



Grandchildren Parenting Experiences of Grandparents

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: This study was to explore the meaning of life found in the life story of grandparents who are parenting their grandchildren.

Methods/Statistical Analysis: This study employed the phenomenological analysis method proposed by Colaizzi. The study was conducted through face-to-face in-depth interviews based on a semistructured interview guide. In-depth interview is a process of communication with purpose and it is where the researcher engages in purposeful conversation with the participant to create knowledge related to the subject to utilize the content provided by the research participant as research data.

Findings: The study results are grandparents taking care of grandchildren showed 3 categories Worth, Relations with adult children, and Difficulties of parenting. Grandparents taking care of grandchildren showed 3 categories 'Worth', 'Relations with adult children', and 'Difficulties of parenting'. The above study results show that grandparents taking care of grandchildren were participating in parenting through their own parenting experiences and parenting literature although they were not largely influenced by their own grandparents in the past.

Improvements/Applications: This study can be provided as basic data for education of grandparents participating in parenting grandchildren and young couples trying to

find a balance between work and family.

Key Words : Grandchildren, Grandparents, Experience, Qualitative, Nurture.

1 Introduction

Data The biggest characteristic of modern society is the equal social life among men and women due to education level increase, changes in values regarding employment, and self-realization desires in women.

The high rate of employment of married women due to the increase of social participation of women is acting as a core factor in bringing social changes and family changes¹.

Important changes that appeared especially after the 1960s include deterioration of extended families, decrease of traditional families, as well as the phenomenon of multiculturalism along with increase of international immigration.

This rapid changes in family and society created a sense of crisis in young women responsible for childbirth and parenting leading to an increase of households without children and this led to the low birthrate phenomenon² with the birth rate of 1.24.

This phenomenon is expanding into a crisis for each household as well as a national crisis. As the participation in economic activities of married women increase, the biggest difficulty that inhibit the coexistence of work and family for women is the problem of parenting after childbirth².

Looking at the fact that while more than 70% of working mothers with preschool age children utilize early childhood education institutions and still entrust their children³ to the children's grandparents in other times, parenting support from grandparents is an alternative plan of preschool age children parenting and can be an important resource as the role of supporting economic activities of the married adult children⁴.

Especially the reason why parenting by grandparents are preferred with younger age of children is because grandparents are trustworthy and take care of the children with affection⁵.

Therefore the purpose of this study was to explore the meaning of life found in the life story of grandparents who are parenting

their grandchildren.

After setting their children on their feet, they felt "emptiness, loneliness and dreariness as if one corner of the heart were with a hole" while the feeling of relief of having achieved the assigned duty was accompanied by the feeling of emptiness and depression by becoming needless people.

The results of study show that they have much time to spare in general, so they enjoy leisure time; however, they also suffer from depression by the loss of meaning of life and sense of purpose by feeling confused in the meaning of life due to changes and loss of family relationship through marriage of their children and death of spouse .

However, most of them led their usual life, enjoyed their hobbies they wanted to have for a long time and were fully occupied with volunteer activities, thinking that the volunteer works were equivalent to the act of gaining virtue for their children.

In particular, one of the reasons why they take care of their grandchildren is that they are proud to see their daughter or daughter-in-law working in the field of their expertise.

This is one of the characteristics of people belonging to baby boomer generation of which working women and participation in society were started to be considered absolutely positive.

Due to the changes in perception of women in the sense that their daughter and daughter-in-law must work, they were willing to actively help in taking care of their grandchildren.

For this reason, the study coincided with the research results⁶, in the sense that they felt responsible for rearing their grandchildren and they want to play a role as primary fosterers in accordance with blood-tied tradition of our country's culture.

This has the same context as the result of research⁷ in the sense that the main motive of taking care of their grandchildren resides in the fact that there are no other proper options or the situation is inevitable.

This means that the elderly in the old stage of life use their time and ability for the benefit of others and society, and it is considered the same context as the result of survey done by Kelly in the sense that this experience gives them an opportunity to actively participate in the society to which they belong, serving as an indispensable factor for social integration of the elderly into the society.

In sum, after making their children independent from them, grandparents think that the act of rearing their grandchildren is rewarding in life and lead an enjoyable life through the activity⁸.

The following results show what influenced the current role as grandparents, view on childrearing, relationship with their adult children, difficulties while rearing their grandchildren, advantages in rearing their grandchildren and desirable childrearing.

2 Materials and Methods

The study was conducted through face-to-face in-depth interviews based on a semistructured interview guide. In-depth interview is a process of communication with purpose and it is where the researcher engages in purposeful conversation with the participant to create knowledge related to the subject to utilize the content provided by the research participant as research data.

Here, the researcher does not only unilaterally accept the content of the interview but as the role of intervening in the experience composition of the participant in the interview process.⁹

Preliminary research participants were 3 grandparents who were not participants in the study. The interview time for the preliminary study was around one hour to one hour and a half per session and it was determined after the interview if there were difficult questions that the preliminary study participants could not understand, if there were additional questions that should have been asked, and if the interview time was appropriate.

Also, recordings were made with the agreement about the recording of the interview and after the interview, the recorded contents were all transferred and analyzed.

To obtain validity and reliability of the study, the study strived to minimize prejudice by researchers against research participants in the process of data collection and analysis.

2.1 Methods

This research conducted analysis according to the method described by Colaizzi, out of phenomenological data analysis methods.

To achieve this, analysis was conducted through listening to recorded in-depth interview of participants, reading the transcrip-

tion of it, and composing the meaning by making general, abstract topics from extracted sentences to categorize a broader level. To distinctively describe what research participants express during categorizing process, their interview responses were repetitively read and categorized into topics before receiving counsels from nursing professors with many experience in qualitative research.

This researcher read many times the manuscript written based on the recording of the in-depth interviews with study subjects, made general and abstract themes with the sentences extracted from the manuscript to build a semantic structure, and categorized them in a larger level.

In the categorization process, this researcher repeatedly read study participants' interviews to accurately describe their expressions and categorized themes, and then took advice from three professors in nursing department, who have a lot of experience of qualitative research.

This study used the phenomenological analysis method proposed by Colaizzi.

This researcher read many times the manuscript written based on the recording of the in-depth interviews with study subjects, made general and abstract themes with the sentences extracted from the manuscript to build a semantic structure, and categorized them in a larger level.

In the categorization process, this researcher repeatedly read study participants' interviews to accurately describe their expressions and categorized themes, and then took advice from three professors in nursing department, who have a lot of experience of qualitative research. According to the flow of themes in the analyzed data, this researcher integrated and comprehensively explained material experience.

2.2 Ethical Considerations for research Performance

Since qualitative research is performed by a direct relationship with research participants, privacy can be exposed, which is very difficult to control it in an appropriate manner.

Therefore, a prerequisite is consent and cooperation of the family and relevant supervisors as well as prior consent. Before con-

ducting interview, research purposes were explained to the participants and a written consent was obtained from them.

The following things are promised with participants.

- (1) the interview content will not be used except for the research purposes
- (2) transcribed data and recorded files will be discarded immediately after the research is completed
- (3) a report was processed anonymously, and
- (4) private personal information will not be disclosed.

Furthermore, the participants had the full right to refuse participating in the research at any time during the interview.

3 Results and Discussion

The study results are as follows.

Table 1 Grandparents taking care of grandchildren showed 3 categories Worth, Relations with adult children, and Difficulties of parenting.

The above study results show that grandparents taking care of grandchildren were participating in parenting through their own parenting experiences and parenting literature although they were not largely influenced by their own grandparents in the past.

While grandparents are involved in raising grandchildren to expect adult children's success, it is difficult because of differences in educational perceptions among adult children.

Nevertheless, grandparents for finding the meaning of life such as happiness, worth, and mission through the parenting of grandchildren.

Table 1: Grandchildren Parenting Experiences of Grandparents

Upper Category	Lower Category
Worth	Meaning in life Economic assistance Appreciation
Relations with adult children	Regret Conflict Trust
Difficulties of parenting	Physical and emotional difficulties

Grandparents taking care of grandchildren showed 3 categories 'Worth', 'Relations with adult children', and 'Difficulties of parenting'.

The above study results show that grandparents taking care of grandchildren were participating in parenting through their own parenting experiences and parenting literature although they were not largely influenced by their own grandparents in the past.

While grandparents participate in the parenting of their grandchildren expecting the success of their adult children, due to the differences in the perception of education between their adult children, it also acted as a factor that made it difficult for grandparents.

Nevertheless, grandparents look for meaning of life such as happiness, worth, and mission through the parenting of grandchildren.

Firstly, the result shows that the execution of a role as grandparents is mainly influenced by the method of childrearing of their parents, books on childcare and childrearing experience.

This coincides with preceding research in the sense that a positive childrearing behavior of a grandmother gives significant influences on positive childrearing behavior of a mother, while a positive childrearing behavior of a mother exerts an impact on the self-conception of a child¹⁰.

Moreover, research participants, who had already finished the childrearing duty, recalled the memory of childrearing of the past by reading books on childcare in preparation for being inadequate to childrearing. As research participants wish to be helpful in rearing grandchildren by receiving proper education in tune with the times, it is estimated that education oriented to grandparents relevant to childrearing in accordance with today's trends will be urgently needed.

Secondly, as for view on childrearing of grandparents, they wanted their grandchildren to be recognized by people by having all-round balance of health, love and character and fulfilling the duty with autonomy.

This manifests the same context as the survey result in the sense that grandparents taking care of their grandchildren are expected to play roles accomplishing socioemotional support, active parental role and educational function, emphasizing the dual roles as fosterers and educators.

At the same time, this coincides with the research result in the

sense that grandparents can play a role as powerful supporters for their grandchildren, while as critics and advisers for their children regarding the attitude of childrearing.

Moreover, when necessary, the parental role can be also supported by grandparents.¹¹

First, the past experience of grandparents raising grand children felt was 'strictness and warmness' and 'losing one's temper and differences'. The goal of their adult child dependence period was earning time on their side and getting well-prepared ending for their later years. The motivation of raising grand children was the expectation of children's success and absence of caring children.

Second, the significant impact on role performance of grandparents was education for children occurred while living with their grandparents, baby books and experience of child rearing.

The view of grand childbearing was 'health, love, the good morale of grand children', 'grand children who are self-regulating and established everywhere.

The relationship between grandparents and adult child was proved as the 'proudness and pitifulness' and trusting son-in-law and daughter-in-law.

The difficultness of raising grand children is 'playfulness and education', 'emotion control and guidance of life'.

The conflict between grandparent and adult child was the different view of education.

Although raising the grand children was being exhausted, there were also some advantages that occurred such as 'the harmony of family' and 'worthwhile'.

Third, the meaning of grandparent raising grand children's life was happiness, responsibility, worthwhile, emotional support, respect and recognition.

Those results of research showed that though there was no such a huge effect from the parents of grandparent, the grandparent could participate in raising the grand children through the experience of raising their child and information from baby book.

Actually, the grandparent usually participated in raising grand children since they have expected the success of their adult child and wants to support them with 'proudness and pitifulness', the different view between grandparent and adult child was one of the factors that made grandparent tired. Even though those happenings oc-

curred sometimes, grandparents have figured out the true meaning of life like happiness, worthwhile and responsibility through raising their grand children.

4 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the study found that in the parenting reality where the number of grandparents participating in parenting gradually increase, participation in parenting by grandparents led to successful senescence through an achievement of sense of productivity apart from the meaning of life and the significance of the study is in that it gives positivity in the participation by grandparents in the parenting of grandchildren which is being activated due to social changes and that it can provide basic data on education of grandparents.

The results of the study can be provided as basic data for education of grandparents participating in parenting grandchildren and young couples trying to find a balance between work and family, and the significance of the study is in providing positive perspective of parenting of grandchildren and the lives of many grandparents.

Besides the meaning of life, we can see as this study showed that raising the grand children leads the grandparent to successful aging with their achievement in the infant care reality that the number of grandparent raising grand children started increasing.

It also granted the affirmation of the participating in the raising of grand children which is being revitalized by the changes of the society as well as it can provide the basic of grandparents' education.

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