are very important. Through parental care and attention, children build relationships with their parents and through this, understand how to relate to society. The most important thing is the emotional acceptance of the parents. Through the parents' acceptance of the infant, the child develops awareness of a situation, and through this, free will is integrated, forming the basis for the next development stage, autonomy development (Lee & Ko, 2016). Therefore, during infancy, the infant's needs must be constantly observed and supported so that the infant can form a healthy self-concept and form the basis for holistic development.

### III. Research method

#### 1. Research subject

For this study, we searched domestic master's and doctoral dissertation published from 1995 to 2023 in the national assembly library and the research information sharing service (RISS) using 'Christianity', 'infant', 'infancy', and 'parent' as keywords. A total of 40 studies were extracted by organizing and excluding redundant studies. In addition, the frequency and percentage were calculated by classifying and analyzing the results into three criteria: research period, research content, and research method.

#### 2. Research tools

This study was analyzed based on the research trend analysis standards (Kim, 2021) to identify trends and characteristics of research related to Christian infants parents. First, this study was classified according to the year of publication of thesis and master's and doctoral degrees. The year of publication was divided into approximately 5-year cycles, and the degrees were divided into master's degrees and doctoral degrees. Through this, it was possible to identify quantitative increase or decrease trends. Second, the classification criteria according to the research content were structured as shown in <Table 1>.

<Table 1> Research content classification criteria (Kim, 2021)

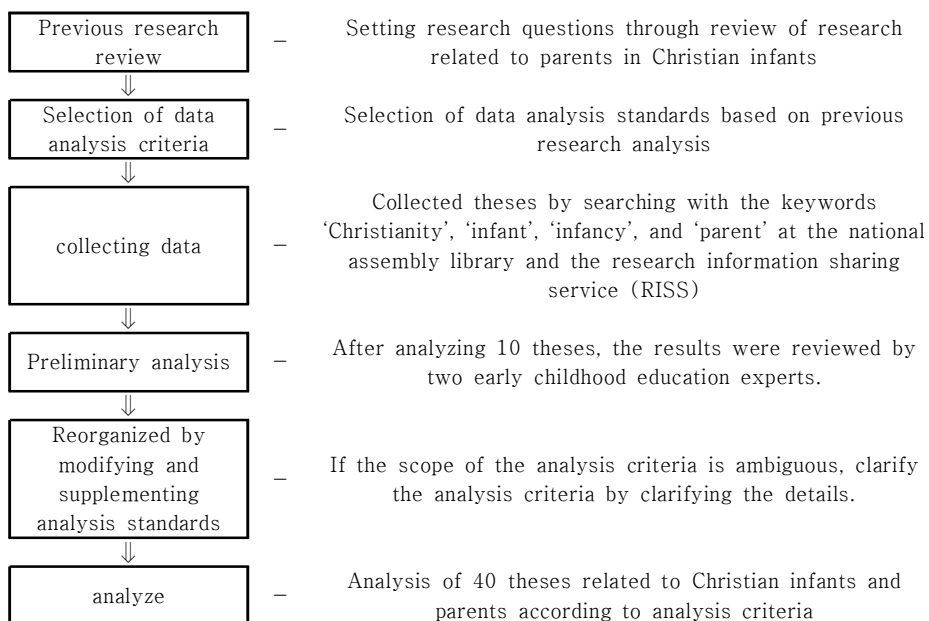
Research contents	basic research	practice research
Specific research contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The necessity and purpose of research on Christian infant parents</li> <li>• The theory of Christian infant parents</li> <li>• The Philosophical Background of Christian infant parents</li> <li>• Awareness and Reality of Christian infant parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum and program development</li> <li>• Teaching and learning methods (teaching media, program effectiveness verification)</li> <li>• Education subject variables (children characteristics, teacher characteristics, parent characteristics)</li> <li>• Evaluation (research tool development, teacher evaluation, parent evaluation)</li> </ul>

Third, the analysis criteria for research methods were classified into quantitative research, qualitative research, and literature research. Experiments, surveys, correlational studies, etc. were classified as quantitative research, while cultural and technical studies, case studies, etc. were included as qualitative research.

The research tool used in this study was a preliminary analysis of 10 studies related to Christian infant parents to ensure clarity of data analysis standards. Validity was secured by verification by two early childhood education experts to ensure that the analysis was accurate and appropriate according to the analysis standards.

### 3. Research procedures

This study modified and supplemented the research procedures of Kim (2021). After reviewing studies related to Christian infant parents, data analysis standards were selected. As a preliminary analysis, 10 papers were analyzed and the analysis tool was confirmed after receiving validity verification from two early childhood education experts. A total of 40 collected studies were analyzed using the final analysis tool.



[Figure 1] Research procedure



## 4. Data analysis

This study divided papers from 1995 to 2023 into approximately 5-year increments and analyzed changes by research period. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for papers analyzed by research period, research content, and research method.

## IV. Results

### 1. Characteristics according to research period

For this study, a total of 40 domestic master's and doctoral dissertation published by the national assembly library and the research information sharing service (RISS) published from 1995 to 2023 were analyzed for characteristics according to research period.

〈Table 2〉 Characteristics according to research period

N=40, frequency(%)

period	1995–2000	2001–2005	2006–2010	2011–2015	2016–2020	2021–2023	sum(%)
master's thesis	3(7.5)	7(17.5)	7(17.5)	7(17.5)	10(25.0)	5(12.5)	39(97.5)
doctoral dissertation	.	.	1(2.5)	.	.	.	1(2.5)
sum(%)	3(7.5)	7(17.5)	8(20.0)	7(17.5)	10(25.0)	5(12.5)	40(100)

Research on Christian infant parents has been ongoing since the study 'Development of Parental Education Program for Church Nursery' by Hong in 1995. Particularly noteworthy is the period from 2016 to 2020, during which 10 studies (25%) were conducted, indicating a more active engagement in research on Christian infant parents compared to other times. Master's theses accounted for 39 studies (97.5%), while doctoral dissertation comprised 1 study (2.5%), indicating a predominance of research at the master's level. These findings suggest the need for in-depth research on Christian infant parents.

## 2. Characteristics according to research content

The results of classifying the research content by period of Christian infant parent related research into basic research and practice research are as follows.

〈Table 3〉 Characteristics according to research content

N=40, frequency(%)

period		1995 -2000	2001 -2005	2006 -2010	2011 -2015	2016 -2020	2021 -2023	sum(%)	total(%)
M	basic research	.	1(2.5)	2(5.0)	.	2(5.0)	1(2.5)	6(15.0)	basic research 6(15.0)
	practice research	3(7.5)	6(15.0)	5(12.5)	7(17.5)	8(20.0)	4(10.0)	33(82.5)	
D	basic research	.	.	.	.	.	.	0(0)	practice research 34(85.0)
	practice research	.	.	1(2.5)	.	.	.	1(2.5)	
sum(%)		3(7.5)	7(17.5)	8(20.0)	7(17.5)	10(25.0)	5(12.5)	40(100)	

M = master's thesis D = doctoral dissertation

In terms of research content, studies on Christian infant parents showed that practice research accounted for 34 studies (85%), while basic research accounted for 6 studies (15%). Continuous efforts have been made in field-related research such as the development of parental education programs and the creation of educational materials for infants. However, it is evident that there is a lack of theoretical, philosophical, perceptual, and factual investigation research related to Christian infant parents.

## 3. Characteristics according to research method

The results of analyzing trends according to research methods (quantitative research, qualitative research, and literature research) by period in Christian infant parent related research are as follows.

〈Table 4〉 Characteristics according to research method

N=40 frequency(%)

period		1995 -2000	2001 -2005	2006 -2010	2011 -2015	2016 -2020	2021 -2023	sum(%)	total(%)
M	quantitative research	.	.	3(7.5)	3(7.5)	3(7.5)	.	9(22.5)	quantitative research 10(25.0)
	qualitative research	.	1(2.5)	.	.	1(2.5)	1(2.5)	3(7.5)	
	literature research	3(7.5)	6(15.0)	4(10.0)	4(10.0)	6(15.0)	4(10.0)	27(67.5)	qualitative research 3(7.5) literature study 27(67.5)
D	quantitative research	.	.	1(2.5)	.	.	.	1(2.5)	
	qualitative research	.	.	.	.	.	.	0(0)	
	literature research	.	.	.	.	.	.	0(0)	
sum(%)		3(7.5)	7(17.5)	8(20.0)	7(17.5)	10(25.0)	5(12.5)	40(100)	

M = master's thesis D = doctoral dissertation

In terms of research methodology, studies on Christian infant parents predominantly relied on literature reviews, accounting for 27 studies (67.5%), followed by quantitative research with 10 studies (25%), and qualitative research with 3 studies (7.5%). The period from 2016 to 2020 witnessed a variety of research methods including quantitative, qualitative, and literature reviews. However, there appears to be a lack of mixed-methods research, indicating the need for studies employing mixed-methods to better understand the complexities of research on Christian infant parents.

## V. Conclusion

For this study, I aimed to provide foundational data for identifying future research tasks and directions by analyzing the characteristics of a total of 40 domestic master's and doctoral dissertation published from 1995 to 2023 in terms of period of study, research content, and research methodology. Based on the research findings, the following discussions can be made.

## 1. Characteristics according to research period

Research on Christian infant parents has been ongoing since the study 'Development of Parental Education Program for Church Nursery(Hong, 1995)'. Particularly noteworthy is the period from 2016 to 2020, during which 10 studies (25%) were conducted, indicating a more active engagement in research on Christian infant parents compared to other times. In an analysis of trends in research on Christian parental education programs, it was found that there was an increase in studies from 2005 to 2009, with 8 studies focusing on parents of children in their early childhood years (Yang, Kim, & Choi, 2017). These results suggest that, rather than a decline in research on Christian parental education programs after 2009, there has been an increase in research specifically focusing on Christian infant parents. Master's theses accounted for 39 studies (97.5%), while doctoral dissertation comprised 1 study (2.5%), indicating a predominance of research at the master's level. The doctoral dissertation titled 'A Study on the Curriculum Model for Weekly Church Education for Parents of Infants in the Internet Environment(Lee, 2007)' is significant as it sheds light on the direction of Christian infant caregiving amidst digital environmental changes, highlighting the necessity of parental education in churches. This doctoral dissertation is noteworthy for the fact that it designed a weekly church education curriculum based on parental demands. In-depth research is needed for studies on Christian infant parents that reflect contemporary societal and cultural changes.

## 2. Characteristics according to research content

According to the research content, 34 studies (85%) were practice studies and 6 (15%) were basic studies in studies related to parents of Christian infants. Analysis of Christian Education Research Trends (Shin, 2022) analyzed the trends of papers published during the COVID-19 period. Of the total 172 papers, 61.5% were related to the practice of Christian education, and 38.5% were related to the basics of Christian education. This shows that more practice research is being conducted than basic research. In other words, field-related research, such as the development of parent education programs and the development of lesson

textbooks for infants, has been continuously conducted in research on Christian infant parents, but it can be seen that there is a lack of theory, philosophy, perception, and fact-finding research on Christian infant parents.

### 3. Characteristics according to research method

The results of analyzing trends according to research methods (quantitative research, qualitative research, and literature research) by period in Christian infant and parent-related research are as follows. According to the research method, research on Christian infant parents was conducted with a focus on literature research, with 27 literature studies (67.5%), 10 quantitative studies (25%), and 3 qualitative studies (7.5%). Qualitative studies include 'A study on early childhood education operated separately from parents (Park, 2003)' conducted through participant observation, and 'A phenomenological study on Christian mothers' religious parenting experiences of their children in infancy' conducted through interviews (Hong, 2019) and 'Exploring Christian parents' experiences raising children in early childhood (Kim, 2022)'. Qualitative research involving long-term observation and interviews is required to study the development of infants.

In an analysis of Christian education research trends (Shin, 2022), 62.7% was literature research, 21.5% was survey research, and 9.9% was development research. The research results showed similar results that were biased toward literature research. It can be seen that 2016-2020 is a period in which various quantitative research, qualitative research, and literature research are conducted. However, as mixed research appears to be lacking, research needs to be conducted using mixed research methods.

Based on the above research results and discussions, limitations are presented and suggestions for follow-up research are as follows. First, this study has limitations in that it analyzed studies related to Christian infant parents, focusing on dissertations. A more comprehensive research analysis is needed, including research on academic papers related to Christian infant parents. Secondly, this study analyzed studies related to Christian infant parents. After infancy, it is necessary to analyze studies conducted on infancy and childhood parents from a long-term

perspective. Thirdly, research related to Christian infant parents is predominantly focused on practical studies. However, foundational research is essential as it can provide the theoretical framework and basis for practical research directions. Therefore, there should be more foundational research related to Christian infant parents to complement the direction set by practical studies. Fourthly, research related to Christian infant parents is predominantly literature-based. Due to the lack of qualitative research, qualitative research with in-depth meaning analysis consisting of interviews and observations of Christian education conducted at church or home for parents of Christian infants is needed.

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