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The Effect of Cultural Values on Caregiving by Generation

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Abstract

This study focused on the relationship between cultural values and caregiving, and how such relationship differs across generations. Data from 396 youth, 330 adults and 315 elderly were analysed after quota sampling by generation, gender and residential area (urban vs. rural) in January-February 2014. Cultural values of filial piety and familism were highest among the elderly. When the difference in caregiving is compared, the conscious of caregiving among the youth was higher than that of the adult generations' caregiving service and the elderly generation's expectations of caregiving. With higher filial piety, their consciousness of caregiving became high; as more caregiving services were provided, there were higher expectations of caregiving. However, for the adult generation, unlike the youth or elderly, the effect of familism on caregiving services was not statistically significant.

Keywords: Caregiving, Cultural Value, Familism, Filial Piety, Generation

1. Introduction

Culture refers to a group's way of life, as manifested by those elements of the group's history, tradition, values, and social organisation that are meaningful to individual members[1]. It provides guidelines for speaking, doing, interpreting, and evaluating one's actions and reactions in life[2]. Therefore, cultural values may be seen as a guiding force in how individuals respond to demands and can influence how care is provided to older adults[3].

Familism and filial piety are among the cultural variables receiving the most attention[4]. Familism is a set of values that views the family as the most basic unit of Korean society and the basis of human relationships, and places primary focus on the interests of families[5]. Familism is the family level version of collectivism, and reflects a valuing of the family system over the individual member of that system[6]. In Korea, it has been the basis for family-oriented collectivism that prioritises the home and family[7]. Familism can be described as 'a strong identification and attachment of individuals and their families, and a strong loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity among members of the same family[8]. Filial piety includes obligations that the child owes his/her parents[9], emphasising obedience to parents, provision of financial and emotional support to parents, and avoidance of behaviour that would disgrace the family name[10]. It is highlights one's duty to ancestors and family honor[11,12]. The concept of respecting one's elders forms the groundwork on which a complementary and harmonious relationship and society between the younger and older generations are formed[10], and Asian societies in which filial piety is emphasised tend to have a stricter hierarchy than the West[13,14].

Cultural values have been attributed as a protective factor[15]. Familism has been proposed as a value that may act as a protective factor against the negative consequences of caregiving[16]. Conceptually, familism would lead to lower burden appraisals and to different patterns of using social support and coping styles, providing an explanation for differing physical and mental health outcomes for ethnic caregivers[17] found a negative and significant association between familism and burden. Using a focus group[18] concluded that 'family-centered cultural norms provided a context for positive perceptions of the caregiving experience; and[19] found that familism works as a positive resource for caregivers and[20] showed that

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university students in Korea with a higher familism had a greater willingness for caregiving. Those with a more traditional value set on familism showed a greater consciousness toward caregiving[5,21]. Concluded that married adults with higher degrees of familism had a higher degree of awareness of caregiving. However, other studies have shown a null or significantly negative relationship between familism and coping[22] or social support[17,23] found that Koreans and Korean-Americans felt more burden and emotional distress with higher levels of familism. In Korea[24], mothers-in-law with high familism reported low satisfaction with caregiving, and the burden for caregiving borne by the daughter-in-law was higher in cases of high familism[24].

Filial piety could plausibly serve as a protective factor against high levels of caregiver burden[9] found that adult children with higher filial piety are likely to provide more frequent emotional support. Other studies in Korea argued that caregivers with higher filial piety have higher caregiving consciousness[25,26]. However, filial piety does not completely buffer caregivers from stress and negative physical effects of parental care[27,28] have not investigated the relationship between these expectations and actual exchanged of assistance between generations[29] found that filial expectations are positively related to aid given to children, but have no correlation to aid received from children. Results indicate that a strong familial relationship and social bonding in Asian-American families serve as a cushion to life's challenges or health crises[30]. However, they also make the lives of Asians more complicated[31].

Culture plays out in different ways throughout the course of people's efforts to more systematically understand social phenomena that reflect time, aging, age groups and social structures[32]. Middle-aged parents grew up in an environment that emphasised a more vertical relationship between parent and child set forth by tradition, and the younger generation grew up in an environment where Western values of individualism or more equal relationships with parents have been highlighted[33]. As a result, the cultural values or the perception, behaviour and expectations related to caregiving differ between these generations. There is a stronger tendency for parents to take care of themselves in later years or see caregiving for the elderly as the responsibility of the government or society[34]. However, senior citizens who did not prepare for their later years appear to depend on children[35], hoping to receive help from family when ill or consider a nursing home as an option. Seok[36] showed that perspectives on caregiving were age-dependent: the older the generation, the more they see caregiving for the elderly as a responsibility of the family; the younger the generation, the more they see it as a personal responsibility of the elderly themselves. The gap will further widen between the generation already in their elderly years and the so-called sandwich generation, which is considered to be the last to provide caregiving for parents, and today's younger generation[37].

Given the gap between perceptions on caregiving by e generation and familism being related to caregiving, it is hypothesised that a difference in cultural values between generations will lead to a difference in caregiving. However, there is little information on cultural values and caregiving and how they differ across generations[33] investigated familism and the concept of respecting one's elders using adult subjects. Results showed that those in their 50s had a higher likelihood of living with parents than those in their 30s or 40s and were also more likely to provide financial support to their parents, and those in their 30s were more frequent visited their parents, indicating that respecting one's elders evolves throughout one's life[33]. However, this study looked at differences in how respect for the elderly takes form, not at the relationship between cultural values and caregiving[33].

This study focused on the relationship between cultural values and caregiving, and how that relationship differs by generation. Generations were divided into youth, adults and elderly. To better reflect the current caregiving situation, the concept of caregiving was modified for each generation: consciousness of caregiving was used for the youth, caregiving services were used for adults, and expectation of caregiving was used for the elderly.

2. Methodology

2.1 Procedures

Data were collected from the population via a stratified multistage probability sampling design based on geographic area (metro city, middle city, rural areas), gender (male, female), and education level (middle school, high school, university) from January-February 2014 in Seoul and Incheon, Cheonan and Seosan, and Tae-An and Hong-Seong. A total of 396 adolescents, 274 adults and 315 elderly were selected as participants, after excluding incomplete questionnaires.

When surveying adolescents, teachers and professors provided support. For married adults with the

responsibility of providing care for parents, a questionnaire was distributed with the help of undergraduate and graduate students majoring in aging welfare. For the elderly, a questionnaire was distributed with the help of social workers at senior citizen community centers.

2.2 Material

Cultural value Familism was measured using[39], with 9 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. One item was excluded (When someone has problems s/he can count on help from his/her relatives). Familism was divided into three factors: Family obligation, perceived support from the family, and family as reference from[38]. Cronbach's alpha for familism was 0.72, 0.74, and 0.78 by generation of youth, adults and elderly, respectively.

Filial piety was measured using[10]. It was translated to English by[39], with 13 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Cronbach's alpha for filial piety was0.86, 0.86, and 0.87 for youth, adults and elderly, respectively.

Caregiving[41] used physical, financial and emotional aspects as measurement criteria for caregiving, which we modified to fit the caregiving situation of each generation. Specifically, the concept of caregiving was changed to consciousness of caregiving for youth, caregiving services for adults, and expectation of caregiving for the elderly. A 5-point Likert scale was used to rate each item, with a higher score indicating the level of caregiving. Cronbach's alpha for caregiving was 0.85 for youth, 0.67 for adults, and 0.85 for the elderly.

2.3 Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Among adolescents, there were more females (56.2%) than males and the mean age was 17.33 years (SD = 3.18 years), with 37.4% middle school students, 29.8% high school students and 32.8% university students. Of 396 participants, 51.0% listed no religion, 39.4% lived in metro cities and 51.4% reported their economic level to be 'Medium.'

Among adults, there were more women (66.7%) than men, and the mean age was 42.88 years (SD = 7.56 years). Of 330 respondents, most were married, 55.3% graduated from university and 37.1% graduated from high school, 45.1% listed no religion, 34.5% lived in metro cities and 67.0% reported their economic level to be 'Medium.'

Among the elderly, there were more women (56.5%) than men, and the mean age was 73.46 years (SD = 7.69 years). Of 315 participants, most were married, 55.9% graduated from elementary school or had less education and 22.9% graduated from middle school, 64.1% listed no religion, 42.5% lived in metro cities and 47.3% reported their economic level to be 'Medium' (Table 1).

2.4 Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse participants' socio-demographic characteristics. One-way ANOVA was performed to examine differences in cultural values and caregiving among generations, and then multiple regression analysis was used to evaluate the effect of cultural values on caregiving. Statistical analyses were performed using a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/WIN 21.0; Company, City/Country) and $P < 0.05$ was considered to indicate statistical significance.

3. Results

3.1 Difference in Cultural Values and Caregiving by Generation

A statistically significant difference was found for in cultural values and caregiving (Table 2).

Table 1. Characteristics of participants

		Adolescents			Adults			Elderly		
		N	%	*M (SD)*	*N*	%	*M (SD)*	*N*	%	*M (SD)*
Gender (n = 1037)	Male	173	43.8	–	109	33.3	–	137	43.5	–
	Female	222	56.2		218	66.7		178	56.5	
Marital Status (n = 643)	With spouse	–	–	–	300	90.9	–	193	61.7	–
	Without spouse	–	–		30	9.1		120	39.3	
Education level (n = 1037)	Below elementary	–	–	–	10	3.0	–	176	55.9	–
	Middle school	148	37.4		15	4.6		72	22.9	
	High school	118	29.8		122	37.1		58	18.4	
	University	130	32.8		182	55.3		9	2.9	
Religion (n = 1037)	Yes	193	49.0	–	180	54.9	–	202	35.9	–
	No	201	51.0		148	45.1		113	64.1	
Residence (n = 1041)	Metro city	156	39.4	–	114	34.5	–	134	42.5	–
	Small city & rural	240	60.6		216	65.5		181	57.5	
Economic level (n = 1033)	Bad	72	18.3		62	18.8		125	39.9	
	Medium	202	51.4	3.12 (.83)	221	67.0	2.93 (.65)	148	47.3	2.61 (.89)
	Good	119	30.3		47	14.2		40	12.8	
Age(n = 1037)		17.33(3.18)			42.88(7.56)			73.46(7.69)		

Table 2. Differences in cultural values and caregiving (N = 1038)

				M(SD)	F	Duncan
Cutural value	Filial piety		Adolescent	3.24(.58)	15.696***	A
			Adult	3.25(.51)		A
			the Aged	3.45(.54)		B
	Familism	family obligation	Adolescent	3.36(.77)	13.992***	A
			Adult	3.42(.63)		A
			the Aged	3.64(.73)		B
		perceived support from the family	Adolescent	3.81(.81)	35.659***	C
			Adult	3.33(.74)		A
			the Aged	3.51(.73)		B
		family as reference	Adolescent	3.28(.67)	39.538***	A
			Adult	3.25(.60)		A
			the Aged	3.65(.60)		B
Caregiving			Adolescent	4.20(.63)	172.131***	B
			Adult	3.43(.60)		A
			the Aged	3.46(.66)		A

***p<.001

Filial piety was higher among the elderly than youth and adults. Looking at the subcategories of familism, family obligation and family as reference was higher among the elderly than adults or youth. Perceived support from the family was highest among youth, followed by the elderly and adults. For caregiving, youth consciousness of caregiving was higher than adult caregiving services or an expectation of caregiving by the elderly.

3.2 Effect of Cultural Values on Caregiving by Generation

Prior to the multiple regression analysis, bivariate analysis as performed on selected control variables, and Pearson's correlation analysis was carried out to confirm multicollinearity (data not shown). Caregiving was the dependent variable for this study. Table 3 presents the results of multiple regression analysis in determining variables. Among the variables, gender, education level, marriage status, religion and residence were treated as dummy variables before regression analysis was performed. For adolescents, 10 variables explained 44.8% of variances in caregiving consciousness, and perceived support was the strongest predictor. Filial piety, family obligation, perceived support from family, and family as reference increased caregiving consciousness of adolescents.

For Adults, 11 variables explained 13.9% of variances in caregiving service, and filial piety was the strongest predictor. Only filial piety increased caregiving service by adults.

For the elderly, 11 variables explained 23.9% of variances in the caregiving expectation, and family as reference was the strongest predictor. Filial piety and

Table 3. Effect of cultural values on caregiving of each generations (N = 1038)

			Adolescent		Adult		Aged	
			β	t	β	t	β	t
(Constant)				5.620***		5.393***		4.778***
Control variables	Gender [a]		−.183	4.308***	−.009	−.167	.105	1.868
	Age		−.040	−.459	−.001	−.023	−.184	−3.142**
	Education level [a]		.173	1.816	−.032	−.559	.033	.635
	Marriage status [a]		–	–	.034	.636	.067	1.076
	Religion [a]		−.012	−.308	.038	.700	.028	.549
	Residence [a]		−.040	−.862	.022	.401	.193	3.683***
	Economic level		.028	.708	.193	3.514**	.203	3.707***
Cultural values	Filial piety		.252	5.317***	.282	4.856***	.142	2.084*
	Familism	Family obligation	.102	2.369*	−.023	−.375	.101	1.522
		Perceived support from the family	.333	7.528***	.114	1.903	.048	.760
		Family as reference	.107	2.206*	−.045	−.738	.146	2.161*
		F	31.268***		4.672***		8.663***	
		R^2	.448		.139		.239	

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

[a] Dummy variable: Gender (male = 1), Education level (adult/the aged: university and over = 1, adolescent: university student = 1), Marriage status (have spouse = 1), Religion (yes = 1), Residence (metro city = 1)

family as reference increased caregiving expectation by the aged (Table 3).

4. Discussion

As each generation assesses caregiving using a culturally specific method[1], this study started with the hypothesis that the values related to caregiving - the consciousness of caregiving, caregiving behaviour and expectations of caregiving - would be different by generation. To verify this hypothesis the difference in cultural values and caregiving was identified, followed by an investigation into the effect that cultural values of each generation had on caregiving. Data of 396 youth, 330 adults and 315 elderly were analysed after quota sampling for each generation, gender, and residential area (urban vs. rural) in January-February 2014.

In looking at the difference in cultural values and caregiving across generations, the subcategories of respect for one's elders and familism, the scores for family obligation and family as reference were highest among the elderly. Perceived support from the family was highest among the youth, followed by the elderly and adults. Excluding the category of perceived support from the family, the cultural values of filial piety and familism were highest among the elderly. The elderly generation places more value on respect for one's elders, love and devotion and responsibilities to one's family than other generations. This result may reflect the history of Korea that the elderly generation witnessed during their formative years. The elderly, having experienced war, dedicated their lives to family during the post-war restoration period and showed a stronger leaning towards collectivism. However, adults and youth lived in the era after modernisation in relative affluence, receiving a Western-style education, which led to stronger individualism. Historical context can be seen as the cause for the difference in cultural values.

When the difference in caregiving is compared, the consciousness of caregiving among youth was higher than the adults' caregiving service and the elderly's expectation of caregiving. This is similar to results that showed youth to be more conservative than their parents with consciousness of caregiving[41]. Two studies conducted in mainland China found that young people believed in stronger filial responsibilities than expected of them by middle-aged and older people[42–45] reported that the older generation has even lower filial expectations for the younger generation than the latter have for themselves. Filial piety appears to signify consciousness of caregiving, and the expectation for filial piety signifies an expectation for caregiving. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the Korean youth's consciousness of caregiving is higher than what the elderly generation expects. As shown in this study, the youth's consciousness of caregiving is the highest, followed by caregiving service by adults and an expectation of caregiving by the elderly, which is a promising finding. This will help avert the isolation of elderly that results from a gap in the expectation for caregiving and the actual caregiving received, since youth and adults are caregivers.

In analysing the effect of cultural values on caregiving by generation, results found that all three groups were positively affected, with higher filial piety correlating with higher consciousness of caregiving, more caregiving service and a higher expectation of caregiving. This result can be interpreted through the concept of filial piety. This family centered cultural construct implies that adult children have a responsibility to sacrifice individual physical, financial, and social interests for the benefit of their parents or family[46]. For the adult generation, unlike the youth or elderly, the effect of familism on caregiving services was not statistically significant. The model's ability to explain the relationship was lower than other generations, and fewer factors affected caregiving service. Adults are the primary agents of caregiving for both youth and elderly. As of 2013, there are 16.7 elderly supported by 100 economically active people in Korea. This figure is expected to rise three-fold or to 57.2 elderly people by 2040. Therefore, caregiving service provided by the adult generation will have significant implications not only in the present but also for the future with respect to quality of life in Korea. Results showing few variables that explain caregiving service by adults have been argued in previous studies as an attachment to the elderly[47] or socio-demographic characteristics and health of the elderly[40], more than cultural values such as filial piety or familism. This study found similar results, with few variables to explain caregiving service by married adults. Follow-up studies, with a more comprehensive set of variables and data may elucidate reasons and correlations.

By identifying differences between different generations of youth, adults and the elderly that correspond to future caregivers, current caregivers and care receivers, respectively, and by analysing the effect that cultural values have on caregiving, this study highlighted the relationship between cultural values and caregiving that may have been overlooked in Korean society

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